

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.

Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights Reserved

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 writer. I write from inside my characters, doing my best to become them while I'm writing.

So I have to 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!*

Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights Reserved

Discussing the MOON & SUN series: The Ruby Key, The Silver Door, and The Emerald Sun

By Holly Lisle

My most frequently asked question on THE MOON & SUN series is “When are you going to do the next book?”

So I’ll answer that one now. **I’m doing it next.**

When I come back to work after my break in December, I’m putting together the rest of the **Create a World Clinic**, and will use *The Emerald Sun* as part of my worldbuilding demo for that course.

THEN I’m doing the extension on my **How To Write A Series** course, and *The Emerald Sun* is going to be my demo for picking up a series after a break.

THEN, I’m going to finish the HTTS Walkthrough—and, you guessed it—doing the actual completion of the first draft of the novel is going to be the demo for THAT.

So by the end of 2013, the first draft of *The Emerald Sun* will be done. And I’ll get it into print as quickly as possible after that.

But if you have OTHER questions about the first two books, the series, or the upcoming *The Emerald Sun*, ask them here.

Cheerfully,

Holly Lisle

Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights Reserved

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 **WARPAINT**, 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

Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights Reserved

Bracing For The Storm

By Holly Lisle

I've been doing HTTS Walkthrough prep and setup all week.

Site set-up, lesson template setup, student set-up.

Today I did workflow setup. Because I'm doing two projects at once, and because one is nonfiction and one is fiction, and because they are inextricably locked together like Siamese twins—and because both are MASSIVE projects, either of which could sink me if I don't plan well—I built something different.

I made organizer wallpaper for my desktop. I then set up my desktop with all my templates and files and folders either to the side, or right on the spot where I'll need to use them. Workflow is top to bottom, and left to right.

And Saturday is my day off, dammit. Except for today.



A bit of organizational coolness against the coming storm. I'll let you know how it works.

Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights Reserved

The Last Moon & Sun and the Think Sideways Walkthrough

By Holly Lisle

More than a month after I intended to start, (due to Circumstances Beyond Our Control™), today I'm beginning **The Last Moon & Sun**...which is not the title of the book, but I have to call it *something* until I have a real title.

This is not a little project. This is...well, mammoth.

Why?

One: I haven't written in the series since I finished **Book II, The Silver Door**, in June of 2008, so I'm going to have to go back and redo my research in the first two novels—but this time I have to look for different things.

Two: I have to toss all of my outlines and plans for the series—I'd carefully planned out seven tightly-woven books. Unfortunately, I have to END the series with book three. Which means I have to come up with a whole new story for the ending.

Three: By the time readers have the chance to buy this book, it will be several years since the previous one. So **The Last Moon & Sun** cannot be part of the linked sequential series I'd laid out.

It has to answer all the questions I asked in Books 1 and 2...but because of the time gap (caused first by me having no clue how I could end the series in one book, and then me

spending all of last year with either family health problems and emergencies, or my own) I now have to REINTRODUCE the questions, so readers who didn't know Books 1 and 2 existed will still get a complete story in **The Last Moon & Sun**—while at the same time making sure readers who DID read the first two books will get all the answers they were hoping for, a fresh story that blows them away, and something good to remember when they finish the final page.

What I have to do:

The book is going to need some elbow room. The first two ran about 100,000 words apiece.

I'm aiming for 150,000 words for this one to keep it within bounds, but it may go longer, if I need more than that to tell the story.

I have a huge risk going into this. I don't have (or want) a contract. I want to be able to do this the way it needs to be done, and that means I don't want an advance that has to be paid back hanging over my head if the publisher doesn't like the story I come up with, or doesn't like the length of the book and wants me to rip out half of it and remove one of the two main characters, for example (because, gee, THAT's never happened to me before), or wants me to change the story in ways I don't like.

I'm hoping to write something magnificent, something my editor and publisher will love. I want to absolutely blow their socks off. But if I end up with another **Hawkspar** situation on my hands, I want to be in the position to say, "Fine, thanks but no thanks."

This is going to be a challenging ride. Big book, tough development cycle, compressed writing time—the sort of book that will generate a lot of learning experiences for me.

And, if you come along with me, for you.

I'm going to be adding mostly-weekly demonstrations on how I apply the techniques of **How To Think Sideways** to my own work to the course.

Why mostly-weekly? Because if it takes me longer than a week to work through one section of the process, I don't want to half-ass the information I put up on that section, and I don't want to screw up the book. So if it takes more than a week, it takes more than a week. The full lessons are already in there here, and if you get ahead of me, you can drop back to previous lessons to see what I did.

As happens with every book I write, I'll make some discoveries on how to write better, more richly, more efficiently, more passionately, and more deeply while I'm doing this book. Anything I discover, I'll pass on to you. Any tools I come up with, any worksheets I create for my own use, any techniques...you'll get them as I figure them out.

