

Endless September

written by Holly

September 29, 2007

By Holly Lisle

So here's the deal. I told you all about the Jatol crash that sent me scurrying for a new host on September 4th. And you knew a little about getting the site to the new host, and up and running, which took a few days to resolve, and how the server I was on at Jatol went away right after I got all my stuff off of it.

And then I let you know about IDevAffiliate and how that program had proven to be insecure, with files that were vulnerable to spammers and phishers who were able to inject their garbage into my site and use it to send people spam e-mails and phishing traps.

So I was going to have to dump it and replace it, which I did. And the new program is a zillion times better.

But there was more. There was a lot more, and I can only tell you about it now.

See, my site carried all its weaknesses from Jatol to Downtownhost. In the many years I was on Jatol, NO ONE ever succeeded in cracking my site. This was not through any brilliance on my part, because there were a bunch of things I was doing wrong, though I didn't know it. It was because Jatol was run by tech-savvy guys who kept their servers locked down tight.

As soon as I landed on Downtownhost, my site was cracked. I asked for help from tech support, and was told that I needed to change permissions on all 777 folders to 755, and that would fix the problem. So Margaret, bless her, spent three days of her time helping me find and test and fix every folder

and file on the site that had a 777 permission. Every single one.

In the meantime, a great guy who does security checked out my site and said that although the 777 folders were certainly a problem, Downtownhost's servers had specific weaknesses, which he listed, that made the site vulnerable no matter what I did to my folder permissions.

Worried, I passed this information on to DTH's tech support, and was told, in hurt tones, that the security guy didn't know what he was talking about, that he was using old software to test the site, and that my whole problem was that I had insecure folders and needed to fix them.

I did. But I was not reassured by the response I got.

And then, when Margaret and I had done everything humanly possible to ensure site security from our end, the spam email scheme and the Skype phishing schemes popped up again. Inside one of the supposedly secure 755 folders. Which meant that the security guy was right, the site-crackers were exploiting weaknesses in the server set-up and not in the file folders, and I needed to move the site. Again.

We informed DTH of the problem, and they may or may not have fixed it by now. They were, I think, working on it, because the server my site was on went crazy for a day or two. But you do not run a site that matters to you and take a pat on the head and a "There, there, this is your fault," as an acceptable answer when you request technical support, or when you provide data from a competent source suggesting that the problem is not, in fact, all your fault, and that your host needs to get on the ball and help straighten things out. Don't get me wrong. I really liked the DTH guys. They were friendly and they got back to me quickly when I had problems. They just didn't get back to me usefully.

I had already received one notice from my domain name

registrar that my domain name would be shut down within 24 hours if I didn't get the phishing thing off of it. This was not an issue I could afford to mess around with.

I shut down the store again, because I didn't want anyone's records to get lost in the move. I shut down the weblogs and the affiliate program. Same reason. And the site wonkiness? That was me heading for higher ground with better walls.

The last few days, I have been frantically moving the site. Again. I have safely arrived, the site has resolved all the way to my new host, and I'm happy to note that, though the phishers and spammers are still trying to get into the site, they're all failing miserably.

Go, TigerTech. And Margaret, who has put in an ungodly number of hours helping me get here, and get things up and running. There are still some bugs. I'm still fixing missing sidebars and broken links. If you land on one, please let me know.

But here's an official welcome to the new place. Glad we all made it.

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Moderately Grand Reopening Sale

written by Holly
September 29, 2007
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Yesterday through the 30th, everything in the e-book shop is

10% off, to celebrate the fact that we're up and running again.

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Wonkiness

written by Holly
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The site works, it doesn't work, it works, it doesn't work. I know. I apologize. Tomorrow is Wednesday. Things should be better.

If not, then by Thursday for sure.

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Site issues

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I'm having some site issues, and Margaret and I are working in the background on security. I've shut the shop and am closing the affiliate program and affiliate board and weblogs so we don't lose any data while we get this taken care of. I

apologize for the inconvenience. I'll bring everything back up as quickly as possible.

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At Last, Good News

written by Holly
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I heard from my Tor editor today that HAWKSPAR will be coming out at full length in one volume. The odds of Tor wanting REDBIRD, the third stand-alone in the world, are somewhere between slim and none, but at least the second book will be right, not ruined.

