

With Tears In My Eyes

By Holly Lisle

I owe a tremendous number of people huge thanks. And I didn't even know. I found out because serendipity has been at work again.

I was not going to be online today at all, but I woke up early and my back hurt; I couldn't go back to sleep. I was waiting for a load of laundry to dry, and I clicked an old link, one I have not visited in months. Forward Motion.

And on the Discussion Board, always my favorite place in the community, I discovered a link titled Prayers for Holly, where the FM folks did not just read about my current career ... ah ... **challenge**. They also acted, preordering LGD, promoting it, encouraging libraries to buy it, emailing the sample chapter to friends.

I didn't know, and I sat reading down through that long thread with tears in my eyes. I've always maintained that there are wonderful people on the Internet, and that most of them end up at FM. (The rest, apparently, stop by here – to every person who has put up a link for LGD on a weblog, my huge thanks. I haven't been making even daily weblog rounds lately because of being so swamped, but something in my head went 'ping' the other day, and I realized that a lot of you have done this.)

Thank you so much. Every one of you. You're amazing, and wonderful, and please know that I appreciate your efforts in my behalf with all my heart. I have no way of knowing yet what effect they will have on my publisher, but I know the effect you have had on me already, and I am grateful for every prayer, every candle, and every good wish, as well as every pre-order and recommendation. It's the people like you who make writing sustainable as a career; you offset the ever-grim corporate bean-counter culture that has overtaken most

publishers.

And here's the update on my self-reinvention, which is ongoing:

Let me note, quickly, that I **don't** have a second career to fall back on. I put my nursing license on mothballs back in 1993. I did not maintain state-mandated continuing ed, nor have I practiced in the field since I left. In order for me to reacquire my license and go back to work, I'd have to go back to nursing school for two years, which, if I had to feed the family tomorrow, isn't going to happen. I also haven't held a "real" job since 1993, so my resume, at the age of 44, would not make me a great hire in most of the few real jobs available locally. And women my age are not first-choice employees for jobs that pay enough to live on.

So the next few months and how they turn out are a huge deal for me.

Going after "C" right now is an intuitive leap, not the clear next career step. I know this, and I know I'm taking a risk that puts me way out on the edge.

When I finish "C", I'll have a completed novel that Claire can either accept or reject; a chance to maintain my name with Onyx, and maybe keep my backlist there alive. It's also a book that can be shopped around if she rejects it; this is in contrast to the 140,000+ words of rejected proposals I've been doing for her since October of last year that are still just proposals, and hard to move in other directions.

However, because "C" is the book of my heart, it's ... odd. The easy things are never what call to you, and this is no exception. "C" is a challenge, an adventure, an opportunity, a stretch – and always, of course, the chance to make a huge mistake and fall flat on my face, this time at a time when a career nosedive would be **crushing**.

The premise of “C” is short and sweet, the execution long and tricky. It would be an easy book to cheat through; it’s going to be mind-bending to get right.

With Anna agreeing to buy the next Korre novel (though of course we haven’t gone to contract yet, so that’s not in the bank, either physically or metaphorically), I’ll have a venue where I get to write as me. At current rates, however, I can’t live off of just my Tor work.

Plan B: Become Somebody Else, is waiting in the wings. I have hope that I won’t have to fall back on it. When I started this self-exploration, I really didn’t have that hope.

Things are better now. I’m enjoying writing again, and it’s flowing for me. I can feel the magic of the words again, and through the Onyx proposal process, I thought I’d managed to kill that. But I’m not for a moment letting myself fall for the illusion that I’m out of the woods. I’m still deep in the thickets. Located the compass, flashlight fell out of the sky into my open hand – what follows, though, is me pushing forward, and brambles, and patience, with heaven knows what waiting up ahead.

So if you are doing prayers, or candles, or sending light or good thoughts – please don’t stop. Not yet. You’ve been helping.

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