**TWR - episode 85**

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You're listening to think right revised episode 85. Hey there, and welcome to think right revised a podcast that offers a peek behind the scenes of productive writing life. I'm your host. Dr. Katie lender. On this episode. I'm offering my final update on how things went for nanowrimo in 2018, and it's kind of a lackluster and dig into what this 4-week.

So I can say that my total word count added to this novel over the past month has been 3604 words. This was done over four different writing sessions in the month. So that was not really consistent. I can tell you that right now and the manuscript went from 34 Pages or about 11,000 257 word. To 46 Pages or twelve thousand nine hundred and sixty-one Words, which is in addition of 1700 roughly words, and you might be thinking well that's different from 3600.

Yes it is because I removed about 2,000 words from the manuscript that were kind of a very detailed outline. So the manuscript went from 34 to 46 pages, but overall there were 3604 words. So you might be thinking that sounds like kind of a failure of this National novel writing month experiment and I'll admit there were parts of me that were like, okay.

This is kind of embarrassing to go on and say especially since the last time I updated I haven't added any words and I spent Thanksgiving weekend really resting and doing some other work but deciding kind of not to dive into this and I had thought maybe of trying to do kind of a last push in the last couple of days and.

Just was not something that could be a priority for me given what else is in my schedule but then I remembered I'm like this is feeling kind of familiar and I remembered a post that I had written in July of 2016 about my attempts to work on a novel and I wanted to read it to you because it's actually very similar in terms of how I'm feeling right now.

So you can find this I will link to it in the show notes, but you can find this on my blog. It's called a 2016 goal. Hashtag fail. 2016 was supposed to be the year of the novel for me. I was going to see if after writing to nonfiction academic books. I had a book-length fiction story inside. Just waiting to get out.

The goal was mostly experimental. I'd been toying with a couple novel ideas for a long time ever since I finished my bachelor's in English lit and creative writing and I've even done a couple nanowrimo Sprint's over the years to see how far I could get with initial drafts when I started 2016. I thought this could be the year to get one finished.

I wanted to know. Fiction writing with something that I liked as much as I enjoyed my non-fiction writing experiences. I began in January in Earnest with 10,000 words by the end of the month. This would be easy. I thought just write a certain number of words each month. And before you know, it goal accomplished 10,000 words a month equals a hundred and twenty thousand word by Year's End definitely a solid amount for a first draft.

Even if it's not polished Pros in my novel drafts folder. I've started a murder mystery a mystery of a missing person a contemporary romance and a young adult mystery paranormal Story. The most any of them has is. Words, but most are around the 5,000 to 10,000 word bark. In other words. I usually get to the point where plotting and character development gets hard and then I stop.

Now that it's July the halfway point of the year. I'm going to call this goal a fail not because it would be impossible to still accomplish but more importantly because I don't want to accomplish it in the time that I have left what I realized this year is that novel writing requires more attention than what I can currently give it.

It can't be done in one day a month or several Sprint's throughout the year. At least it can't be done by me that way. Novel writing for me needs to be a nearly daily practice. It needs to be something that can consume my brain and creativity and unfortunately, there are other things that are taking up that space right now.

I've done a lot of other writing and creative work this year revisions from a new book a successful Grant proposal a couple other unsuccessful Grant proposals three collaborative chapter drafts the start of a peer-reviewed article some research reporting regular tweeting personal journaling notes for a new book idea and I started blogging a bit more.

I'm also using some of my creative juices on a podcast project. The rest of the year will see at least one peer-reviewed Journal article draft two more large Grant proposals and the preparation of several conference presentations. In other words, my writing and creative life is too full right now to add a novel that could be written in a way that I would feel proud of the idea of a novel shouldn't be idealized.

It might never get done. But it is too important to try to slot in this important project just anywhere that it can fit to be sure novels you get written in the nooks and crannies of many people's lives, but my brains nooks and crannies are currently overflowing. So I'm calling it halfway through the year.

This is my 2016 goals fail. I'm taking this goal off my plate for the rest of the year and focusing my energies elsewhere, maybe next year or some years from now. I'll turn back to that novel drafts folder and pick up an idea and run with it. I know it's not an impossible task. It's just a task that can be committed to right now.

