

Crippling A Lesson: An Apple iBookstore Ethical and Practical Issue

written by Holly

June 30, 2012

By Holly Lisle

Decision Made: Thank you to everyone who commented.



**Ethics
and
iBooks**

BEFORE I START:

*I'm going to ask for reader input ONLY from Mac product users who buy books from iBooks. If you don't have a dog in this fight, then no matter what you think about the ethics of this situation, I don't need to know. I am going to make a decision on the availability of one (or maybe more) lessons in this course that will affect **iBooks customers only** based on what I learn here, and I ONLY need to hear from them.*

If you don't buy books from the iBookstore, please DO NOT answer the following question.

THE PROBLEM

I received an email from Apple's iBookstore that **How To Think Sideways—Lesson 6: How to Discover (or Create) Your Story's Market** has been pulled for containing links to a "Competing Website" and that in order to have the lesson put back on sale, I'll have to remove the offending links.

The problem with this, however, is that the links, which are to Amazon.com, are part of the content of the lesson, in which I demonstrate a technique for doing market research into other genres which might be reasonable places to attempt to sell your book along with your planned market (because in some cases your planned market won't pan out, but that doesn't mean there aren't other places that would buy what you've written).

Two examples of my own experience with cross-genre marketing came with the sales of TALYN (started as high fantasy, was sold as fantasy romance) and MIDNIGHT RAIN (started as urban fantasy, was sold as paranormal suspense). THIS IS A COOL TECHNIQUE.

There is NO other site upon which this technique will work. None. Anywhere. It is the combination of unique features and cross-references on the Amazon.com website that allowed me to come up with this technique, and I have linked to the features and sections writers need to do this research.

If I remove the links, I cripple my iBooks reader's access to the technique, and make it more difficult for readers of the iBook version of the lesson to do research that will help them build and maintain their writing careers.

I have also noted, in my usual smartass fashion, that if you happen to be one of those folks who hates Amazon, you can always use their site to gain the knowledge you need to further your career, and then **not buy anything from their site**. Strangely, Amazon did not remove my lesson for that bit

of obvious commentary. Fancy that.

ADDED INFORMATION

Neither Amazon.com nor BarnesAndNoble.com, the other two big distributors where I have placed my lessons, have demanded the removal of any “Competing Website” links from the lessons before they will publish them.

Such links are in the lessons, because I want to give my students meaningful options, and meaningful options require me to link to sources that compete with each other. That’s what OPTIONS are. (Obviously, the lessons are available in their full versions directly from my shop, so writers who usually buy from iBooks, but who hate Amazon or B&N, are not stuck with buying from sites they hate.)

MY POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

I can remove the links from the iBookstore edition, and leave the reader to find his way to Amazon.com and the features it offers for research on his own.

I can remove the links, but add a link to a PDF the reader could download directly from my site that would include the missing links, knowing when I do this that many readers will NOT download the PDF.

I can take a stand against the crippling of the lesson, leave the links in place, make the lesson unavailable on the iBookstore, and hope that iBookstore readers will download either a copy of the cross-platform Kindle app or the cross-platform Nook app, or will come to my site directly, and buy the missing lessons from Amazon, Barnes and Noble, or from my shop.

YOUR INPUT

ONLY IF YOU ARE A CURRENT IBOOKSTORE CUSTOMER: Please copy and paste the following text into the Reply box at the bottom of this page, and then answer the questions.

You don't need to be a potential or current student of the existing course, though if you are, please let me know. I want iBookstore customers' input on receiving iBooks content that is incomplete, crippled, or intentionally inconvenient compared to versions offered on other platforms.

Copy and paste the text between the lines:

=====

APPLE DEVICE(S) ON WHICH I READ iBOOKS:

YEARS AS AN APPLE CUSTOMER:

WHAT I THINK YOU SHOULD DO:

WHY:

=====

Thank you for taking the time to help me figure out my response on this issue.

