

Do I still recommend John Locke? No.

[By Holly Lisle](#)



Cheaters and
Liars

[Back at the end of June, 2011, I read a book that succeeded because of a lie, and I turned my entire life upside down as a result of that lie.](#)

The book was, of course, John Locke's **How I Sold 1 Million Ebooks in 5 Months**.

Like a lot of other writers, I let myself be suckered in.

I bought the pretty lie hook, line, and sinker.

The writer, John Locke, had the bestsellers that seemed to prove the validity of his approach. I didn't like them, but I'm not everybody's reader. He had the seeming endorsement of Amazon, which had sent out a single-title recommendation of his book.

And mostly, I WANTED to believe.

Sadly, his whole house of cards rested on the unspoken promise that he had actually done what he said he'd done—wrote a blog post a month, hung out on Twitter, talked to people, and wrote

good books.

I know I write good books. And I desperately wanted to get back to fiction, which I'd put on hold after a couple of nightmare experiences.

One nightmare was with an editor at Tor (now an ex-editor) disemboweling HAWKSPAR, a novel that I then had to fight like hell to get returned to *my* version, which still included both main characters.

The second was waiting six months for Scholastic to pay me, after having approved the book...and watching my finances circle the drain while I waited.

WHILE my finances were circling the drain, I started self-publishing nonfiction (**Create A Character Clinic** was my first onsite self-pub project), and I did very well at that. Well enough that I started creating other writing courses, and put fiction aside for a few years.

But I love fiction, and saw John Locke's method as my opportunity to revive my Cadence Drake series (which was only ever a series to me, since Jim Baen refused to reprint HUNTING THE *CORRIGAN'S BLOOD* after it hit Locus bestseller lists two months running, and sold through its initial printing in four months).

I know I'm repeating what a lot of you already know. I'm sorry. I have a point.

Based on John Locke's lies about how he hit bestseller lists, I ditched a whole long list of planned nonfiction courses, and revived my fiction career. I'm now a couple weeks out from finishing the first draft of my second Cadence Drake novel: WARPAINT.

I've planned the revival of another series, MOON & SUN.

I have a list of partially completed novels that have been

sitting on my hard drive that I want to finish.

HOWEVER...

First, I recommended this asshole. I'm very sorry about that. I'm sorry if you bought his book on my recommendation, and I'm sorry if you—like me—thought he was telling the truth.

Second, I took a MAJOR financial hit for stopping writing course production to focus on fiction. I paid, and paid, and paid some more, and told myself it would be okay, because I write good novels, and using Locke's method, I'd come out all right.

But I won't. At least not anywhere near as well as what he suggested was possible. Because I won't buy reviews. I won't do what MAKE A KILLING ON KINDLE author Michael Alvear suggests either, and make a bunch of fake Amazon accounts so I can review my own books.

I've never cheated at publishing, and I'm not going to start now.

Did anything good come out of the wreckage I've wrought in my writing business?

Yes.

1. I'm about done with WARPAIN, and I love it, and I know I'm never walking away from my fiction again.
2. And... And... No. That's it. Just the one thing.

I'm picking up the teaching. Resuming creating courses, offering them exclusively on my site again—though I'll still do Kindle and Nook versions of everything. And of course I'll leave the HTTS Direct version available on Kindle, Nook, and Apple (still haven't uploaded the last lessons, but I've been scrambling and doing damage control for a while now). Maybe it

will eventually take off in those versions and make the expense worth the massive time and effort it took.

So what happens next?

First, I'll write fiction every morning, because it remains joyful and wonderful—and moreso because I know some publisher or editor won't manage to wreck the joy of it.

Second, I'll create more writing courses. I'll teach and create courses at a slower pace, because from now on, fiction gets the first few hours of my morning every day.

The plan now is, in other words, to work hard, create the best stuff I'm capable of creating, and count on quality to keep a roof over my head.

This is one of those times, though, when I wish my blog was still titled **REAL WRITERS BOUNCE...** because after falling for a liar's lies, you bounce or you fail.

If you bounce, you pick yourself up, figure out how to put yourself back together, and you go on.

I'm a real writer. I know how to bounce.

RESOURCES FOR THIS ARTICLE:

[New York Times](#)

[Karen Woodward](#)

[Three Percent](#)

[Tales from the Sith Witch](#)

[Jane Friedman](#)

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Halloween Tonk

[By Holly Lisle](#)

Got an email from a reader who loved **Talyn** and wanted to make herself a Tonk Shielder uniform.

She used **Talyn** as her basic reference, and got a lot of the rest of the details from the [Tonk Stuff](#) I've posted online.