I'm very, very happy about this news.

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A freebie, a new book, and an update

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The Freebie



If you click the image to your left, you'll download a copy of the Plot Clinic Intro.

The Intro is 54 pages long, and contains:

Introduction: What Is Plotting (And Why Is It So Hard?) 3

- Plot Is... 3
- Where Plots Are Born 4
- A word of warning on dealing with the subconscious 6
- How Plots Grow 7
- The Seven Basic Plots (Plus A Mermaid) 9
- Plotting Is A Process, Not An Act 10
- How To Use This Book 12
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- What Youâ€™ll Need 15
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- Tool 1: Question 41
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- Tool 2: Twist 46
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 - 2. Exercise: Twist 49

It's a good-sized chunk of the book and should let readers know whether the Plot Clinic is something that would help their writing or not. However, it's also branded with the username of the HollyShop Affiliate who's giving it away—in this case, that fun-loving guy, Sample Affiliate—and each link in the e-book links to an affiliate link. If you're an affiliate, you can use the affiliate software to download your personalized e-book with your links inside to give away as a

free download on your site or from your weblog. These take a lot of time for me to make (for you, they'll take about ten seconds to download), so I'll be adding new ones slowly. This one is ready to go, though.

If you want to give away this ebook, login to your affiliate account, then go to Affiliate Tools →Viral PDFs.

The New Book



I'm delighted to note that I've added a new book to the site: Ann Angel's Freedom, by Katarina Gerlach and Anke Waldmann. This is a very good English translation done by the German authors—excellent historical fiction, wonderfully researched and beautifully written. I highly recommended the book some time back, and am delighted to be able to sell the e-book version through Shop.HollyLisle.com. I've also linked to the print versions.

I hope you'll pick up a copy in one version or another. You'll love the story.

The Update

Finally, for the rest of this week, and (because of the second phisher mess requiring me to rearrange a great deal of the site today to prevent a recurrence) probably some of next week, I'll be adding advertising to the affiliate program. No writing for me.

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Changes in the Affiliate Program

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Added later: There was a link bug in the login link. I've fixed it. {beating head on wall} You should be able to join now.



I apologize for posting more on this, but the affiliate program is a big deal for me, because I need help getting the word out on the books I and the other HollyShop authors have written—I want to have help with sales, recommendations from people who have genuinely enjoyed the books and found them useful, and I want to make sure that the folks who have made those recommendations and have sold the books are compensated promptly and fairly.

I got all the earnings from the iDevAffiliate program transferred over to the new program. So I started looking around for places to list the program, and found out that, the way I have it set up, it is unlistable. It's considered an MLM, or multi-level marketing program, and MLMs have a bad reputation.

Now, I and the other writers agreed to pay up to 30% of what we make on the books we sell to affiliates who make sales for

us. I had this divided so that you would get 15% of the sale price (minus PayPal fees) for direct sales, 10% for sales by people who signed up through you, and 5% for sales by people who signed through people who signed up through you, because clearly I want you to make money by selling the books, but I also want you to make money by referring the program to other people who will also sell the books.

Our objective as the writers of the books is to have people find and read them, and we can't do that without advertising, and, bluntly, we can't afford traditional advertising. A classified ad in Writer's Digest costs hundreds of dollars, and may or may not deliver results. We can't pay for maybe. But we can pay for results.

So here's the deal.

I've eliminated the third tier. You'll get paid **20%** of the sale price—(cover price at time of purchase, minus the PayPal fee, which is 2.9% of the cover price +.30, or 3.9%+.30 for sales outside the US) for every book you sell for us. You'll get a \$10 bonus for signing up, which will be added to your first payment, which you get when you've earned \$10. So your first payment will be at least \$20. You'll get an additional 10% of the sale price for any sale made by someone who signs up to the program through your link, for as long as they're an affiliate. No third tier.

That's the whole program. We, the writers, will still be paying you, the affiliates, for every book you sell for us (including books you buy for yourself through your affiliate link), but you'll make more right off the top, and the money will add up faster. And you still have an incentive to sign up new affiliates. *Please sign up new affiliates.*) On a single \$9.95 book sold to someone in the US, you'll make \$1.92. ($9.95 - .33 \text{ PayPal fee} = \$9.62 \times .20 = \$1.92$). If someone you've signed up sells it, you'll make \$0.96. About a buck.