ADDED SUNDAY, JULY 1, 11:30 AM: CENSORSHIP INFO

Guys, this is NOT a censorship issue. ONLY GOVERNMENTS can censor. They make it illegal for individuals to say certain things or present certain content, and if you do, you either:

- go to prison
- end up in a reeducation camp/concentration camp, or
- are killed

What Apple is doing is NOT CENSORSHIP. I have the option to work with the company, to work around the company, or to tell

the company to go stick its head where the sun don't shine, and I will suffer no repercussions from doing this beyond minor financial ones. **I AM NOT BEING CENSORED.**

Apple is doing nothing more than requiring all products on its site to meet standards it sets. This is not illegal. This is not immoral. It's just business.

It IS bonehead stupid "Business By Idiots" business—and this process is **precisely** why iBooks has such thin content, and does so little business for me compared to Kindle, Nook, and even my personal shop—but Apple has as much right to be stupid and act against its own best interests as any other company.

(The fact that this topic has generated so only four responses in the 24 hours since it first aired—compared to topics like DRM which generated not only hundreds of replies to the site, but also hundreds more directly to my email—demonstrates to you how effectively Apple has made its iBookstore irrelevant.)

The ethical issue is MINE.

I am unwilling to sell a crippled product on one platform (compared to full working versions on other platforms) in order to make sales I cannot reach otherwise, but I know there are some folks in some countries for whom the Apple iBooks store is their ONLY way to get these lessons. I'm looking for direction from iBooks customers on the issues of buying crippled products, and I'm waiting to hear back from the folks on my mailing list, many of whom will receive an email on this issue tomorrow.

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Dancing the Proofreading Dance for HTTS

written by Holly

June 30, 2012

By Holly Lisle

Have just this instant finished the proofreading on the LAST of the 29 lessons of **How To Think Sideways**. In a second, I'm going to send off the proofing sheets to Booknook.biz, but right now, I'm dancing around the office.

Happy, happy, that's me.

With the proofing done, I can move on to setting up pages (in my shop, and on Amazon and B&N) for the lessons.

After that, where the HTTS Direct is concerned, I'll need to do the print versions.

After that, I'll go through this same process with **How To Revise Your Novel** (with fewer lessons and fewer handouts, and a smaller, specialized audience, this will be a smaller production all around).

Happy, happy. Don't want to list everything that comes after that. Just want to dance a bit, at passing an enormous milestone, and now seeing it through the rear-view mirror.

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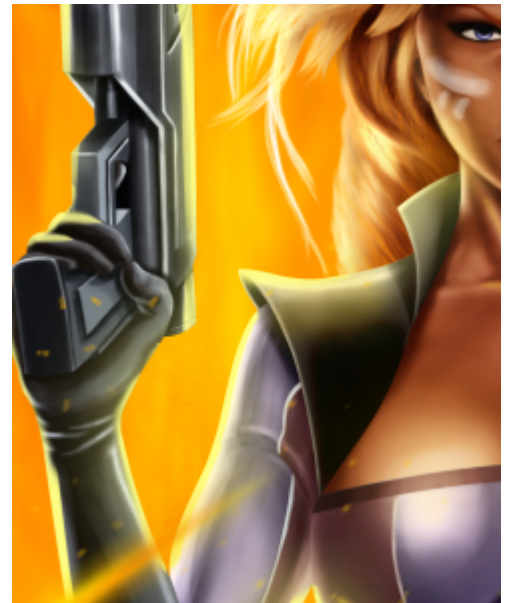
SNIPPET: Warpaint (or How Cadence Drake woke me at 3 AM)

written by Holly

June 30, 2012

By Holly Lisle

So there I was, sleeping, and into my mind crept the image of a glowing map, across which stains of blood slowly crept.



As dreams go, it wasn't much, except that it woke me out of a sound sleep at 3AM, and told me something I'd desperately needed to know about Cady, the world of WARPAINT, and how they found out...well...what they found out.