She asked me a few additional questions, though, I provided details, and she sent me her Halloween pictures, along with permission to post them here. I thought this was really cool, so I present to you, EJ, Tonk Shielder.

Start with the clan mark tattooed on her left hand. You can find ALL the Tonk Clan Marks here:

http://hollylisle.com/images/tonk_clans_&_clan_symbols.jpg

You'll note that EJ is Clan Berdaa, (pronounced bair-DAY-ah) one of the New Clans.



EJ's Tonk Clan Mark

I was able to provide a good description for the insignia on the beret—I hadn't gone into detail on the battle ribbons, so

EJ had to wing those.



Beret, Vest, Shirt
with Battle Ribbons
on Shoulder.

And finally, the full Tonk Shielder uniform with cap and beret.



EJ in Full Tonk
Shielder Uniform

If you ever do a costume from one of my books, I'd love to see the pictures, and I'll be thrilled to post them here.

(With, maybe, an exception for the bodyart in [Hunting The Corrigan's Blood](#). Nudity and all, you know.)

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A thoughtful post on Christian/Muslim reconciliation

[By Holly Lisle](#)

The writer of this is Quaker (I used to be) and a visiting scholar at Yale Divinity School. My personal take on **any** religion is “no, thanks,” but I am a firm supporter of *freedom* of religion. And of tolerance, defined as follows: I will tolerate you, your quirks, and your beliefs, if you will tolerate me, my quirks, and my beliefs, and if nothing you do imposes on the rights of others to life, liberty, and the pursuit of lawful happiness. I, in my part, will not impose on your right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of lawful happiness.

I will not pretend to be someone I'm not in order to have you like me under false pretenses. I ask that you return the favor.

And I don't tolerate child molesters, rapists, murderers, or factions of religions whose only happiness can be achieved if I am subsumed into their religion, or killed for not joining.

This is, I think, a reasonable definition of tolerance. It may not be perfect, but neither am I.

And with that thought, [I give you Sarah Ruden writing for the Wall Street Journal on Yale's Christian/Muslim Reconciliation Conference.](#)

Some of what she had to say made me think of **Talyn**. Some of it made me think of **Hawkspar**.

Thanks to Jim for the link.

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My Super-Secret Agenda Revealed

[By Holly Lisle](#)

Arconna said—The fact that Democrats accused Republicans of fiddling with votes and intentionally disenfranchising voters who had names similar to criminals is just as disturbing as Democrats doing the same thing. All that that proves is that no party has the interests of the American people in mind, just their own. Iâ€™m absolutely sick of this divide between parties.

YES! That's it. **That's** my secret agenda! I want the Democrats and the Republicans, people in any third parties, and those of us who have NO party that stands for what we think and believe, to work together for the good of the country, and the good of the citizens in it.

All the ceaseless bickering partisanship, all the Democrats Are Bad, Republicans Are Bad, We're Better Than You Are

idiocy, is destroying all of us. The nation is too big and too diverse to speak with one voice. But its varied voices need to start talking **to** each other, rather than **at** each other.

The Romans were masters of “Divide and Conquer,” and kept half a world of enemies successfully occupied for a couple thousand years while they ruled with increasing despotism. Both Republicans and Democrats from the far edges of their respective constituencies are using the same “Divide and Conquer” strategy quite effectively to keep people who mostly agree with each other at each other’s throats. So long as we remain distracted by fighting each other about the red flags each side waves in our faces, we cannot force those in power to change.

We are a nation deeply divided by politics and the people who wield politics as their weapon. Yet most of us share the common ground of love of liberty, a belief in human rights and freedoms, the right to the pursuit of happiness, and the value of representative government made up of people we chose who ACTUALLY REPRESENT US. Our divisions are taking all of that away from us, a piece here and a piece there, from both ends of the spectrum. The goal of both sides is to get into power and then stay there. What we want and what we need as a people and a nation does not begin to figure into that.

HUGE SPOILER WARNING FOR TALYN FOLLOWS—

I don’t like to publicize the themes and subplots of my books, because I’d rather people read them and get what they need out of what I put there, but that IS the theme of TALYN.

The Tonks are conservative. The Eastils are liberal. And by fighting each other they miss the bigger picture—that the rest of the world has no reason to love them, and many good reasons

to wish to take the good they've both created away from them. Divided, they are conquered. Without each other, they cannot survive.

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It's Out There (The Ruby Key is Live)

[By Holly Lisle](#)



I've been haunting the local bookstore, and [THE RUBY KEY](#) isn't on the shelves yet, so it didn't really dawn on me that people are already reading it.

