

Rose glanced at her watch and gasped before hastily pulling herself up out of the chair, knocking her knees on Henry as she did, and racing from the room, barely remembering to flip off the light and close the door.

Henry listen to the thumping of feet on the carpeted hall, a dull noise of retreat, as he heard Rose race through the house. He waited until he was sure she was gone before he sighed, although it came out more like a creaking or settling of wood. Hardly noticeable at all, and certainly not if you hadn't been in the now closed and darkened room.

Rose had forgotten, again, to close the curtains, and Henry wondered if he'd have the company of the moon or stars as visitors for the evening as he sat rigid and firm against the wall. It's not that he was lonely, but a change of view once in a while was always nice.

Henry had spent most of his life in this small room. He'd seen the walls change color at least twelve times. He'd watched children small enough to hide behind him grow into adults. He'd seen the walls fill with photos, art work, and posters, only to be removed and filled with something different.

He'd shared his small space with a bed, and even an occasional person sleeping in it. Those were the hardest days for Henry, sharing such a tiny space with so many others, especially one who snored loud enough to rattle the screws that held him together, but Henry had endured it as stoically as ever.

He'd had books piled upon him, and removed only to be replaced with more. Rose had been known to doodle on him from time to time, only to be shocked with her results, lick her finger, and scrub it off. Henry supposed he should be grateful she'd removed the marks, but honestly he'd prefer she'd used a proper cloth as opposed to her spit.

Henry loved Rose, as much as a desk could love anyone I suppose. I mean, he loved that she visited frequently, that he'd been there for her through thick and thin. He'd held her up while she'd worked at rebuilding strength in a weak knee, he'd stood strong while she'd pounded away on the keyboard hashing out some new plot that he didn't quite understand, and he'd been there the day she'd slumped over him and cried for hours.

Yes, I suppose that Henry did love Rose, after all he'd never let her down. But if only Henry could talk, if only he could tell what was truly on his mind. Why, he might even answer many of those questions Rose threw into the air with wild abandon, or he might ask her why she never completed her sentences.

On those days, when Rose was pounding away furiously on her keyboard, an occasional chuckle escaping her, almost a gurgle in the back of her throat, Henry knew what would come next, and he'd attempt to silently brace himself for the mad dash of typing and foot thumping that would ensue.

Next it would be followed with the kicking off of shoes as Rose flung her chair backwards as she rolled across the carpet, never very far for the room was small and the carpet was not apt to allowing much room for travel, but still she seemed to take enough glee in the effort, that Henry often wished he had wheels to move with, would he be able to glide as easily across the carpet?

When the chair stopped moving Rose would sit and stare out the window, but what she saw Henry was never sure of. Perhaps being taller she saw more, for all he saw from his viewpoint was the sky, a row of hedges, and an occasional bird or fly that would come up to the window. While it was all worth looking at, especially on beautifully warm sunny days he just couldn't fathom what she saw that could hold her attention for such long lengths of time.

He was sure it must be people, for she'd suddenly stab her pencil into the hair piled atop her head and say, "I just don't know if that's going to work, do you Henry?"

How, Henry wondered, was he supposed to know? He couldn't see anything happening to know if it, whatever *it* was, would work, so he never bothered to reply. Even if he had replied, he's not so sure Rose would have heard him anyway, for no sooner had she asked the question than she'd begin to drum her fingers on his smooth flat top and say, "I wonder if.." Over and over until he Henry was quite near enough to feel that if she didn't stop tattooing her fingers atop him he might just get a headache, or perhaps it was the frustration of hearing, "I wonder if.." Repeated a million times, he was never quite sure.

Just at the moment when Henry was certain he should fling his top drawer open and shout, “You wonder if what?!” Rose would begin typing again, and then pause and say, “I mean, what if Lucy had never gone into the cupboard, am I right Henry? Or if Marilla hadn’t had compassion on Anne! Oh yes, we must carry on and see where our own journey takes us!”

Henry supposed Rose was right, but to be honest, he was just grateful the drumming had stopped, and would enjoy a quick snooze while Rose worked away, only rousing when her elbows dug into him, or she knocked her knee against his legs, or slammed a drawer she’d opened.

Henry endured it all though, because at the end of each week she’d come with her oiling rag and wipe him down, and then go back over him with a soft cloth and buff him until his wood shined. Then she’d sit back, sigh and say, “Wow Henry, you look amazing. You really are such a lovely old desk! What would I do without you, hey?” then she’d pat him gently before returning to her work.



I like to write each day, even if it’s only a few sentences of nothing much, I really like to write each day. It’s an exercise many writers attend to. Some go for word sprints, or sit for a specific amount of time, or perhaps have a word count they are specific about obtaining.

I’m a bit more free spirited in that I simply want to write. There are times though, when my brain is so full of life that clearing those things away to write can be difficult. The day I wrote this piece, was one such day. I’d cleared the room of distractions, announce loudly that I’d be writing and shouldn’t be disturbed, sat down to write, and.. Nothing.

I glanced out the window, but even the neighbour’s dogs were oddly quiet and invisible. I closed my eyes waiting for my thoughts to sort themselves, and that didn’t help me any at all. I scanned my writing idea list, and found that I was equally not capable of formulating the

plot points because I had something much bigger sitting forefront in my mind that I'd been working on, but had hit a wall with.

Instead, I grabbed my writing prompt book, opened to the first flagged page, and started to giggle. The idea was to write about what your desk thinks when you are sleeping. This spurred a fair amount of ideas, but as I began to write Rose & Henry tended to take their own path which I enjoyed following.

In fairness, I do not have a desk named Henry. In fact, I don't actually have a desk at all. I had a desk, once upon a time, but it was needed by someone else and I was willing to make the sacrifice. I now longly drool over a couple of desks at a local shop that I'm unlikely to purchase, because the wooden table I sit at to write serves me well.

It's name is not Henry either though, in fact we just call it "the school table" most often, as it's the place my children use to do their seated school work from. It is medium, and round, and once served as our small kitchen table. It really does get polished weekly, and we would certainly be lost without it.

The Reluctant Author
