The Ohio Series: Novel 1 — Define "crazy"… And a note about my email list revamp

By Holly Lisle

My main character is finding herself in a situation where reality is meshing badly with her previous understanding of reality. She's doing the best she can with it, but she's kind of missing the days when the worst thing that happened to her was that she got shot at.

Thinking maybe going back to THAT job would be a serious step up.

Had a great writing day, got 2053 new words, finished up yesterday's second scene, and got a good chunk of a new scene today. And I keep loving this world more and more.

My favorite moment today was my main character's "ahah!" moment about conspiracy theorists and their connection to areas in the country with low population densities. That might be tomorrow's snippet…

MAJOR fun.

Have I mentioned lately that I love my job?

And on a another topic, I am overhauling my mailing lists, simplifying the selections, and deleting a few things I'm not going to be pursuing anymore from the options, and have dumped the "game" concept from the option selection because it was impossible to maintain, and too hard for folks to use.

So if you are already on my mailing list, I've deleted all your tags except for the "big class owner" tags for HTWAN, HTRYN, HTWAS, and HTTS. You'll get the new "pick your

interests" email when I get it done."

If you're if you're considering signing up for emails from me in the next week, it's going to take me about a week to get you your Preference Email.

Here's why.

I've deleted all the tags folks added to their emails before. Have selected just the tags for projects and activities I'll be supporting in the future — and now I have to build that email. Selecting tags is a light process on the user end. It is intensive and complicated on the builder end, though, and as the builder, I'm going to need about a week to put together the structure that underpins "click the link you want, add that tag to your email."

So please hang with me while I get this done.

Removed almost 10,000 folks from my Writing Tips newsletter

By Holly Lisle

It was not the easiest thing I've ever done. There's something comforting about thinking you're talking to 21,000+ people at a time.

But at the point where folks haven't opened a single email

you've sent in six months, you're NOT talking to them.

So if you look at the green Writing Tips sign-up form in the sidebar, you'll see that instead of 21,779 people on the list, I now have 12,217. (Well, I just looked at at the moment it shows 13,000 and change…but the database shows the lower number, so I'm guessing it will take a little time for the form to catch up to my massive deletion).

I'll go through my other newsletters soon, and I'll do the same clean-out process. But I wanted to note that if you're on the Writing Tips newsletter, you can double-check to make sure you're STILL on it by opening any email from me and clicking the "Change Subscriber Options" link at the bottom.

If you're there and subscribed, good. If you're there and Unsubscribed, you can click the Subscribed button to start getting emails again.

If you get an error page, you didn't show up as having read anything for more than six months. You can sign-up again here if you'd like:

https://hollylisle.com/writer-updates-newsletter/

I'm getting back to adding new tips and answers to letters from readers to the list.

Results of the "Help I'm

Looking For" Writers' Survey

By Holly Lisle

I did a survey of folks on my Writing Tips newsletter, many of whom have dropped out of regular readership.

Many of whom have a good reason for doing so.

The migraines don't prevent me from working (most of the time) because I am tenacious and I'll put up with a lot of pain before I give up. (This is, after all, how I got published in the first place.) This post, for example, is the sort of thing I can do with a migraine.

But the part of me that is *creative* crawls off in a hole and cries during migraines. Coming up with writing tips is big-C *Creative*. It does not play well with migraines. And when I've been feeling halfway decent, I've been working on stuff that pays the bills.

But I want to get back to doing cool things with the newsletter. So:

I asked the following four questions:

Where are you in your writing progress right now?
Answers I got:

- **598 (76.6%)** said, "I'm working on creating my first work"
- **128 (16.4%)** said, "I've finished projects, but I don't know how to revise them"
- **46 (5.9%)** said, "I'm self-publishing regularly, but would like to do it better"
- **8 (1%)** said, "I've given up—I've moved on to other

interests"

Receiving the following emails would help me reach my writing goals:
Answers I got (these were multiple choice, so totals are more than 100%):