I'll make time to be on the boards to answer a few questions, to ask a few questions, and to set up some specific discussion topics.

And I'm adding one other thing. Each week that I post my own Walkthrough, I'll also be offering a one-hour brainstorming session to one student. I'll record that session and include it in the course so you can see not just how that week's techniques work for me, and how they might work for you, but how another student can apply them to his or her work—getting that third perspective can be enormously helpful when you're facing situations you hadn't anticipated.

Any active HTTS student or course grad will be able to apply for a brainstorming session. (Once you've been picked for one, you can't apply again, though.)

I'll pick the student whose question and story problem will make what I think will be the best demonstration for that week.

The brainstorming sessions will be free.

Now here's the thing.

I haven't raised the price on **How To Think Sideways** ever. It's been at its debut price since I opened the doors in 2008 and the first class started through with me.

I didn't raise the price when the course I thought would take four months to present took six months, and then seven.

I didn't raise the price when I added the **How NOT To Write A Series (And Why You Don't Want To)** course as a graduation gift.

I didn't raise the price when the private Think Sideways writing community took off and became this amazing place where dedicated writers gather to work, to brainstorm, and to send off and frequently sell what they've been writing.

I didn't raise the price when I added in the core elements of Grad Novel, including a marketing forum and a lot of private development work I did on the currently-sidelined **Dreaming the Dead**. (The book I'm finishing after I do **The Last Moon & Sun**.)

But this is going to be a MAJOR upgrade, so I'm going to raise the price.

Through the end of April, you'll still be able to get into class for \$25/ month for 12 months or \$47/month for six months. When you join at that price, you're grandfathered in at that price, and as long as you don't quit, you stay at that price all the way through to the end of the course.

May 1st, though, prices are going up.

If you've been wanting to take **How To Think Sideways** this is the last time you'll be able to get it for the introductory price.

I hope you'll join me on what promises to be a wild charge into the deep, dark thickets of novel writing.

Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights Reserved

Courses, classes, and novel for 2011

By Holly Lisle

So...I've been MIA for a bit more than two months.

I'm back now, and ready to get down to the cool stuff, but before I get to that, **here's where I've been, and why:**

After losing just about six months last year to constant migraines, vertigo, and there for a while the dread that I was going to drop dead any minute, I took time off from all my work except for answering customer service e-mails. I was off from December 17th to January 10th. Which is why there were no writing diary posts, no regular e-mails, and nothing else from me.

During that time, I didn't have a single migraine, I only had

one regular headache, and I had no vertigo. And I thought, cool. Rest fixed it. I'm all better.

Within two days of getting back to work, I was having migraines again. Every day. My second week back to work, the vertigo came back. Granted, I was doing taxes, dealing with a massive software glitch on one of my sites and world's worst customer service, and updating websites, and it was frustrating, exhausting, and—except for spiffing up the sites, which was fun—it sucked.

But it had to be done, so I gritted my teeth and did it.

It demonstrated something I'd started to suspect when my vacation cured the migraines and vertigo, though. I can't prove causation, but I have a strong enough correlation to think the migraines and the vertigo are both work-and-stress induced.

But a girl's gotta eat. And if you wanna eat—at least in the world of the self-employed—you gotta work.

Enough background. Move to what's cool.

I put together my schedule for the year, and did everything I could to make it sane, livable, cool, and fun for myself, while allowing me to fulfill promises I made last year before my life went south on me. My main objective in this is to create wonderful things while not living in daily pain—but I hope what I have planned will be fun for you, too.

So here's my 2011.

January.

Educational, but already gone, eaten alive by income tax prep and upgrading websites. Taxes are done, websites not so much. Such is life.

February.

Starting today, actually. I'm doing the new stand-alone course **How To Write A Series** (which will also be the free graduation bonus for **How To Revise Your Novel** students who complete the course).

▪ **Week 1: Fundamentals**

- The 192 different types of series (yes, really—there are **192**, and you'll learn to identify every single one)
- How to make sense of them
- How to choose the series type that's right for you
- Designing your series (It's going to be a busy week)

~~Lesson will post on Feb. 7th, Live chat will be on Feb. 9th.~~

▪ **Week 2: Writing Your First Book**

- Presenting your characters
- Establishing your world
- Using your limitations
- Controlling your story
- Bringing in your ending

~~Lesson will post on Feb. 14th, Live chat will be on Feb. 16th.~~

▪ **Week 3: Maintaining Your Series**

- Tracking and connecting your stories
- Developing and using timelines and other series tools

- Planning and writing follow-up novels
 - Designing a bullet-proof exit strategy
- ~~Lesson will post on Feb. 21st, Live chat will be on Feb. 23rd.~~

▪ **Live discussion: Q & A**

- If you've taken the course as I'm creating it, you can buy one of a limited number of tickets to attend the live session after Lesson 4 with me where I'll answer questions on your series and brainstorm with you, or...
 - You can send your questions to me beforehand at a special e-mail address, and I'll answer the best of them during the same live session.
 - Either way, every student will have access to the video and transcript of the **Week 4 Q & A**, which I'll post to your student page as quickly as possible after the live session.
- Lesson will post on Feb. 28th, Q & A will be on March. 2nd.

