

Getting the books out, getting the word out.

By Holly Lisle

The second edition of *Tales from the Longview, Episode 2: The Selling of Suzee Delight* has entered distribution today.

This is the sequel to *Tales from The Longview, Episode 1: Born from Fire* (previously released as *Enter the Death Circus*), now available permanently for free.

I'm hoping to have the third episode, *The Philosopher Gambit*, ready to publish in two weeks. It's been sitting on my hard drive, almost finished, for about two years. All I need is the first chapter from *Episode 4: Vipers' Nest* to put in the back.

Everything else is done. Doing that doesn't count as fiction time, because I'm writing the entire Longview Series as the demo for my **How to Write a Series: Master the Art of Sequential Fiction** class. And I need to get the episode written so I'll have my demo for one of the later class modules.

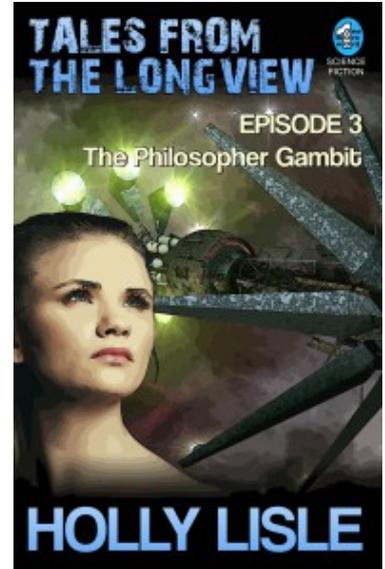
It's nice to finally be seeing some progress.

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The Philosopher Gambit is off

to the copyeditor!

By Holly Lisle



LONGVIEW 3-The
Philosopher Gambit

Finally.

I'm having the folks at Silver Jay do an in-depth proofread for me—I'll do the clean-up and publish when I get it back.

I'm considering offering a print version of the first three stories, which would give the reader the equivalent of a 90,000-word novel. I KNOW I'm going to offer this book later, when I have all six stories finished. I'll put the series together in two volumes.

My issue is offering the first print version **now**. Like Episodes 1 and 2, Episode 3 offers a complete internal story. Unlike Episodes 1 and 2, it also contains one big cliffhanger that will form the core story of Episode 4: *Vipers' Nest*.

I'm starting in on **Viper's Nest** tomorrow. I hope to have the story written fairly quickly, because I want to be able to start up Module Four of **How To Write A Series**, and I can't

until the demo story for that module is done. (*Vipers' Nest* is going to be a particularly important demo—the whole focus of HTWAS Module 4 is keeping both writer and reader interest high in each episode of your long-running series, and I have a whole stack of techniques I need to demo in the story.)

The way things have been going, though, it will probably be six months before I have all three episodes that conclude the series available, because the HTWAS Modules take more than a month apiece, and the stories have been, too.

And I HATE getting something that ends on a cliffhanger, and having to wait forever for the next print volume to appear.

This is where ebooks have it all over print.

Anyway, that's where I am today.

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Before I was so RUDELY interrupted...

By Holly Lisle



Rude Interruption

I had just put together my schedule for the next couple of months. (Link opens in new tab).

The VERY next day, a WordPress update broke an old plugin on my [HowToThinkSideways.com](https://www.howtothinksideways.com) site that just happened to have been delivering about 90% of my readers' and writers' purchased downloads.

I finished manually locating and manually moving each of those roughly 800 downloads into new download software and manually attaching those downloads to the correct class and purchase pages late yesterday.

Arrgh.

Today, I'm resuming my Writing Life plan. Onward.

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Scheduling a writing life: Follow-up #1

By Holly Lisle



Picture of me in my office.
Sort of.

I'm following up on the "How Would You Clear My Schedule" post.

First, INTERNS!!! was the cool and awesome suggestion that I leapt on, only to discover that the legal ramifications made it impossible for me to do. (Enormous thanks to Margaret Fisk, who did the research and let me know about this.)

There are folks actively hunting for ways to monetize the suing of folks who offer internships, **so I killed the intern program.** I don't make enough to pay even one full-time employee at minimum wage, much less the numbers I need to actually get my out of print and "messed-up-in-print" work into circulation in a professional fashion.

