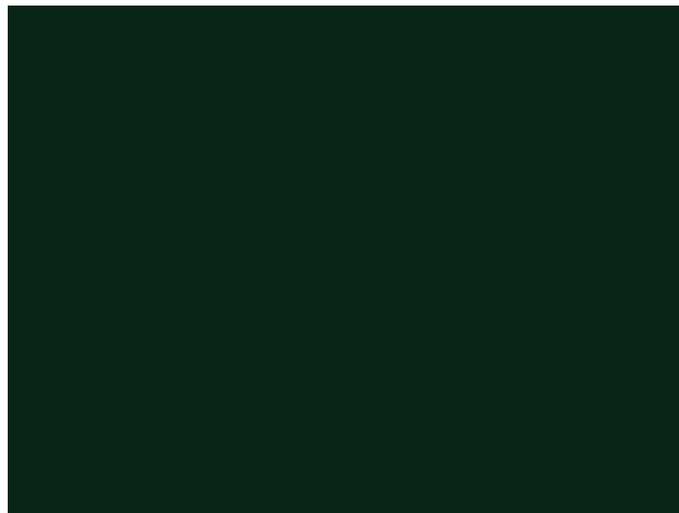


## Na-NOPE-WriMo

[National Novel Writing Month](#) is one of those challenges I look longingly at every year, saying "Someday...someday, my love, we'll be together." I adore writing challenges. Testing my limits as an writer/artist is one of my favorite past times, as my friends will attest - probably with a lot of sighing and eye-rolling. But I was in school for a long-ass time, so the only time I've ever done NaNoWriMo was during a leave of absence in 2009. I won.

When I realized in late October this year that I would actually have time to do NaNoWriMo again, I talked myself into it in about thirty seconds.

And then NaNoWriMo actually started. I wrote up my novel summary, opened the document for it in Scrivener, and uh...NOPE.



This isn't gonna work for me for three reasons:

1. Since I started freelancing, I've been falling hard into the trap of tying my self-worth to the projects I'm putting out, and doing a big pass/fail writing challenge like this is only going to make that worse.
2. I get incredibly single-minded on projects like this when rushed, to the point of neglecting important human things like sleep, food, and chores, and I still haven't recovered from the Dinosaurs With Jobs binge. I did 99% of the work for that book in six weeks and then immediately dove into prep for an art show I'm doing in mid-November. My kitchen looks like a tornado full of frat boys hit it. I can't reach the microwave, and the stovetop is buried. Half my meals in the past few days have been Halloween candy. **HUMAN BEINGS WERE NOT MEANT TO LIVE LIKE THIS.**

3. I didn't give myself enough prep time to dive into this novel right now. I need way more

daydreaming time to get into the story. I often neglect the daydreaming part of my writing

process because it doesn't feel like DOING anything, but it's kinda vital, since most of my

pre-writing happens in my head when I'm slacking off and watching TV.

And y'know, I *know* I can write a novel in a month - that in itself is not an interesting challenge to me anymore. Hell, last November, when I was working on my graduate thesis, I reworked a 125,000 word novel in 18 days. And I did it without any pep talks, while maintaining a day job, a social life, and two Thanksgivings. (UPHILL IN THE SNOW! BOTH WAYS!) I am capable of that shit. But I still want to do a writing challenge of some sort in November, for Hufflepuff reasons.

Or, I guess, a *writer* challenge. Because for me, the hard parts of being a writer are not the writing itself. Words are hard but doable. The part I've never gotten the hang of is striking a balance between projects and life. So I'm gonna focus on that this November instead.

Here's my new November writer challenge: **I will spend this month learning to better balance my personal and creative life.** If I get even a little bit better at this in a sustainable way, I'll

consider it a win.

More specific goals for the month:

- I'll unfuck my entire damn apartment and start training myself into better laundry and dishwashing habits.
- I'm making a giant to-do list of little self-care assignments and grown-up tasks and will be checking at least one off per day.
- I'll figure out better ways to work my fannish writing projects into my everyday creative life without them eclipsing or getting eclipsed by my original writing projects. I'm aiming to write, edit, and post two short fanfics I've been working on and start another long one I've been toying around with. (The art side of my fannish life doesn't need this sort of focus. Fanart just *happens*.)
- I'm going to move forward on my thesis novel, actually revising my damn query letter and sending it out again. I've been stagnant in this area for months for fear of rejection, and it's time for that to end.
- I'm still going to write the novel I chose for NaNoWriMo, but I'm aiming for 10,000 words - a solid start that I can build on over time instead of binging.

I'll do a write-up of how this went when the month is up. Right now, I'm off to face the kitchen mess. If you don't hear from me on Twitter in two hours, call the coast guard.