

October, the glorious month of magnificent color changes amongst the foliage, falling leaves, and the slow transformation from a long hot summer to the chill of autumn. Brightly coloured pumpkins, crunchy apples, yeasty donuts, sweet cider, dark nights, morning fogs, and a crisp wind in the air.

Being my first year in well over a decade back in the Mountains I'm ready for all of this. Fire pit evenings, star gazing, pumpkin patches, corn mazes, hoodies, hiking, and watching the wide green expanses slowly change shape as they begin to settle down for their long winter naps.

I can smell fall in the air where I live, can you? I can taste it on the occasional breath of wind, and I'm downright giddy that we'll be experiencing a major temperature drop this weekend and I can finally pull out the my "*Happy Fall*" hoodie and not look too crazy wearing it.

Yet, October in the writing world is also known as Preptober. It's where many writers are preparing for National Novel Writing Month {NaNoWriMo/NaNo}. In years past I've spent Preptober debating if I'd even have time to participate, and if I could eek out enough time what one story would I focus on for the month? Oh the debates I had with myself were quite intense at times and ranged from the timid story idea to the epic, *what will the family eat if I'm busy writing all night*. Let's just say that the majority of October was rarely spent doing any true prep work for the project I was often about to embark upon.

This year Preptober, like so many other "new" and "different" things I've had the joy of experiencing, is a little different. I know what I'm writing about. My story, shockingly, is already plotted out. I know, I know I hear you Pantsers, I'm with you most of the time, but this year I'm trying things just a little differently.

I've set up my Scrivener file, plotted my scenes, have begun my research, & shockingly even found an ending. Okay, so maybe the last part isn't all that shocking. It's not abnormal to start from the end when I'm writing. Watching characters dance and march through an ending, and the crux of the story writing aspect is how they got there. Sometimes it works, and sometimes I close the notebook and run for it. However, this ending has been evading me for a good 11 years, so when I say I'm pretty excited to have finally chased it down I'm

usually talking at an excalarated speed while my words trip over each other.

I'm so excited to jump in! My new writing notebook is bursting with notes, ideas, questions, and conflict that will likely find their way into this story at some point. And if I use my time wisely, I might just finally be able to solve the "muddle of the middle" once and for all so I can finish this book! What a satisfying accomplishment that would finally be, but also just a little bit sad to say good-bye to these characters who've waltzed through my dreams, distracted me during chore time, and kept me awake long into the night as they tried to tell their side of the story.

Oh, yes there will be plenty editing ahead, and those pesky characters will probably tell me how poorly or unfairly I've represented them in certain situations, but to close the book, quite literally, on this major task... Mmm, I'm not sure I can find the adequate words to express just what a lovely feeling that will be!

You see, this story was originally written in 2008 for NaNo. It flew off the keyboard pretty quickly and then I hit a road block and nearly missed the deadline to eek out a few thousand words more and was racing the clock that dark crazy night! I just couldn't put my finger on exactly what was wrong with the story! I decided to try Camp Nano in 2009 and edit the first half of what I'd written, but the editing didn't help me entirely pinpoint my problem other than, "this is a little too happily ever after.."

In 2011 I began a rewrite for NaNo, but had to change tactics because I was being swept under again. It wasn't until 2018 that I finally flipped the entire story upside down and did a rewrite for Nano, which was really a first write because I'd changed everything from the plot line to characters and location. The problem was I hit a bit of a dry spot and it took me a while to realise it was because everything was far too happy go lucky and was such a bore to read!

Like it or not in real life, stories need drama, conflict, and opposition, it's what makes them so enjoyable to read. Thus, after much poking, proding, and rewriting I've finally got a story I truly enjoyed plotting, and slowly, ever so slowly, writing and sharing with a few *privileged* individuals.

Lest you become jealous that you, Dear Reader, weren't selected to read chapters, scenes, snippets and what nots as they came off my notebook pages, keep in mind that rough drafts are filled with typos, flaws, plot holes, and more. I'm genuinely grateful that those who've taken the time to read them haven't thrown their hands up in despair!

Although I confess in one draft I had to change a character's name {again} and instead of doing it properly I used the old "Edit and Replace" function on my computer. Let's just say people were reading away happily and then were jerked clear out of the story when the old name popped up! One of them rather bluntly asked me who the heck Bill was, to which I shrugged and said, "How should I know, he's not a character in my story!"

Yes, I am truly grateful for the patience those who've read the mangled portions of story I've shared with them. Every bit of feedback makes me smile, every question and intrigue, every ounce of excitement spurs me on!



[National Novel Writer's Month](#), more fondly known in our home as NaNo, is an annual November event. You can choose to write 50,000 words in a month towards whatever project you are working on, you can choose to edit a project you are working on, or perhaps your goals are smaller, and you'd prefer to write considerably less. That's possible too.

You set your own goal, or the pre-set Nano Goal, and jump in on the first of November. Time allowances are taken into consideration based on where you live, so if you set up an account over on the official [NaNo website](#), be sure to set your time zone to where you live to take full advantage of all the time you need. If you choose to join, I'd love to know so I can cheer you on throughout November!

The Reluctant Author