So here are the three things I'll be dealing with in May (with probable leak-over into June)

PART 1: Working with Dan on software development for my new sites.

This HAS to be done, and it has to be done now. The most recent WordPress update broke HowToThinkSideways.com admin for a full week. Dan had to do major, major overhaul work to get it up and running for me again so that I could go in and fix accounts for folks and do the other things I do in admin. (Create products, set up coupons, kill spammers, add new pages for things like the live chats...)

I have to consider that the NEXT WordPress update is likely to not just break MY access, but everyone's access.

So, as I said, this has to be done, and it has to be done now, and I am not a passive observer. I am wire-framing the designs for my future software, designing interfaces and front-ends and describing how I need elements to interact with users and databases. I am designing a fair amount of stuff that doesn't exist yet, but so far, I haven't done anything that Dan says is impossible.

I have most of the wire-frames that I think I'll need done. As we build, and as we start bringing in live testers, I'll have to amend things and I'll have to add things. But Dan's and my objective is to have me off of WordPress for good, and onto the software I need, by the end of the year, and sooner if possible.

PART 2: Finishing up *The Prisoner Gambit*, and then writing the next HTWAS Demo Story for the HTWAS Class.

Before I can take the next module of How To Write A Series live, I have to write my proof-of-concept story for my writers. MODULE FOUR of How To Write A Series, by the way, is going to be **PREVENTING SERIES BOREDOM—Yours and Theirs.**

So figure that I'm going to have to pull out all the stops for the fourth HTWAS demo story—***Longview 4: Vipers' Nest***. AND keep it between 20,000 and 30,000 words, which is getting really tough. These things keep trying to turn into novels on me, and in the first three stories, I've already done the equivalent

of one full-length novel.

PART 3: Working with RMW Beta Testers

What I've done instead is ask founding members of ReadersMeetWriters.com to beta-test the in-house certification courses I'm putting together for RMW, and to test the courses using my lessons, letting me know where there are problems, and letting me fix the courses while they practice on my books. That way, RMW members who take the training for things like Manuscript Layout and Cover Art Design will not have to get the versions with splinters. My volunteers are taking the pain for them.

I'll fit in other things as I can, but getting my out-of-print stuff off of my hard drive is done, and delegated, and the weight off of my mind from just that is massive. If I can also get two stories written, and my part of the software development mostly finished between now and the end of June, I'll be in much better shape than I was when I asked for help.

Thank you for your suggestions. I wanted you to see what I've done with them so far.

I'll be back here when I've finished something. ☐

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**The REVISED new LONGVIEW
covers, and how to run a**

solvent self-pub business

By Holly Lisle

Book covers...GOOD book covers, anyway—are a big flying pain in the ass on a good day, and they are so very much easier to get wrong than right. And blithe comments about hiring a professional cover designer don't help.

A BIG DIGRESSION ON THE FINANCIAL END OF SELF-PUBLISHING, AND HOW YOU STAY SOLVENT

The Longview stories are, right now, low-margin.

I am using them to give people an inexpensive route into my Settled Space universe. With that in mind, I'm looking at experimenting with pricing again, which means they're probably going to become LOWER margin for me.

Someday, if the series develops a large enough readership that copies of the whole series are selling regularly, I may be able to hire a professional to do cover art for them, but here's the deal on self-pubbing. You need to be able to make your investment back on each project within a set time period.

For me, that time period is two months. I need for every single thing I do to pay me as much as I've invested in it, including time, two months after it debuts.

My time is my biggest expense, because creating writing courses pays much better than writing fiction. I have to look at every fiction project I do, look at every nonfiction project I could do in the same amount of time, figure out whether I'll still be able to meet my budget every month if I do fiction rather than nonfiction, and plan accordingly.

And I have the same hard expenses most people have: housing, automotive, insurance, food, etc. Plus I have independent contractors I pay monthly to help me with various aspects of my business. All of that comes out of my budget before any money comes to me. I can offset some of the cost of these stories onto the HTWAS course, but not very much of it, because I invest time into creating the HTWAS course, too.