But [Tina already has a review up \(and is giving a copy away\)](#), and I'm not ready.

I knit two pairs of Genna's socks to give away, and they're done, but not blocked, and I haven't done certificates of authenticity for them or anything. At the moment, they're just two teenager-sized pairs of woolly green socks.

If you spot the book, please let me know where you find it (in the store—YA, front of the store, in with the adult fantasy....I worry about where it's going to land), and when it lands.

Meanwhile, I'll get the sock stuff done for the giveaway.

A Book Giveaway (sort of)

[By Holly Lisle](#)

Lots of my novels for free if you'll pay the postage.

SUNDAY ADDITION:

I underestimated the extent of my problem. And I do have a few copies of some of the later Baen books. And I found the missing **Vengeance of Dragons** copies. Lots of them.





Any more volunteers?

Also, much to my amazement, I have no remaining copies of the historical thing. Many apologies. Holly

P.S. The scary thing is, I suspect there are still more books hiding in corners. I'm afraid.

SATURDAY: The Original Post

I have a bunch of copies of my own work I need to get rid of.

- I'd have one massive contest and winners galore, but I can't afford the shipping for that many books.
- I can't sell them—that's in the contracts.
- I don't want to dump them at libraries; I'd rather give them to individual folks.
- I considered doing a **Books of the Wild** thing, where I'd send boxes of books to people who agreed to send all but one of the books out into the world to meet new people, who could then log into a **Wild Books Tracking Station** to note where they got their book, and where they passed it on when they were done with it, with rules taped into

the inside front covers to let the readers know how to find and log into the tracking station, (I thought this would be particularly cool) but as previously noted, I don't have the money for all that shipping, and I can't ask folks to pay shipping and then only keep one book.

So...

I have at least a few of most of my more recent books (most of my post-Baen work) and a lot of a few of them. And I have some flat rate shipping boxes that ship to anywhere in the US for \$8.95. In order to cover PayPal fees and packing up the box, add an extra dollar—total US shipping will be \$9.95. Each box will comfortably fit 6 paperbacks, and as long as they last, one hardcover or galley. When I run out of hardcovers and galleys, I'll throw in three extra paperbacks. (These are likely to be duplicates. If I have to send duplicates and you didn't indicate that you wanted them, I'll let you know before you pay for the shipping.)

If you're willing to pay the postage, I'll ship you a box of mixed books. If you don't mind duplicates (to give to friends, for example), please note this in your entry. I have quite a few paperback **Talyns**, for example.

I'll autograph one book in each box—I hurt my wrists, the right one especially, from too much knitting, which I've been using to deal with stress, and typing is painful and hand-writing pure agony. (Forget knitting. At the moment, I can barely hold yarn.) So give me your wish-list of three books you'd like to own in autographed form in order of your preference, and if I have it, I'll sign and include one of those three books in the box. If I don't, I'll pick what I think is the best book in the box and autograph that one. These books won't be personalized, just dated and signed. I apologize for this, because I usually personalize unless requested not to, but ... pain. We're not going to mention how

exciting it is to type this.

I also have a couple of surprises (still my books, but special or odd in some way or another). No comment on those, but they'll ship in the first boxes to go out.

All books are new, unread, but some do have dings on corners or other flaws—the boxes seem to pass through punishment testing en route to me from time to time.

If you enjoy ancient historical fiction, note this and I'll throw in an unrelated book of which I happen to have a whole bunch of copies. If you *really* like it, I'll send a few extra (I have lots and lots of copies). Just ask.

Here are the rules:

- 1. You have to have some way of using PayPal**, whether through your own PayPal account, a debit card, credit card, or checking account, to do this.
- 2. Don't send any money until I've packed your box and contacted you** (and we've agreed on the shipping price if you're outside the US).
- 3. Special requests are first come, first served.**
- 4. All book boxes are ALSO first come, first served.**
- 5. If you have any books you already have and don't want to accidentally get another of (even to pass on), please list these.**
- 6. The times on replies will serve as the final arbiter of who asked first.** I will religiously check the spam and rescue requests while this offer is ongoing. If you have fallen afoul of the spam-catcher, let me know right away at **holly AT hollylisle DOT com.**

7. This offer is only good until I run out of books.

The average value of a box of 6 paperback books with one hardcover will be about \$67. I can't guess the value of the galleys, but to collectors, I'm sure they're fairly valuable. Average value of a box of nine paperbacks without a hardcover or galley will be about \$63. If you're outside the US, keep this number in mind when figuring shipping. You don't want to pay more than the value of the books, and you'd probably want to stop at about half the value. For orders outside the US, we'll figure on a case-by-case basis. You're never obligated to buy—if shipping is too much for your budget, I can pack up just one or two books for you in a sturdy envelope or little box, or you can pass your box on to the next person on the list.