IMPORTANT: The **How To Write A Series course has **ONLY** one live Q&A at the very end of the course.**

The HTTS Walkthrough has weekly live chats. I wrote this post sometime after 1 a.m. this morning, I had been working since eight in the morning, and I got the details of the two courses mixed up. **I apologize for the error.**

The stand-alone price for the four-week course will be \$97, and will include mindmap, lessons, videos of techniques I use

while prepping to write Book III of the Moon & Sun series (with transcripts), step-by-step instructions, my own proven system for keeping a series tight and not letting quality degrade with subsequent books, series worksheets, the course completion Q & A, and more.

If you receive the course as your graduation gift for completing *How To Revise Your Novel*, it is, of course, free.

March

Starting March 7th, I'll begin creating content for the first month of the long-awaited, long-delayed **How To Think Sideways Walkthrough**. There's been a lot of speculation about the **Walkthrough**. So here's what it is, and how it will work.

I have to get the third book of the Moon & Sun series done this year. The kids who want to read it have waited too long already. So for the walkthrough, I'm going week by week through my own Think Sideways process, building **Book III** while I document what I'm doing and why. Documentation will take the form of notes, screen shots, new Technique videos (with transcripts), and pdf mini-lessons where I think they'll add value and give you something new and useful. (I learn something with every book I write. I don't know what I'll learn this time, but when I learn it, so will you.)

Each week I'll also offer a VERY space-limited, first-come, first-serve video session where I'll take questions from students about problems they're having with that week's lesson in relation to their current project, and I'll use a whiteboard to brainstorm directions they can take with problems that are stalling their stories. There will be an additional charge for the live session. ALL students will receive these videos (plus MP3s and PDF transcripts) as part of their course, as quickly as I can upload each. (TRANSCRIPTS TAKE LONGER. I have to pay someone to do them, and the person I hire has to do each one by hand.)

Either way, you'll learn how to troubleshoot problems with your story by seeing it done live, and hearing the back-and-forth discussion between the students in the live session and me.

Current students, students who join How To Think Sideways before March 1st, and course grads will all receive the walkthrough at no extra charge. The price of How To Think Sideways will go up on March 11th, when I upload the first new material, to reflect the added content. All students who join the course on March 11th or later will pay the new price.

April – September

The HTTS walkthrough, writing Moon & Sun Book 3, revising Book III, and sending it off to my agent.

October

Start the loooong-delayed **Holly Lisle's Create A World Clinic**.

November

Finish **Create A World Clinic** and make it available through Novel-Writing School, and via Kindle, iBook, and Nook.

December

Off. I'm going to need it.

January 2012

Tax prep. Oh goodie.

...After that...

I'll surprise you. I have some things already on the calendar. But it's not full, so I'll surprise me, too.

But THAT'S NOT ALL...

Because **Rebel Tales** now has full editors who have their full season guidelines posted, we're now open for story submissions in a BIG way. Writers, I've made resources easier to find, and have made the query desk one click from any page on the main site.

WE WANT STORIES!

Join us in our quest to create a great new serialzine while bringing back the midlist, and to create writers who are making a living from their writing while writing great stories.

Ask questions here, let me know what you think.

Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights Reserved

HollyLisle.NET and My Video Contest

By Holly Lisle

□ This is a contest for everyone, basically. If you can legally enter the contest where you live, and if you have a PayPal account (or your parents will accept prizes at theirs), you

can play. You can even play if you don't qualify—you just can't win.

All the details are on my new site:

HollyLisle.NET

Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights Reserved

More on Joshua Middleton

By Holly Lisle

Joshua Middleton, my magnificent cover artist for **The Ruby Key** and **The Silver Door** (I've seen it; I'm not allowed to share yet; it's stunning) has a very nice interview over at Tor right now.

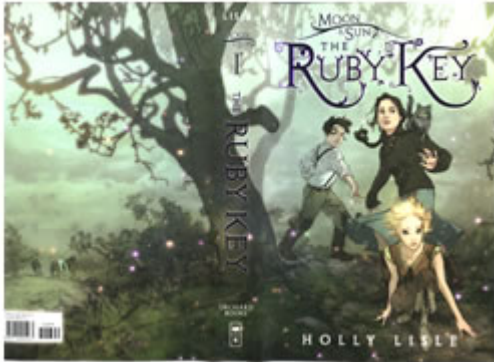
I had no idea I got his first novel cover ever. Talk about getting lucky...

And thanks to Craig Campbell, who let me know the post was there.

Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights Reserved

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.

Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights Reserved