And you will have helped us—Zette, Sheila, Elizabeth, me, and new HollyShop author Katherine Kolata.

For those of you who are NOT affiliates, but who have a weblog or website, or use e-mail, or have any friends you think would like the books we have in the e-book store, please join. We really need your help.

Thank you.

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Affiliate Update.... ARRGH!

written by Holly
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Hi, again. Your friendly neighborhood bug-hunter here.

Margaret fixed the too-short username issue. I fixed the “can’t log in without a referral number” issue.

I’ve fixed the link to the affiliate program, so if you hit the affiliate button in the navbar, you’ll go to the right place.

Margaret fixed the stuck Affiliate Email program. **HOWEVER**, in the meantime, I’d tried a number of times to send e-mails, and they all evidently lined up in the queue. And when it started working, everybody got four or five. All slightly different.

The last one is correct.

I’m very, very sorry for the system barf into your e-mail.

Bouncer, Goodbye

written by Holly
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I got Bouncer in 1990, from a friend who had a long-haired orange tabby who'd been hanging out with a neighborhood Siamese. The unnamed kitten came home with my then-boyfriend (later my second husband) from the friend's house, having sat in the other seat watching out the window for most of the fifty-mile trip, and having not complained about the car or the movement. Bouncer was a mellow kitten; he moved in, made instant friends with the other cat in the house, my pedigreed Persian, Fafhrd (named for Fritz Leiber's wonderful hero), and chose me as his person. He became my writing buddy, my friend, and my companion.

He was with me when I wrote my first published novel, *Fire in the Mist*, and he was with me through every book since, frequently curled up under my desk where I could rub his tummy with a foot, or where I could rest my feet on him while I typed.

If you read *Minerva Wakes*, you know him. He was Murp. He was the cat who would come when called, from wherever he might have been. I remember whistling and yelling "Bouncer!" when he

was young, and waiting for a minute, and seeing him sail over the chain-link fence in the back yard without even stopping on the top. He would gallop up to me and careen to a stop, just to see what I wanted. He didn't walk or trot up and down stairs. He bounced. Hence the name.

He gardened with me, walking through but never on my plantings. It sounds stupid, but if I sniffed the flowers, he'd sniff the flowers, or at least stick his nose in them to see what was so interesting. He'd try to play board games with the kids, which lead to occasional wails from de-housed Monopoly players and his ejection from the bedroom in question. Where we were, he was, and he was there for all of us. But I was his person.

When the kids and I were on our own, he did his best to step in as provider, bringing me the back halves of neighborhood squirrels on several occasions. Thankfully, at some point he realized that we were doing all right, foodwise, and he stopped that. He was the inventor of squirrel-foot tea, a one-time invention that the other cats, by then Fafhrd, Grey Mouser, Winnie-the-Pooh, Tigger, and Hrognar, all loved.

He was not without his vices. He loved pizza, and was capable of procuring his own. He'd jump to the top of the fridge (which in that old house stood away from any counters or other launch pads—he was a tremendous athlete in his younger days), and open Domino's pizza boxes, and eat the one or two slices we always had left over, all except for the rim of crust around the end. His favorite was pepperoni.

He was a bit of a slob. Having started life as an indoor/outdoor cat with an adventurous streak, he had a sort of Guy Thing going. He didn't mind being dirty until one of us noticed and brushed him. He was, in his later years, an indoor cat, and pals and nap buddies with our youngest cat, Spenser (named for Robert Parker's hero), who is as fastidious as Bouncer was messy. Spenser spent time keeping Bouncer groomed

and his face clean. I never saw Bouncer return the favor.

Bouncer was a comfort through two divorces, a friend to three children who were sometimes clumsy but who never even knew he had claws because those claws never came out, even by accident. Even when the youngest, as a toddler, fell on top of him or picked him up by his hind quarters once.