The HTWAS course, though, is buying me the time to write Longview stories in between HTWAS modules.

And I cannot do basket accounting. *Basket accounting* is when you count all the money coming as one lump, and ignore how much individual projects earn. If you basket account, you can throw your heart and soul into something that is not earning its own way, and wake up one day to discover that the projects that were paying your bills have fallen off because you have not added more like them, while you have been tossing your time and work into a money-sucking black hole that has a minimal readership.

My earn-through number is two months rather than the one month for these books because I built HTWAS with planned time for writing them, and I am using them as part of the course. They are teaching me and I am teaching them. So with the Longview series, I have a tiny but real buffer.

I can pay bills and make payroll if I can get my investment of time and cost out of each book within two months.

But that means that I cannot be frivolous with expenses. I have a budget of about fifteen bucks to spend on each cover. Which means I MUST do them myself.

I paid off the software I do part of the covers with years ago, I buy stock art for the images, and, and paid off the new software that does the fonts and a couple other neat tweaks with the first course I used it on. Everything I buy, everything I do, has to pay its own way, and has to do it

quickly. Stories can sit in your backlist earning you money for as long as you choose...but **they have to pay back your expenses quickly**, because you have to get back the money you invest in each project so you can invest it in your next project.

Your next cover, your next writing time, your next editing. If you cannot invest your last project's earning into your next project when you're ready to do it, you're running your business in the red, and you won't last long. Running in the black—making sure every project pays its own way—is the secret to being able to afford to write full time. It's not much of a secret—but this is how you do it.

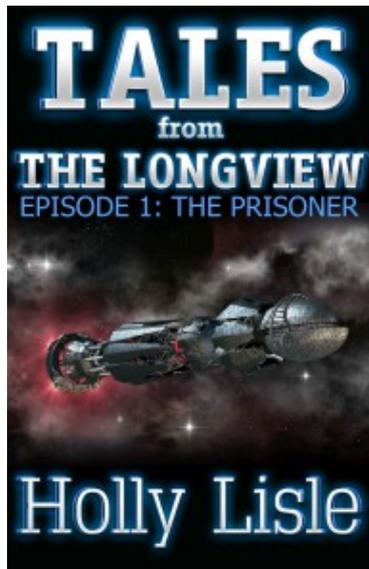
End of Digression

So the last covers were close. I had the background right. I had the concept of the font and overall look somewhere in the ballpark.

These, though, are significant tweaks.

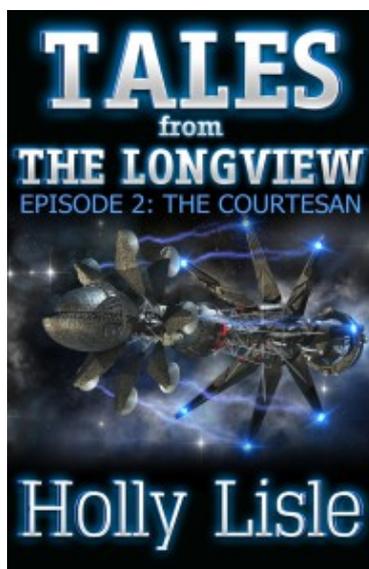
These are PROBABLY final, but I'm going to have to run them past Matt, who first came up with the retitling fix yesterday, and then looked today at what I came up with yesterday, shook his head, and said, "Not yet." He came up with the layout concept for these, but he and I work opposite shifts (I'm up days, he's up nights) and I just finished these, so I'll run these by him when he's up and if he has any strong objections, I'll probably do another set of tweaks.

Episode 1: The Prisoner



Tales from The
Longview
Episode 1: The
Prisoner

Episode 2: The Courtesan



Tales from The
Longview
Episode 2: The
Courtesan

Episode 3: The Philosopher



Tales from The
Longview
Episode 3: The
Philosopher

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The New Covers for Tales from The Longview... I listened.

By Holly Lisle

I read every comment, made notes, came up with alternate concepts, and here are the three final results.

