Writing the Novel: Small Insanities

written by Holly
May 26, 2009
By Holly Lisle

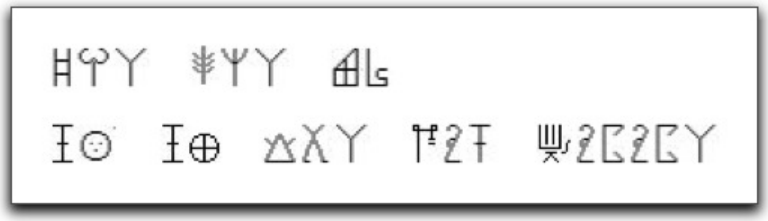
Lap desk: Check.

Laptop: Check.

Logitech trackball: Check. (Does Apple think all Mac users have only one finger on their mouse hand? Or just that we're not bright enough to use two or three…AND a thumb?)

Story plan for the night: Oh, big-ass check.

Last night I wrote for two hours and got less than a thousand words. But some of that time I spend reverse translating an English phrase into Latin, and then translating the Latin into a Minoan cryptograph.



Now, granted, my Latin is me plus an English-to-Latin translator, a decent knowledge of Spanish, a smattering of French, radar blips of Italian and Portuguese. So my English to Latin is suspect until I get someone Latin-competent to check my work for me. –

And no one has translated Minoan, but some significant work has been done on the Linear A syllabylary–some sounds are known, some are inferred back from Linear B.

And the rest is what writers like to refer to as elbow room.

There’s a LOT of elbow room where the Minoans are concerned.

In any case, signed copy of one of my books to the first person who can translate the cryptogram. You have to give both the Latin and the English. (You have one enormous advantage over the heroine of the story, in that you know the cryptogram is transliterated Latin. All she has is a vase with Minoan symbols on it.)

> *NOTE ADDED LATER: The signed book thing is not open to Think Sideways grad students, since you guys have the Dreaming the Dead notebook, in which I actually give the English translation.*

Yes, this is a small insanity. But it develops the character of The Coat Guy. (He doesn’t have a name yet.)

And tonight, while messing about with the protagonist’s relationship, I also begin laying the groundwork for the eventual arrival of the Bansidhe. (Also a characterization of a character not yet named.)

1500 words if I don’t wipe out first.

Onward.

Added MUCH later:

Yup. Screwed up the cryptogram by one syllable. And though I thought what I’d done was something that could be said in Latin, I may be wrong, so have corrected the poetic voice out of the cryptogram for now, and have taken a more straightforward approach.



Here’s the corrected version.

Contents © Holly Lisle. https://hollylisle.com All Rights Reserved