

# The Emerald Sun: Walking with Genna this morning

By Holly Lisle

My hour (plus) this morning did not yield a massive wordcount.

556 words total.

But in that 556 words, Genna and her voice came back to me, and Genna immediately broke what I'd planned for the first chapter, and did what I did not expect her to do.

She lied to the Audiomaerist, in whose house she and her companions had been staying, and hurried them all out without even saying goodbye, and started toward someplace I'm not sure about yet.

She did this because her gut told her she and her friends needed to get away from where they were as quickly as possible.

And the Cat, when he caught up with her, simply confirmed that something was wrong.

## What's wrong?

I don't know. This has been my experience with writing Genna – and in the years since I wrote her last, she clearly has not changed. I plot something, she looks at my plot, and immediately does something that breaks my planning, but that still gets both of us to the right place eventually.

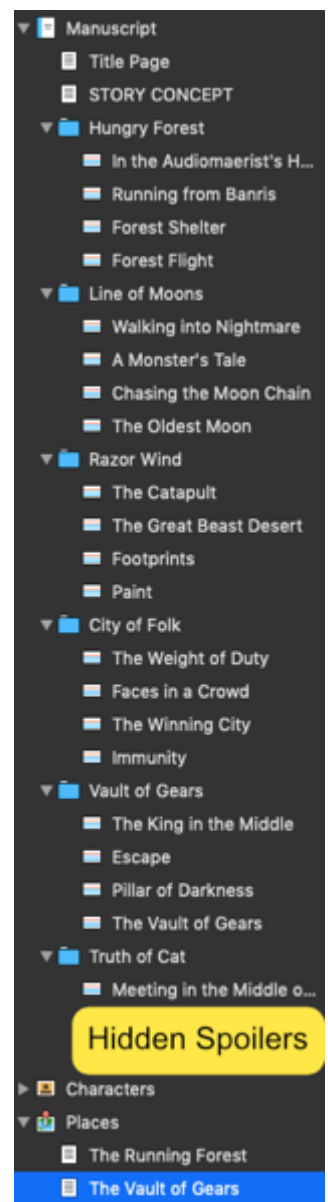
My path would have been cleaner, calmer, and considerably less messy.

From the perspective of adventure, however, hers is going to be a lot more interesting.

# Moon & Sun 3: Sketching with words

By Holly Lisle

I started out my workday this morning looking for (and finding) a sketchbook among my many notebooks and blank project books.



Followed by staring at the blank pages, with an array of

drawing tools in front of me, and with my Muse going, “No, no, no, no, no...”

“I need to see these things,” I muttered, and Muse said, “I already see them. Let me show you.”

So I sat, pulled up my Emerald Sun Scrivener document, and opened a page in Places, and my Muse said, “Tell me about the Running forest.

So I did. Rather a lot.

And then the Muse said, “Okay. Now what’s the story with the Vault of Gears?”

And I started answering the question, and discovered SO much more story.

I didn’t have pen lines or shapes for what I was seeing, for what I was discovering – but I had a lot of words, and the words divulged secrets, and the secrets made me hungry to get started on this book.

So.

Next Tuesday, I’ll start writing the actual novel. I might from time to time need to slow down to sit with my Muse and sketch more words...

But this story has been waiting a long time to be born, and all of a sudden, it feels like it’s in a hurry.

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# Outline Finished! The Emerald Sun moves forward...

By Holly Lisle

Short post today. Took a couple hours, but I was on a roll, so I just stuck with it.

And I'm delighted to announce that I've finished the line-for-scene outline of **Moon & Sun 3: The Emerald Sun**.

Tomorrow I'll take a day off from writing fiction, and instead work on building some of the locations that exist in this story so I can see them. I'll just a sketchbook for this, not Minecraft Mapping.

Once I know I have a decent feel for the locations, I'll do a couple of character interviews – but after that, I'll be ready to actually start writing the book.

I thought it would take me a lot longer to get to this point than it has. So I'm going to find myself writing on three separate novels each week for a while – and I honestly don't know if that will work.

I'm not having any problem right now with two novels, and *Dead Man's Party* is past the halfway mark, with the first draft planned for completion at the same time that I finish up the last lesson of *How to Write a Novel*.

I'll confess, though, that even to me it seems excessive.

But worst case, it'll make an interesting experiment in exploring my limitations as a writer.

Best case, I'll get to write on three separate novels each week, and will have as much fun as I'm having writing two.

# Moon & Sun: The Emerald Sun. It begins...

By Holly Lisle

Today is my first day of actual story brainstorming (a combination of plotting, doodling, and talking to myself) on The Emerald Sun.