When I write a novel. I don't want it to be something I just Dabble. Fiction writing should be taken as seriously as all my other writing. It should be front and center given those requirements and thinking it might be my retirement project. Okay. So in many ways that post is exactly how I feel right now at the end of this month.

It's like I had completely forgotten that I had made this attempt at working on a novel and it's a lot of other things on my plate and like I say on this post, I don't think that's impossible. But it definitely explains why I was I was able to add some words, but maybe not as many as I would have originally hoped.

And if you remember from my first Nano remote post I had set my number relatively small instead of 50,000 words. I was thinking maybe 10,000 so I have to say I'm pretty happy that I added 3600. I don't think that's anything to kind of turn away from but obviously it's not kind of a higher number as it could be but it does make me think a lot about how creative writing is different than academic writing and there is kind of this imagination muscle that needs to be flexed when.

In that creative writing work that I don't think it's the same muscles that you're flexing with academic writing at least not the kind of academic writing that I do. So that's something that I've been kind of thinking about. I think it would be fun and at some point in the future and I'm not going to commit to it now, but to take a class on creative writing which I have done in the past and has been a really good experience to have different exercises.

That would be I would be kind of exposed to and to do like little Snippets here and there and I remember the creative writing courses. I took in when I was in college that was one of the most fun things if you'd be asked to write a scene or you'd be given a prompt and have to respond to it. And in some ways I feel like that's kind of training your brain to kind of flex that creative muscle.

And so that's something I'm kind of toying with as something that could be kind of fun to assign myself different things over kind of a consistent period of time and see if that builds up into something that would be added to one of these novel drafts that I have. So some of the things that I'm that I'm kind of taking away from this experience is.

You know, I think I'm kind of the queen of adding one more thing to my plate even when things are already full and there was a lot going on this month between the Conference travel and other writing projects that I'm trying to get off my plate before the end of 2018. I did have a book to book manuscript actually edits added to my plate during this window one for my.

My co-authored book on alternative academic careers and then the second edited collection that I've been working on. I also received the red lines for that this month so adding it all that stuff kind of at the same time where I thought that November was going to be kind of a clear plate month that I be able to kind of devote to this and it ended up not being the case.

So the other thing I think that it is a helpful reminder and this post from 2016 is definitely. Shows that I've been thinking about this for quite some time. Is that goals change and that's okay and it's not a failure to say I cannot prioritize this right now and especially for something that's experimental.

That's meant to be fun. I really kind of refused throughout this month to feel guilty about this project and when I couldn't get to it, I just kind of checked in with myself about the reason why I wasn't getting to it and sometimes it. Because I had to prioritize another writing project that had a deadline or I just wasn't getting enough sleep and that's why I wanted to prioritize that and they were all good reasons.

And I think that that's something that is important to keep in mind with any goal that you feel like is kind of going off the rails. Is it maybe just not the right time for it? And that's okay. It doesn't mean that you're not going to get around to it. It doesn't mean that it's not important. And I think best of all it doesn't mean that you yourself are kind of failing in some way because you're not moving it Forward oftentimes.

I think there are other things that come up in our lives that kind of do real things and we have to respond and deal with that. So how you choose to deal with that and the kind of self talk that you give to yourself in those moments is very important and I think with writing projects in particular spiraling down kind of a.

A guilt spiral doesn't really motivate us to get writing again. And I want to stay really positive with these projects. I want them to feel fun. I want them to be something that I want to return to in the future in order to do that. I can't kind of, you know, have negative self talk to myself about how this went or that I've obviously not meant to be a fiction writer or you know, any of those things that could potentially come out of this instead.

I'm just kind of talking it up too. Well, It was a busy writing month and it wasn't what I thought it would be but I kind of rolled with the punches got a lot of other writing work done added 3604 words that wouldn't otherwise be in that novel and also had a fun time revisiting it and reading through the you know, 30-ish plus pages that were already there and kind of got reacquainted with something that I definitely hope to finish in the future.

So that is my final update for National novel writing month in 2018 in a couple of years. I'll probably swing back to it and you'll have to remind me of exactly what happens every two years. I try to write a novel and I don't always succeed but at some point in the future, I'm sure it will happen.

In the month of December. I'm really excited to start to talk about plans for 2019 writing and also some overviews of accomplishments of 2018 writing. So I hope you will join me for that and looking forward also to another life work QA episode coming up later this week. Thanks so much for listening.

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