

# Why this is a writing diary

By Holly Lisle

I read a startlingly grumpy post about the total tedious awfulness of my weblog, in which the post's author pointed to the fact that I wrote about word counts and didn't make a point of being interesting, or censoring what I wrote in order to entertain.

I thought I ought to address that, because I'm well aware that word counts and scheduling books in order to hit deadlines and the other processes I follow in order to finish projects are frequently as interesting as watching mud dry. I continue to do those posts here for the following reason:

## **This is not a weblog.**

This is an online writing diary. Writers have been journaling the processes that got them through the writing of their books for about as long as there have been writers. Previously everyone did it in little journals kept at the writing table or the bedside. Most writers who do page counts and word counts and grumble about recalcitrant characters and stuck ideas still do. I chose to drag the process online because I thought other writers, especially those getting started, might find it interesting. Or helpful. I considered the possibility that some readers might like to see the inside of how books get written and then published, though I figured they would be a secondary audience, because a lot of the process is simply "apply ass to chair, and slog," and while I find it interesting to do, I don't for a moment imagine that it's particularly interesting to read about day in and day out.

In the final assessment, though, the writing diary stays here because I have found that it is a useful tool for me; I have found that posting my writing progress and meandering my way

through the creative process is more fun if I do it online. Even when I wasn't permitting replies, it was a little less lonely to know that there were people out there checking in from time to time to see how the book in progress was coming along. With replies back in place, I get to hear from people, both readers and writers, and even though I don't respond to every comment, I love reading them all.

I don't feel the need to be entertaining here. I write my books to be entertaining, and if readers like them, that's as much as I can ask.

The writing diary has nothing to do with entertainment. This is where I open a window to my work to those interested in process, and where I demonstrate by living the process that none of my job is hobnobbing with the rich and famous or going on lavish author tours. I get to sit at a computer for a handful of hours every day. I get to think up cool things. I get to type them out. Sometimes I go in a wrong direction; sometimes I get stuck; sometimes, letting my fingers wander over the keyboard while I question where I have gone wrong, I come up with the solution to my writing problem in the writing diary. Occasionally I finish a book. Sometimes I sell one. That's about as exciting as it's going to get here. But it works for me.

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