I'm not going explain what this is. If you've read **Hunting the Corrigan's Blood**, you'll probably extrapolate. If you haven't, you'll still get the gist of this.

(And for anyone interested in WARPAINT'S progress, this morning's session put me over 18,000 words out of 80,000 total.)

NOTICE: This material is copyrighted, unchecked raw first draft, probably buggy. Please don't post typos or corrections (I do my edits at the end of the first draft of the project

and will not see your comments when I revise). This material may not survive to publication. Do not quote or repost anywhere or in any format. Thanks.

The map appeared across the forward viewports, suspended in the air, glimmering. Every known point in settled space was a glowing pale blue dot, and new blue dots kept blinking into existence, filling in black areas, spreading the map outward.

The map was a beautiful thing. It reminded me of dropping into the atmosphere above a big surface city at night, watching the lights glittering beneath me, knowing that those lights were the proof of human existence, of civilization, of the countless little comforts and joys that made life not just tolerable but good. Little red dots winked in and out across all of settled space, but in the first minute, two minutes, three minutes, nothing stuck.

At minute four, though, something changed. A red ring appeared around one pinpoint out near the dark edge of the map. And stayed.

And was joined by another, also out along the rim, this time a semicircle because nothing lay beyond the point of light. And then a third.

By minute five, fourteen clear circles hung out along the periphery, limned out by multiple simultaneous connected hits, and I could see the sketchy shapes of red circles building around other settled areas closer to the civilized core.

Around me, I heard indrawn breath. From my own throat, a tiny whimper.

The map looped, and once again space was clean, marked by tiny flashes of red that that were coincidental. Or were related, but not yet definitive.

“Don’t make me watch it again,” the statistician begged.

"Please."

I understood. We had our proof that everything we loved had been invaded by a disease that was killing it. We were watching the death of not just one world, but proof of the danger to every point of human life, everywhere.

"Shipcom, stop loop, move map to final second of minute five and freeze."

We stared at the end of everything.

Eventually I found my voice. "How does that match your numbers?"

"Six months may be optimistic," one of the mathematicians whispered.

"We're done," the statistician said. "If someone had understood what this was the second it was invented, if someone had created countermeasures then, it could have been stopped." He turned to me. "You want a timeframe?"

I nodded. "We have to know."

"Please have the shipcom split out the final year-four frame, and the final year-five frame, and overlay them, and have the year-four redlines changed to green."

The ship said, "Captain, do you approve the request?" The statistician jumped.

"Yes," I said, and told the folks around me, "This ship has the best AI available. As long as we're in emergency lockdown, it won't even get you a glass of water without my approval...but it will understand your requests, catalogue them, and run them past me. And I have it set to listen to and record everything everywhere."

I'd had bad experiences born from assuming I knew who was on

my ship, from assuming my security was sufficient. I didn't make assumptions anymore.

The split maps overlay each other. The contrast from year four to year five was terrifying.

The statistician waved a hand over the map, muttering. I realized he was scanning the data points manually, which made sense since I had direct data access locked down.

He tapped his wristcom, and started muttering under his breath, and after a moment said, "Figuring for geometric growth without anything that pushes additional acceleration, we have four months, three days, twenty-one hours, forty-two minutes, eleven seconds Standard to total Darkout." He looked from one to the other of his assembled colleagues, and said, "It has been a pleasure and an honor knowing you."

And then he crunched something in his jaw, and his eyes rolled back in his head, and he fell to the floor, foaming at the mouth.

I picked him up—years of living and working at three Gs made him at the one G I'd set for my visitors a totally manageable, if floppy weight.

I ignored the shrieks. The shouts. I walked to the back of my deck, and hit the flat red panel in the wall, and my personal Medix slid up from the floor. The lid opened, I dumped him in, and while he was still twitching, jammed it closed. "Save him," I told the ship.