(Reading and noting is done with the books and sticky notes. Brainstorming requires your butt in the chair and your fingers on the keyboard with a sketchpad on the desk in front of you – at least if you're me.)

Because, as I frequently did during my commercial career, I planned the series to run long – in this case, seven books – and because I have to finish the series now with Book 3, I find myself once again rethinking where I wanted to go with the story, and digging through the core principles of what I'd already built, and how these worked.

I'm going through the characters...

- The Cat
- The Dragon
- Genna, Danrith, and their humanoid allies
- The Audiomaerist, a woman who listens to what the roads tell her

And the settings...

- The abandoned ruins of a different civilization
- The forests that grow so quickly they can outrun fleeing humans
- The paths along the Moonroads, and what lives there

And the conflict...

- The single act from the past that is still destroying the present

And the question...

- How can some kids, a Cat, and a dragon save a dying world adults have lost the will to save?

I'm trying to find my way through.

I have the ending I'm NOT going to write (what I call "the ending to beat").

I have my Octopus Map, which sets out the obstacles in my path.

Now it's a case of plotting out a path to follow (or again **in my case**, to beat as I go).

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# **Becoming Piers Anthony: The Not-Impossible Dream of 3 Books A Year**

By Holly Lisle

A couple of things have changed in my life recently, one of which has been the writing of *Dead Man's Party*, my demo novel for the writing class I'm currently building, **How to Write a Novel**.

I've been dedicating one concentrated hour or so a week to the writing of the first draft (and a bloody awful first draft it is, too), but the bones of the story are solid, and it's going in a great direction, and it's turning funny on me all of a sudden.

And I've been reading through *Moon & Sun*, and taking notes, but they were not being very helpful notes.

Then, while Becky and I were talking about going back through the first two novels of my *Moon & Sun* series in order to pick up toys I'd left on the floor for the third book, I realized that I had not done an Octopus Map for the series.

So I built the Octopus Map (a core technique in my *How to Write a Series* class), and something that I mention in the upcoming **Episode 29** of *Alone in a Room with Invisible People*.

Once I remembered to do it, it took me about half an hour to get the overall bones of the final story figured out. I still have to do all the reading and the finding and identifying of essential toys, and some scene-by-scene plotting, but I know what the story is now. That's big.

So...

At the moment Patreon is covering me for one hour of fiction writing a day, and the income from my fiction isn't currently enough to run beyond that.

And I'm writing the *How to Write a Novel* class, and the demo novel, and doing the podcast, and reissuing some of my novels, and getting others ready to go live...

But I've discovered from my writing of *Dead Man's Party* that I

can get a lot of actual written fiction done in an hour, and I want to be seeing more progress than I'm seeing.

Because almost all of my hours have been eaten up by research for *Moon & Sun*, I haven't been seeing a lot of progress.

But this morning I was standing in the shower and my Muse said, "Piers Anthony said he worked on THREE books at a time."

And then I thought, "I have five hours a week, and *Dead Man's Party* is only taking one hour, and I could limit my current reading and noting in the *Moon & Sun* series to two hours, which would let me do... What?

## **"What third project?"**

At which point, my Muse practically screamed in my ear, "The *Wishbone Conspiracy!!!*" With a muttered undertone of *you idiot*.

As I've noted elsewhere, my Muse and I have an interesting relationship.

With *Wishbone*, I already have the world, the characters, the opening chapter, and even a bit of the plot worked out.

## **So I'm going to do this:**

- Two days a week I'll be working on *Moon & Sun 3: The Emerald Sun*
- One day a week I'll be writing *Dead Man's Party*
- And two days a week I'll be working on Cadence Drake in *The Wishbone Conspiracy*

If my Patreon funding can go up to two hours a day, or if I can get my fiction income up by other means (which I'm also working on), I'll be able to increase that. Top level would be three hours a day, which would still leave five (plus the occasional evening) for creating **How To Write A Novel** plus



emails plus forums...

I think even at top funding, or with a much-increased readership of my fiction, this will still work.

Monday I start finding out.

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# **IT'S A SIGN!!! – Moon & Sun Book 3: The Emerald Sun**

By Holly Lisle

A long time ago (back in 2006-2008), I wrote two novels I loved and younger readers loved.

**The Ruby Key: Moon & Sun Book 1**

**The Silver Door: Moon & Sun Book 2**

I'd started work on the third one, **The Emerald Sun: Moon & Sun Book 3...**

And then Scholastic told me they weren't going to continue the series. It would end with Book 3, and they would only want the third book if I took a massive pay cut.

