



Hi there!

How are you all doing? Flagging at the keyboard with heavy hands and a mind full of whirling words and images, or skipping through the scenes as though there's a movie playing behind your eyelids and all you have to do is take notes?

Believe me, both are part of the writing process, and there are days when I never seem to get out of first gear, and end up walking my dog/cleaning my house/baking cookies until it's time for supper and I can switch off my computer as if I've put in a full day of writing. It's not *magic* that lets me skip through the pages on a good day; it's a particular state of mind. So how do we get there?

First of all, think *lightness of touch*. Start by the actual way that you're writing: Are you bashing at the keyboard as if each letter needs to be hewn out of stone before it will appear on screen? Or if you're writing longhand, have you got your pen clasped in a death-grip, in case it gets loose and nips your knuckles, or runs away laughing with your notebook?

Lighten up! Literally, go on. The sound you're aiming for on the keyboard is gentle summer rain, just a tiny, rapid *tap tap tap* like mice scampering or butterflies resting on petals. If you're holding a pen, relax until you can see folds in your skin, rather than your knuckles and tendons trying to burst through. Stroke it over the paper, think of the words spilling out like glitter from an up-ended tube, sparkling onto the page. The process of writing is not your enemy; instead, it is the only way you can transform from a storyteller to a writer.

Anyone can be a storyteller, dancing through their imagination and weaving tall tales to enchant and entertain. Comparatively few can perform the alchemy required to capture those tales in words. Treat your keyboard, your fingers, your pen, gently, because they are an essential part of that alchemy.

See how the tension leaves your shoulders when you stop wrestling with your writing instruments? Now let that lightness spread from your fingertips up your arms, all the way to your head. *No one will die if you don't finish this scene right now.*

Take time out to lighten your imagination; write lists of names for future characters, or physical descriptions, or choose one very minor character and jot down a fabulous back story for them that might never get mentioned in your story – or could take it in a totally different direction. You're still writing, you're still adding to that pile of feathers (light,

light words that dance in the breeze), and when you go back to the main thread of the story, you'll be even better prepared.

Tension and heaviness in the way you write will create tension and heaviness in your story, that I can promise you. Approach your writing gently and lightly, and even the days when your imagination is half-asleep will be less frustrating.

Good luck!

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