And I turned to my future colleagues in saving the universe and said, "Anyone else want to be stupid? Because I'm not going to let you die. Mado Numbers might think the universe is already dead, but we're standing here looking at each other, still aware and breathing, as proof that he's wrong. And as long as we're human and thinking and capable of taking action—any action—we're going to act on the assumption that

we still have time to turn this around. Until the instant in which we lose, we fight like we can win it all."

Storm Rat said, "We don't have a lot of time, people. So let's get back to the labs and get to work."

No one felt the need to say anything else.

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How To Think Sideways: Weird Time Travel Moment

written by Holly
June 30, 2012
By Holly Lisle

I was digging through the weblog, trying to remember when exactly I suggested doing the **How To Think Sideways** course, and when readers voted on that course above all others as the one they wanted next.

And it was here:

My Top Twelve New Course Ideas

Reading over those course ideas, I'm amazed (and a bit disturbed) at how many of them ended up incorporated in **How To Think Sideways**.

Small Writing Courses

- *How to Start Your Novel*

Yes. It's in there.

- *How to Finish Your Novel*

Yes. It's in there.

- *How to Polish and Submit Your Novel*

Yes. It's in there.

- *How to Pitch Your Novel to Pro Markets*

Yes. It's in there.

- *How to Make Your Story Break Their Hearts*

Yes. It's in there.

- *How to Write Page-Turning Scenes*

No. WAAAY too much info to cover in just one lesson—but I did follow up by making it its own separate course.

BIG Writing Courses

- *Create A World Clinic*

No. Not in there. But it's the last writing course on my schedule, and it is about a third done.

- *Crit of the Month Club*

I'm poleaxed by this one. Yes, it's in there, as the Walkthrough. Not completed yet. It's what I'll be doing while I write WARPAINT.

- *Novel Writing Secrets*

Yes. It's in there. Every single solitary bit of it.

- *How to Think Sideways*

Yep. This is all in there, too.

- *Character Clinic Upgrade*

Yes. Even most of THIS is in there.

- *Learn to Write in a New Genre in One Month*

I cut it down to *How To Learn A New Genre in One Lesson*.
But yes. It's in there.

Now here's the part that's just really, truly wacky.

I did not consult that list while I wrote **How to Think Sideways**. I just wrote what I thought was that one course idea, and used the examples I needed to use to make my points...and somehow almost everything else on that list shoehorned its way in.

The subconscious mind, however, is a tricky, twisty creature—and mine clearly was up to something during the whole seven-eight months it took me to create the first version of the course...and then the many, many months I've spent doing upgrades and additions.

Today, I came around a corner and surprised my Muse at work, and it looked at me, winked, and said "Gotcha."

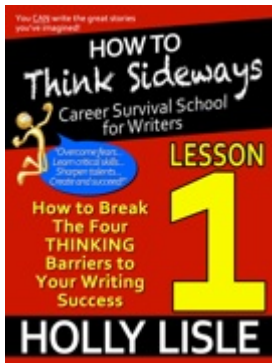
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First 5 Lessons of HTTS Direct are now LIVE

written by Holly
June 30, 2012

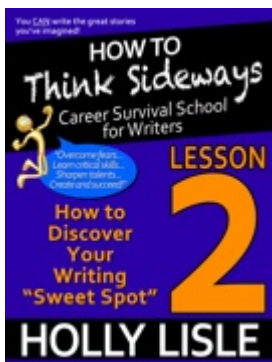
By Holly Lisle

And as promised, DRM-free. iBooks isn't working as expected, so you'll only be able to find the first two lessons there right now. The other three have been loaded just as long, but have not gone live yet. The print versions aren't yet available because I haven't had time to put them together.