**I couldn't afford to take the pay cut.** We were already just squeaking by.

So I stopped working on the series, and wrote a bunch of writing books instead. *Mugging the Muse: Writing Fiction for Love & Money*, *Create a Character Clinic*, *Create a Plot Clinic...*

and a long list of other books and classes I'm not going to name goes here, but that kept a roof over our heads and food in our bellies.

Meanwhile, however, I kept hearing from the kids who wanted to know what happened next with Genna, Dan, the Cat...

And now those kids are adults.

**The rights to the first two books have reverted to me.** Today I start the read-through of the first one to get back into the world, to get the voice back, and to find and take notes on any toys I left on the floor that I can pick up for Book 3.

And after I did the first run of reading, I got an unexpected gift.

During a Hard Drive Move (which is never anyone's favorite thing) years ago (which I think coincided with our move from Georgia back to Florida, I lost track of the Book 3 outline and early chapters.

My older computer had become massively obsolete. I moved the backups to a new computer, and when I did this, Moon & Sun had already become a dead project, so I didn't check to make sure I could find it.

Forward a bunch of years to when I wanted to find it, and I couldn't. Realize... Macs have excellent backup, and really good search, and I knew what I was looking for. And no search term I had brought me to those manuscripts.

Today, on the day I started this project, I dug into an unrelated folder looking for something else, and found the entire Moon & Sun project in *there*, including the start of Book 3. Wasn't where it was supposed to be, but everything opens, everything is readable, everything is usable.

**It's a sign.** Time to write Book 3, time to get the first two into print again, time to bring this world back to life.

# Just finished the first draft of *The Owner's Tale* – Moon & Sun 3 on deck.

By Holly Lisle

So. Just now the first draft of *The Owners Tale*, the LAST episode in *Tales from the Longview*.

Wrote the final thousand-ish words this morning and part of this afternoon, and for now, at least, I like the ending.

I've printed off the manuscript (in 12 point Courier, double-spaced and with large margins, of course) where it will sit on my desk for at least one week to cool off.

I like a lot of stuff when it's still hot that I can see problems with once it's cooled off.

After it's cooled for at least a week, I'll go in, do a read through and a revision, and then hand off to Matt, who will do my content edit. I want to wow him. He already figured out a part of how it will end (he's just that good).

But he doesn't yet know why. That is where I want to really bring this home.

This is a story I've been working towards for a long time, through a lot of books. This is the story I've pulled from

dark corners and bad spots in my own life, from the lives of family, from the lives of other people who have not always had things easy. It's not personal, not any sort of roman á clef.

But through the fiction of the characters, I did manage to hit some things I've never been able to work into fiction before.

So here's the process once I get through the revision.

I hand off to Matt.

Matt points out all the places where I got it wrong, where I missed what I was going for, where I failed to give the characters the proper respect.

I go in and to an editor's revision.

I ask for a few folks to bug hunt THAT version.

I make corrections from the bug hunt.

I publish the final episode.

## **And then I start into *Moon & Sun 3: The Emerald Sun*.**

**Yep. FINALLY.**

I'm not going to rush through writing the final book in the series. In the episode of *Alone in a Room with Invisible People* that Rebecca and I taped yesterday (Episode 13: Plotting VS. Pantsing, which will go live TOMORROW – Tuesday, Oct. 16th) I talk a little bit about why.

I remembered to mention:

- Currently writing my **How to Write a Novel** class demo novel, *Dead Man's Party*
- Whiles also writing the first draft of the **How to Write a Novel** class

- Brainstorming and doing the weekly podcast with Rebecca
- Doing the other stuff that has to fit in with these major activities, like spending time with my guys, answering emails, paying bills, talking with folks on the forums, and doing the still-less-frequent-than-I'd-hoped blog posts

## **But the biggest thing about getting back to the series is this:**

I haven't read the first two books in years, and I have to step back into that world. I'm a visceral writing. I write from inside my characters, doing my best to become them while I'm writing.

So I have reacquaint myself with the nuances of these folks, both good and bad. Walk through the concept map I drew for Book 3. Remember how to step back inside those characters, and become again the girl at the end of childhood who has had the weight of her world land on her shoulders, and who, with a brother she sometimes fights with, friends who aren't as reliable as one would hope, and a cat who's lying through his teeth about who he really is, has to save her people from destruction.

If she doesn't do it, no one will.

I'm hoping to be able to announce the start of the novel around or shortly after Christmas of this year.

I expect that I'll need about a year to write and revise it. I cannot GUARANTEE that's what I'll need, because I'm not just doing one book these days. I'm doing a book, classes, forums, and other things that are possible with the Internet.

Life was simpler in the days of just print publishers and just answering snail mail letters from fans a few times a year.