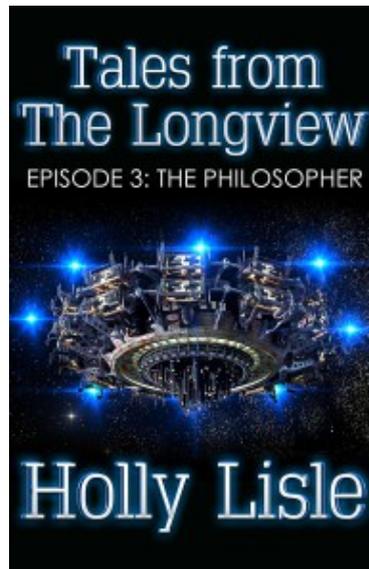
WITH new titles, too.



Tales from The
Longview: Episode
1: The Prisoner



Tales from The
Longview: Episode
2: The Courtesan



Tales from The
Longview: Episode
3: The Philosopher

So...does this fix the many problems?

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HTWAS Lesson, Longview Minecraft Map Update, More

By Holly Lisle

Got **3300+** words on HTWAS Module 3, Lesson 2 yesterday.



This lesson, titled **Breaking Things Mid-Story and Mid-Series**, covers GOOD breaks—places where your Muse kicks in with an absolutely awesome idea that requires a lot of fixing in the current episode, but that **DOES NOT BREAK YOUR SERIES**.

Being able to tell the difference between this kind of break and the “My Muse hates me” type of break from the previous lesson is a critical skill. I’m having a lot of fun with the lesson, by the way—it’s much more enjoyable showing writers how to clean up the mess from a great break than it is to cover the same ground for a nasty one.

The Longview Minecraft Map Update

As you may guess from the cover art above, the Longview spaceship map, VERSION 2.0, debuts today. You can pick it up for free in the Reader’s Room.

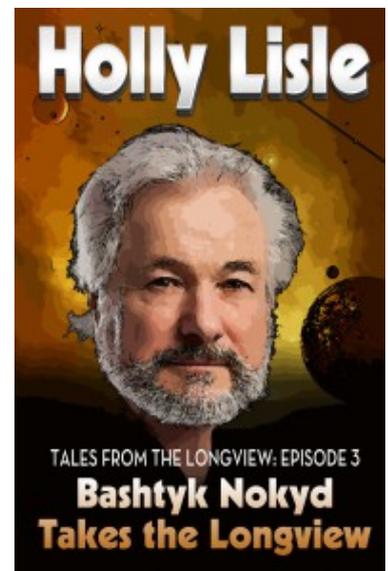
Login: <https://howtothinksideways.com/login/>

Then go here: [Tales From The Longview Series Intro | Longview Bonus Downloads](#)

If you don’t have one, you can create a free account.

Bashtyk Nokyd—Possible Cover Art. Your input?

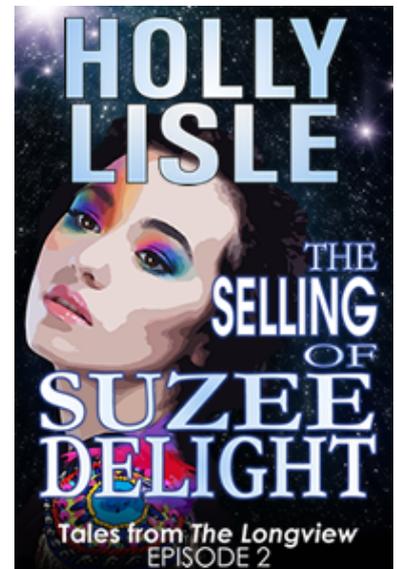
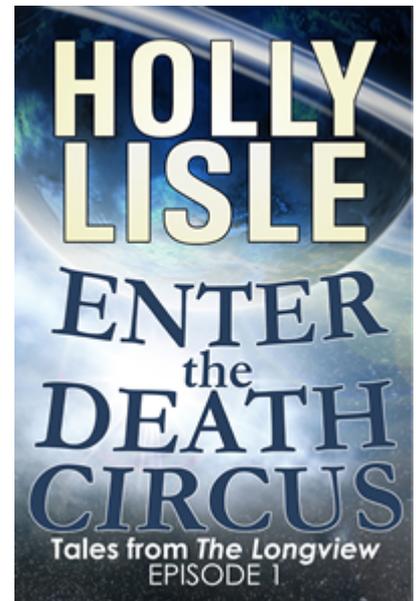
By Holly Lisle



[Click to see the big version](#)

I like this cover better than either of the previous ones I've done for the Longview series, and am considering doing the other two over again to match this style and formatting. What do you think?

