

NaNoWriMo: This Time is Going to be Different!

Monday, 02 November 2009

Two days and 4612 words into NaNoWriMo. This time, I'm doing it.

November snuck up on me this year. A couple of weeks ago, while staring in disbelief at a calendar that indicated October was half over, it hit me that it was nearly NaNo time. Was I going to make excuses for not participating, as I have for the past three years – toying with the idea then watching November pass with no effort on a novel? Or, was I going to stop talking about wanting to be a writer and actually, you know, write something?

I primed the pump by registering at NaNoWriMo.org. I set up a profile with a picture (gooblink) and a brief, poorly written bio. Then I started “following” Twitterers who referenced #NaNo or #NaNoWriMo. Some even followed me back. I announced to my friends on Facebook – “Hey, I'm gonna write a NaNo novel.”

I set the alarm to get up early on November 1. Even had an extra hour to play with due to the time change. But, as luck and habit would have it, I squandered my extra time the night before, staying up way too late, and hit the snooze button multiple times before I finally climbed out of bed at 8:00 and had to shower and dress for church.

So, no writing in the morning. Harbinger of another failed attempt?

Church. Lunch. We got back home at 1:00 PM or so and the weather was looking beautiful! Too nice to stay inside. I started to feel sick – headache, sinus pressure, achy. That's a good excuse to not write, right? Maybe Chuck would take the boys out somewhere so I could take a nap.

Yes. And no. Chuck rallied the troops and said, “C'mon fellas. We're gonna give Mom three hours of writing time.” He looked at me, “Can you do 2000 words in three hours?”

I had no clue. Never really tried it before.

So, the guys leave me with an empty house, except for Pumpkin, whose paws really stink. She needs a bath.

No! I have to write. Chuck gifted me with three hours of uninterrupted quiet.

I need inspiration…maybe if I play the piano my creative juices will start to flow. I play for 15 minutes. No juice.

What do I usually do when I have no idea how to start? I head to the bookcases and pull out several books I like and read the opening paragraph of a few. Now, things are starting to simmer. Ideas starting to gel.

My notes. Get my journal and pull out more ideas. Yes! Yes!

Next - Butt In Chair. Fingers warming up the keyboard. Don't think. Write. Don't stop, don't question, don't listen to the inner critic, whatever you do, don't revise. Just. Write.

Chuck and the boys return, has it really been three hours?

"What's your word-count?"

I check, "1030."

"Hmmm, so now we know it takes about 6 hours to write 2000 words," says Chuck.

"I had a slow start, and my head is pounding. I'm on a roll, though, I think I can get the next 1000 out faster," I continue to work.

A couple of hours later I come to a line that makes a great cliff-hanger for an end of chapter. I check my word count: 2010! Yay! I did it. I save the file (Chuck already lambasted me for not saving my work at 1000 words) and update my NaNo profile (their word counter actually registers a few more words than mine), brag to my Tweeps and FB friends and call it a night. I'm in.

This morning, I get up at 5:30 AM, full of rest, no headache, no aches, no pains and pound out the next 2000 + words in three hours. Cha Ching!

My story is taking shape. My characters are revealing themselves to me; they have stories to tell. I've got a lot of work to do, but I am stoked.

This time, I'm gonna do it.