But cooking on a wood stove and dumping a honey-bucket in the

midden downriver from your house were simpler, too. Been there, done that.

Simpler is not always better. *Vive la Internet!*

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# Moon & Sun: I'm now clear to write in my world again!

By Holly Lisle



I'm Celebrating!

I didn't want to say anything about the fact that I was pursuing the removal of the non-compete clause from my contract until I heard one way or the other.

I got the news today. **The non-compete clause for my Scholastic contract is dead**, and I'm now free to write stories in that

world again.

**So now the issue becomes looking at my schedule** and figuring out how and where I can start opening the world up again.

For a little context on my move to publishing my own work, read I've quit Big Publishing to publish myself.

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# Upcoming Stories and Classes

## #writer #reader

By Holly Lisle

I've been nearly invisible here for ages because migraines left me with barely enough energy to keep courses running and get some writing done. But a low-sodium diet is proving to have a 1:1 correlation with the migraines—if I accidentally eat something high in sodium, I pay for it with three days of migraines, starting within 24 hours of whatever I ate.

When I manage to avoid the salt, I feel normal. No vertigo. No icepick migraines. No regular migraines.

So if they aren't curable, the migraines are starting to look like they'll at least be controllable.

Second, because for the last three or four weeks I've been MOSTLY feeling better (you'd be amazed what has a lot of sodium in it, dammit), I've moved most of **How To Revise Your Novel** to the new platform. This is NOT a course upgrade—it's the identical course, but once I get it up and running, (I'm

looking at June 28th as my target goal for opening on the new site) the student discount on HTTS will come back. It will become available to students once they have completed the first month of HTRYN.

Then I'll move **How To Write A Series over**.

I'm nearly finished with **Create A World Clinic**, too, and I'll bring that out right before I start doing the **How To Write A Series Expansion**.

Because of the necessity of doing good, complete demos, and equally because of my desire to do the expansion in a timely fashion, I'm going to put off writing **The Emerald Sun: Moon & Sun Book Three** until I finish the expansion.

The **How To Write A Series Expansion**, will, instead, be six linked 10,000-word novelettes set in **Settled Space**, but with mostly different characters. This way, I'll be able to demo the complete, start-to-finish arc of a series, and all the details of keeping everything running between crossing storylines involving multiple characters.

After that comes the simultaneous writing of **The Emerald Sun** and the **HTTS Walkthrough Completion**.

And then I'm taking a frikkin' vacation. 😊

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**I'm officially on Holiday**



# Hours #wabwm

By Holly Lisle

Getting the whole month of December off didn't quite work out.

But I am taking off the rest of the month. I don't remember ever having been this tired before, but I now have a chance to rest. Mostly. Sort of.

UNTIL MONDAY, JANUARY 7th, I'll do Student Support on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. It's just me in there. Margaret is going on holiday, so it'll mostly be me WITHOUT major techie backup, so big problems will be "as I can fix them" or "when Margaret gets back".

On Monday, January 7th, I get back to work for real.

So what does next year's work look like?

## What Happens Next Year

First, I write **CREATE A WORLD CLINIC**. I have my outline in Scrivener, the first couple chapters are done already, and I'm FINALLY going to finish the thing. Starting in January.

**Drip** (the piece of software I needed to offer new BIG courses) is done and working. (Margaret built this, and it's wonderful.) This is HUGE. It means I can do workshops with small class sizes and personal feedback, new bigger courses, and "textbook" classes for things like CREATE A CHARACTER CLINIC and the upcoming CREATE A WORLD CLINIC, where we'll meet a few times in a single week, and I'll crit your creations. Real assignments. Real deadlines. ☐ It'll be fun.

Next year I'm bringing back the FULL, timed-lesson, everything-included version of **How to Think Sideways**. I have had a ton of requests to make the structured version with the

walkthrough, all the downloadable stuff, the bonus course, and the community as a single purchase available again.

**HTTS Direct** will still be around, and still be a less expensive and unstructured alternative. **HOWEVER**, after the new year, HTTS Direct lessons will come off their extended introductory price. Individual lessons will be \$5.99. The community + additional downloads option will remain available at the same price. When I have the Walkthrough finished, it will become available as a separate upgrade.

**How to Write A Series** will move to the new classrooms, and get the promised 6-lesson extension.

I'll write **THE EMERALD SUN**.

**How to Revise Your Novel** will move to the new classrooms.

I'll start **WISHBONE**.

I'll begin doing some live (online) workshops.

These are not in sequential order, and I'm not putting dates on any of this. I'll just work through the list, and get as much done on it as I can, take next December off (jumping up and down on this one), then pick up wherever I left off in January of 2014.

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