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The Secret Life of a Would-Be Novelist

by Media Admin • May 13, 2020

(Damn You, Noxious Virus, Causing Me More Work When You Know How I Hate to Put Off Novel Writing)



By Pam J. Hecht
NSNC Member

I have a problem that will likely prevent me from finishing this column, which is also, frankly, a flagrant cry for help. In fact, I will probably ask you to finish it. And it's not just because of the recent pandemic, which is a little embarrassing. It's because while I'm writing this, I'm also texting my aunt, watching a YouTube video of Prince, and wondering about lunch.

In fact, an unlicensed medical "professional" who may have been myself has diagnosed me, after hours of online research, with a rather severe case of dawdle-itis accompanied by mild scatter-brainism. This analysis has taken a good long while because as I'm reading studies about the procrastination habits of Costa Rican spider monkeys, a voice in my head is reminding me that I have to check my email for the sixteenth time that hour, launder my unmentionables, and return a pair of shoes by mail.

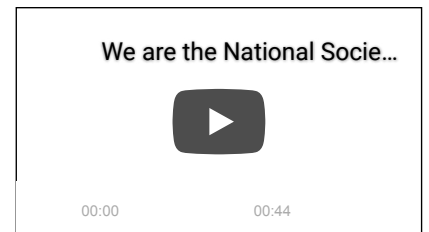
The other day, as I was shopping online for an extra-large coffee mug that tells you what time it is in a small village north of Belfast, I was thinking about the next thing I wanted to google: the indigenous people of India. Maybe it was the masala chai tea I had at lunch. After breakfast on a given day, I may be found looking into the egg industry and considering farming my own eggs. This is partly because I feel bad for the chickens and, also, to avoid doing real work.

Sadly, I've been forced at times to put these important writing avoidance activities on hold, due to the mysterious, possibly extraterrestrial life force sucking up our toilet paper supply. In fact, I recently had to spend several desperate hours online to purchase something a step up from notebook paper or tree leaves for delicate bathroom business.

Before starting on my latest writing project, there are no less than twenty-three things I have to do first, fourteen of which include food and beverages. Then, there is that bookshelf that needs to be alphabetized by author, no, by title, no, by subject. But wait, I have to clean the shelf first. We're out of spray cleaner, of course, so I'm off to the store because this is a dire need in the fight against viral germs. Or, maybe I should first see what Consumer Reports has to say about the latest and best COVID-busting household cleaners on the market before ordering one online that will arrive in exactly one and a half days (unless it's held up because everyone else is also cleaning their bookshelves). Perfect!

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AMAZON SMILE

Because now I can finally get down to business.

After I have written and rewritten one of the best sentences in the history of world literature almost exactly forty-seven times, I will need to tackle that cluttered coffee table, call my mother, and bead a necklace for someone's birthday. Required social distancing means I now have to hurl it onto the birthday girl's front lawn and run screaming, back to the safety of my car. (Of course, I have to recover by taking time to enjoy a bottle of wine and a secret stash of half-melted chocolate hidden under the front seat, which also detracts from writing time.)

The bottom line is that I could possibly have a novel finished if I didn't absolutely have to paint a bedroom, plant tomatoes, and, because of this dang virus, figure out how to cope with the added time and inclination to avoid novel writing. I had an idea for a bestseller the other day that rivals Harry Potter, I'm sure of it. As soon as I've finished organizing my desk drawers, bathing the dog, learning to live without luxuries like toilet paper, and writing this, I'll get to it.



Pam J. Hecht is a journalist, instructor, mother of two almost-but-not-quite-grown children, and author of a syndicated parenting humor column. If she was alone in the woods and saw a bear, the first thing she would do is make a joke about it. Then she would run like hell. When she's not working or dreaming of becoming a famous fiction writer, she enjoys making fun of everybody and everything, including herself. You can find her online at www.pamjhecht.com.

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The Secret Life of a Would-Be Novelist



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Two in Chat Know a Lot About That (Book Contracts)



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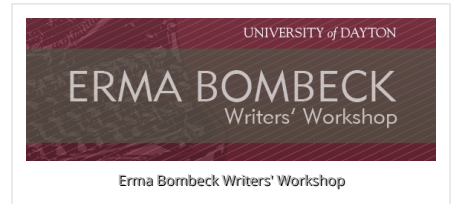


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