**Molly Perry**

This project has been going amazingly well! I thought it’d be a struggle to find time to just sit down and write but it really hasn’t been to difficult of a task. I’ve been lacking inspiration for writing as of late but I have recently been going on long hikes and just stopping while I’m walking and taking some time to write. I think being outside in nature helps me a lot, as cliche as it sounds, and it really helps me in my writing process. I have completed my first chapter and am quickly moving on to the second chapter.

Though finding time to write has been seemingly pretty easy and simple for me as of late, it took me a tremendously long time to get to reach that point. Writing an entire book, though immensely enjoyable, is quite tedious and time consuming. Not only the act of writing the book, but the sheer fact that the entire process is being done completely on my own has definitely been a challenge for me. I know I have Steph as a sounding board, but obviously writing is an extremely solitary experience and exercise.

As I’ve said in my last journal, I am terrible at time managing, and I have been my entire life. I always thought it was just a part of who I was, and that I, somehow, had to find a way to live with it and accept it. I have always wanted and dreamed to be more organized, but I never seem to get to the ultimate level of organization I want to achieve. (And eventually, it comes back to haunt me down the road.)

I of course believed this wholeheartedly for most of my life, but I’ve finally realized this year that the feeling I was having about myself was nothing but a preconceived fallacy. I realized that writing an entire novel wasn’t something I could “just wing”. Writing a novel isn’t something you can just whip up at midnight, sleep deprived and groggy. Writing, especially to the extent of a multi-chapter novel, can not just be things you mix up and try and make work. You as the author NEED to plan it out. There needs to be characters, an enthralling plot line, development, symbols, every little piece someone could think of that goes into a great work of literature. This epiphany lead me to a greater goal. Though I do despise planning, I began to set up outlines for chapters within my novel. I began to create storyboards and draw pictures and sketch outlines for who the characters are within the story. I began to create a description for the town my character is living in and generate some local history about the little town in the south my little girl is living in. This process of writing and planning has been extremely beneficial and made the act of writing out the chapters better than I ever even could have imagined.

After getting over a huge hump of severe writer’s block in the dead of winter, I received a lovely email from Steph asking to meet to discuss my first chapter. I was a bit nervous being as I had never had anyone outside of my family read my work, but was overly enthused to hear about what she had to say about something I had poured my heart and soul into. I met with Steph on Sunday at Cosi , and as we sat and chit chatted about college, our summer plans, etc., we began to dive into my work. She began to speak about my writing style,

saying that she absolutely adored and loved my first chapter. She also added that she was extremely impressed with my work and said that I have a very mature writing style.

But the best way to tell if a mentor is adequate is not on the things the praise you for, but rather the things they tell you to improve upon. Steph did start of the meeting with high appraisal of my work, but she also wasn’t afraid and gave me some very helpful critique on things I need to fix within the story. I jotted down notes as she spoke and everything she told me was extremely insightful and one hundred percent helpful. Not only did she offer suggestions, she even helped me edit my work grammatically, which I am extremely inept at doing.

All in all the meeting with her discussing the very first chapter of my book went extremely well and at the end of it we decided to set up our next meeting time. We scheduled it for next month, most likely around the 3rd of February. We set a precedent that when I arrive to this next meeting, I am supposed to be having my 2nd and 3rd chapters completed. This is so we can discuss and see how the story is developing. I am so happy that Steph is my mentor, and I am so excited to see what the writing future has in store for me!