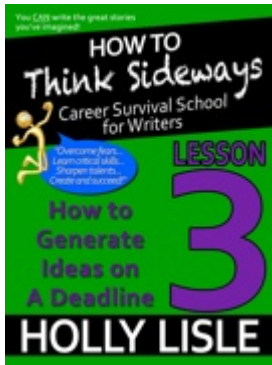
HTTS LESSON 1:

- My Shop
- Amazon.com
- Barnes and Noble



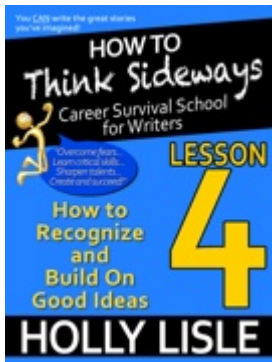
HTTS LESSON 2

- My Shop
- Amazon.com
- Barnes and Noble



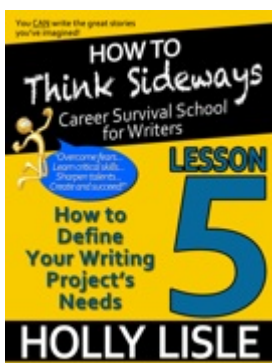
HTTS LESSON 3

- My Shop
- Amazon.com
- Barnes and Noble



HTTS LESSON 4

- My Shop
- Amazon.com
- Barnes and Noble



HTTS LESSON 5

- My Shop
- Amazon.com
- Barnes and Noble

I'm proofing the next batch of lessons today. ☐

Right now, even.

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Reader Interview: Dinner Conversation

written by Holly

June 30, 2012

By Holly Lisle

You can have dinner with any one person in history. Language will be no barrier, you'll be guaranteed to survive the meal unscathed, and you can ask anything you want and the person you're having dinner with will tell you the absolute, full truth.

Who would you invite to dinner, and what would be the one question you would absolutely ask?

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Two down

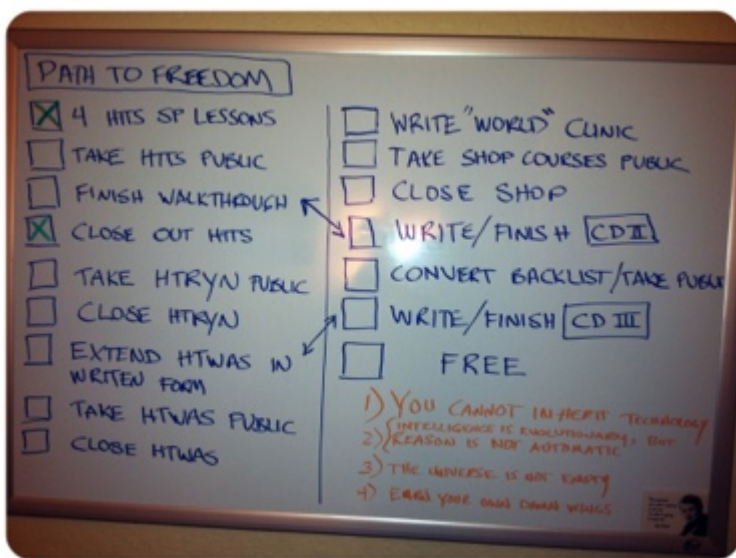
written by Holly

June 30, 2012

By Holly Lisle

Two boxes checked off on my Path to Freedom writing board now. At 11:59 pm, I stopped taking new students into my biggest, longest, and most involved writing course, the Legacy version of How To Think Sideways: Career Survival School for Writers. Took a picture of my board with its new X... Using my iPhone to enter this and can't figure out how to ADD the picture, so I'll put it up tomorrow.

But...two down! And this was a BIG one.



<< **First Freedom Board Post** |

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A little sneak preview of the

new shop

written by Holly

June 30, 2012

By Holly Lisle

I don't have everything (or even close to everything) in place yet, but if you want to see how the DRM-free stuff is going to work, I have a couple of books and the first five HTTS lessons available, and I'm moving over the other stuff as quickly as I can.

<http://howtothinksideways.com/shop>

It's still a bit rough around the edges, but everything works.

I've had pretty good luck with my first few beta testers, but if you have issues, **go here for help**.

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