Previous two covers are below for comparison.



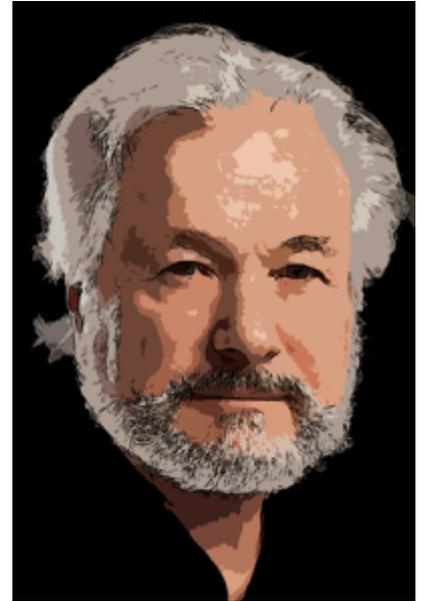
The Selling of
Suzee Delight:
Tales from the
Longview Episode 2

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Type-In DONE on Bashtyk Nokyd

By Holly Lisle

Right up to the last minute, the story kept punching me—I kept finding better ways to do things. I got an absolutely unanticipated but just-right ending to the episode.



And added damn near 10,000 words in the process.

But I'm done, I love it, the printer is humming merrily away, and I'm going to hand off my manuscript to my editor tomorrow.

This means next week, I write Lesson 2 of HTWAS. And next Friday, we resume class.

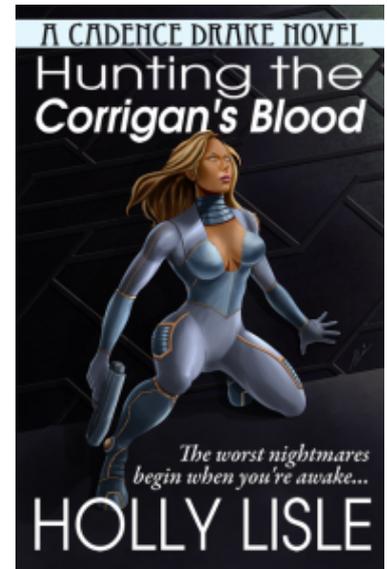
God, I'm fried. I'm going to sleep as much of this weekend as I can manage.

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Cadence Drake in Real Life:

Now legal, soon possible. I win! :D

By Holly Lisle



Hunting the
Corrigan's Blood

The main character of my current novel series, Cadence Drake, was a genetically engineered child. One mother, three fathers, and some slicing and dicing of her chromosomes to give her the exact characteristics her mother wanted for her:

From my mother I have my coffee-with-a-touch-of-cream skin and full lips and straight teeth. From one of my fathers I have high, sharp cheekbones and slanting almond-shaped eyes with a pronounced epicanthic fold, though the eyes themselves are a vivid and startling blue, the gift of another father. My hair is straight and the color of amber, my nose is long and thin. My body is long and angular. I look like what I am—an outdated fashion statement.

From Hunting The Corrigan's Blood: Cadence Drake #1

And it just became legal in England to do this exact sort of genetic engineering in order to prevent lethal genetic disease being passed from mother to child.

I think this is a fantastic development, something that will improve the lives of future generations of human beings, and something that has tremendous potential for giving people a chance at longer and better lives.

However, I also think it's cool as hell that I built the main character of my current main series on science that just went Real World.

The novel is also available here:

- <http://howtothinksideways.com/shop/hunting-the-corrigans-blood-a-cadence-drake-novel/>
- <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/hunting-the-corrigans-blood-holly-lisle/1002110711?ean=2940015519778>

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