He was a chatty guy but without the shrill Siamese voice, who was waiting outside the bedroom door when I came out in the morning and who followed me around the house, talking to me, throughout every single day. Even yesterday, even when he was failing so badly and was having a hard time walking, when he was down to weighing almost nothing and it hurt to see him that way, he met me at the door in the morning, and he greeted me at the front door when we came home from shopping. I rubbed his tummy and he purred.

And then I came out to help Matt start supper, and saw him under the table. He was already gone. It had been quick. Quiet. He was there for seventeen years, and then all of a sudden he wasn't.

We buried him last night with a favorite toy and something of mine, and we stood by the grave, and I couldn't think of anything to say but, "He was a good cat. And a good friend."

We ordered a pepperoni pizza from Domino's in his honor—it's the first time in years we've had one, because we didn't need it and neither did he. But last night we opened the box, and I remembered catching him on top of the fridge carefully working the box top open in order to get his prize, and I had to smile.

I'll miss rubbing his tummy, miss hearing his cheerful greeting in the morning, miss talking to him as I do the laundry or the dishes and having him talk back. Mornings will be colder and books lonelier to write without him.

I hope there's a place with a sunny window sill for him to stretch out on somewhere, with birds and bugs and breezes full of interesting smells. I hope there are trees to climb and roofs to thunder across at full speed. I know I'll think of him that way.

Mostly, though, I hope I was as good a friend to him as he was to me.

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Affiliates: Everything's live

written by Holly

September 29, 2007

By Holly Lisle

Well, everything's live, but the admin newsletter e-mail isn't working, so the letters I've tried to send letting you know all this haven't gone through. I've been at this all day and night, and yesterday, and the day before yesterday, so maybe we can get people back up and running via the weblog.

The new affiliate login is here:
<http://shop.hollylisle.com/jamaffiliates/>

If you're an affiliate already, the membership port worked. In all cases but one, your memberships went into the database without change, meaning your usernames and passwords should be the same. (mikaela_l is the exception. Your username is mikaela because underscores don't work in the new program).

Here's the news you should have gotten:

First, I apologize for the disaster with the iDevAffiliate software. If you weren't aware, a site-cracker injected a Skype scam into a folder available due to a weakness in the software, and because iDevAffiliate doesn't support their software (though they claim to), I had to take down the whole program.

However, your commissions and pending bonuses are safe. I'm having to hand-enter them into the software, and expect that this will take me a couple of days, so if you know you have a balance but don't show one yet, please be patient.

I've already re-entered your affiliates, so those of you who had downlines in the previous software have them again. In some cases you'll find you have more affiliates, because there are two tiers of affiliates in this new program.

Second, I am pleased to announce that I've replaced our awful affiliate software with something really, really good. Along with the ads you've had available before, you'll be able to give away free e-books with your name and affiliate link on them. There will also be a pre-built bookstore those of you with websites can drop into its own page. Plus a lot of other goodies.

Your accounts are ready to go, and much to my surprise, I was able to import your account information, with a few minor issues.

Due to an import incompatibility between the two programs, EVERYONE is now from Afghanistan. If you DON'T live in Afghanistan, please mark the country you do live in. I'm basically guessing that would apply to everyone—country codes didn't port.

Please do not add your tax ID to the software. Come tax time, if I need it in order to mail you a 1099, I'll email you and request it. I'd rather not have sensitive information in the database. This means also please delete phone numbers if you

had them in the other program. The only information I really need from you is your name, your user name, your website link (if you have one) and your PayPal address so that I can pay you.

And if you had a first initial instead of a full name, I had to insert (initial) in that line—you can change it to a full name, a nickname, anything but just one initial.

If you forget your password, you can have a new one sent to you. The link is right beneath the Login button.

If you need help figuring out the program, click the question mark button in the top right hand corner to use the system help. To log out, click the X button. There are many, many new features, and I'll take some time to put together information on them.

I don't have ads in yet. I'm working on it.

First, though, I want to get everybody's money straight.

Welcome back. It's better now.

*Cheerfully,
Holly*

—Holly Lisle

<http://shop.hollylisle.com/jamaffiliates/>

Once I get the e-mail working, the letter will go out to everyone who doesn't read the weblog regularly. You'll all get it, too. I apologize. But you'll get a head start.

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