

Writing the Novel: Developing the Yes/No Relationship

written by Holly

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By Holly Lisle

Between migraines, three days of being unable to sleep, and actually being sick for the first time in a long time, I did not have a great weekend. Or get anything done.

But I'm set up to write now. I'm starting at 4915 words, and shooting for 1500 tonight. And I want to develop the conflict between the hero and the heroine.

I already know it's big. I've outlined the whole thing on screens full of index cards. But it has to start big. I hate trite. The stupid misunderstanding, the disagreement over the trivial—to me, if you have two people that you want to have end up together and a part of the story is about the conflict that is keeping them apart, that conflict has to matter. To both of them. They both have to know what it is, they both have to understand the terms, and it has to be something big enough that they won't bend their principles.

They have to earn being together, by building the thing that fixes the conflict. Not a patch, not he gives in to get her, not a compromise. A real fix.

So tonight, I'm laying the groundwork for that big conflict. It needs to start with both of them telling the truth—and discovering that their truths put them on opposite sides of a great divide.

Yes, they are attracted to each other.

No, they aren't going to pursue this relationship, because they would be wrong for each other. Events will then clobber

hell out of them while proving them wrong...but that's then.
This is now, and tonight is all about Yes/No.

Onward, then.

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