Make sure your e-mail address in your account on this weblog is correct, because that's how I'll contact each of you.

That's it. If you're interested, let me know here. The giveaway starts now.

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Thank you

[By Holly Lisle](#)

I'd like to take the time to thank each of you who has faced out a copy of **Talyn** at your bookstore, or bought a copy for yourself or someone else, or recommended it to a friend or a bookseller. I apologize for being so distracted by garbage

that I haven't taken the time to say this properly.

It's been an unpleasant week or so—most people probably think I should have just ignored the whole Little tempest, but I believe that someone who has been lied about has the moral obligation to defend his innocence. However, as noted by one commenter, anything you say when someone lies about you will only convince the people who want to believe the lie that it was justified, and that sort of hostility is no fun to deal with. While I know that I had to go on record correcting the lies, I acknowledge (and knew beforehand) that this whole thing would have sunk from lack of interest if I had let the lies stand.

You folks have been huge bright spots for me with this garbage, as well, and I want to thank you for that, too. Your support and encouragement, as well as your help with **Talyn** means more to me than I can say

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The Tonk need a rescue

[By Holly Lisle](#)

✘ **Talyn** debuts in paperback today. With luck, you'll find it in local indie bookstores, where real people order books, and where support for my work has been strong. If you don't have an indie store, then you may find it in your local chain bookstore, but computers order the books for chains, and they order to the net, a process that kills most writing careers in three books.

I'm not in danger of having my career killed at the moment, but **Hawkspar** could easily be the last Tonk/ Korre book. The sale of a third book in the series depends on the paperback success of **Talyn**. The **Talyn** hardcover had a small print run, and sellthrough was meager. If the hardcover showed up in your bookstore, it probably did so with one spined-out copy, and if that sold, no more were reordered. That was the story with most of the chains, including mine. With no sales reports in front of me, I have to guess that the majority of sales came from the indies.

There's a very narrow time window (about a month) in which the book has a chance to succeed or fail. The clock starts today. If it succeeds, it will get another month. If it fails, though, it will disappear from most of the chains at this time in December, and that will be the kiss of death to **Redbird**, the third book.

If you have been waiting for whatever reason to buy **Talyn**, **now is the time when buying it will make a difference.**

If you enjoyed **Talyn** or the world of Korre, please recommend (read "beat over the head with") the book to anyone you think might enjoy it. If you can't find it in your local bookstore, please ask your local bookseller to order it in. Perhaps in quantity.

And if it isn't available where you are, then **you can buy it here from these online indies:**

- Bookpeople.com
- Tattered Cover
- Merritt Bookstores
- Seminary Co-op
- Rediscovered Bookshop

Or the chains online, of course: Amazon is one of the online sales venues of last resort, along with Books-A-Million and Barnes and Noble.

Talyn is one of the two best books I've written (I consider **Hawkspar** its equal) and though I know the odds are against me, I want this world to succeed. If you can help out in any way, my deepest thanks.

And if you do a review or something else that might encourage people to buy, please post a link here. I'll put a link to this post and links to some of the reviews on the front page.

All articles in this series, in order:

- [The Tonk need a rescue](#)
- [Selling to the net](#)
- [Bookseller furor](#)
- [Hughart, Rasmussen, and little guys versus the juggernaut](#)
- [DearAuthor.com Behaving Badly](#)

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Talyn Paperback!

[By Holly Lisle](#)

 I had no idea what the cover was going to look like. Found it today on Amazon. Wow.

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Update

[By Holly Lisle](#)

I wrote a long post yesterday, but my browser ate it, and I was too exhausted to do it again. The short version is that yesterday I woke up at 2:30 AM, got up and started to work at 4:30 AM, and by one had finished Chapter Five of **The Ruby Key**, the complete synopsis of the rest of the book, and the short sheet on where I see the rest of the series going.

Today I'm revising, in spite of a rotten headache. Later today or tomorrow, I'll send it off to my agent, and get back to work on the **Language Clinic** and **Hawkspar**.

I'm fighting a really screwed-up sleep schedule right now, and this is adding all sorts of exciting layers of complexity to my life. I'll get it worked out ... but considering I was up until about 3:00 AM this morning before finally falling asleep, today probably won't be the day that happens.

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