- **956** said, "Writing tips once a month"
- **707** said, "Questions from readers that you answer once a month"
- **679** said, "Links to blog posts discussing aspects of writing that interest me (select preferred topics from SUBJECTS list)
- **490** said, "Notice of new writing articles on your site"
- **219** said, "Shop coupons"

The writing SUBJECTS I most need help with are:
Answers I got (these were multiple choice, so totals are more than 100%):

- **845** said, "Writing skills info: plotting, characterization, scene development, dialogue, worldbuilding, story structure and pacing, etc."
- **627** said, "Advanced skills: career development, novel revision, series development and management, etc."
- **619** said, "Functional skills: time management, motivation, scheduling writing time, developing project deadlines, etc."
- **498** said, "Basic creative start-up info: how to get ideas, how to start stories, how to make myself write, etc."
- **310** said, "Basic technical start-up info: software, hardware, document formatting, contact instruction such as how to write query letters, etc."
- **88** said, "Something else" From this, I've received a bunch of new course requests, including a LOT on self-publishing, self-promoting, some advanced writing topics, some absolute beginner writing topics…. I'm

putting the requests into an inspiration folder that I can pull from when I get ready to create new courses. As always, I'll run ideas through here first to make sure enough people are interested to make it worth the investment in my time and effort. There are some GREAT ideas in there.

Do you resent me including information on my available novels and writing courses in your free emails?
Answers were:

- **1056 (99.5%)** said, "No."
- **5 (0.5%)** said "Yes. (Please cancel your subscription. While I'm willing to offer free help to struggling writers, I can only do this if I get paid for the novels and courses I create. If you resent my inclusion of links to the work that allows me to help you, you don't want my help. Unsubscribe instructions are below.)"

So far, about a hundred others however, most of whom did not fill out the survey, unsubscribed.

So what does this mean?

- First, it means that I have some wonderful folks on my list—and for those of you who sent good wishes on the migraines, thank you very much.
- **Second, it means that I'm going to be getting back to work on adding new stuff to the writing tips list.**
  Folks in Year One on the list will get a new writing tip every week. Folks who have been with me for more than a year should start looking for one writing tip a month, plus one other cool content email—either a round-up of writers questions and answers, or a discussion of some aspect of writing or publishing I'm currently dealing with, or a link to a blog discussion here, or one of the other things folks would find useful.

- **I'll continue to include links to courses I offer that meet the needs students have noted above.** Aside from new releases, which I'll promote regularly for a week or two, the links will be attached to content emails, and they'll just fly by, so if you see something you like, go after it when you see it.
- **I'm going to be adding what I'm thinking of as *Specific Task Classes* to HowToThinkSideways.com.**
  These will be classes that use existing courses: *Character Clinic*, for example. You get *Character Clinic* separately, and then you do a Specific Task Class to create (as an example only) the Hero, Sidekick, Romantic Interest, and Villain for your next story.

  Or a class built around Plot Clinic that will help folks set up plots for related 2500-word short stories to sell as limited-run series.

  For Specific Task Classes (I'll come up with a better name, I promise), you bring your own textbook, but you'll get worksheets, audio, demos, a work board for live interaction with other students. Not sure what else. My objective with these is to keep the price low.

Here's the link to sign up for the newsletter, in case you didn't know I offered it: https://hollylisle.com/writer-updates-newsletter/

Oh, if you want to ask a writing question for the newsletter (these will ONLY be answered in the newsletter, and I'll pick the best questions to answer every month), ask them at THIS link: http://novelwritingschool.com/support2/

Comments?
Questions?

Another Newsletter Question

By Holly Lisle

When people drop out of the Writing Updates newsletter, (and take the time to tell me why), it's almost always because I'm sending more newsletters than they can read.

As you can see from my 400+ emails post the other day, I DO understand the problem, and I don't want to contribute to someone else feeling as flattened by relevant e-mails as I do.

So here's a poll. Please let me know how often you could get and *actually read and use* the Writing Updates newsletter.

You should be able to see the results this time, so you'll know how it's going.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this and vote on it.

How often should I mail out the HLWU newsletter?	
○	Once every other week
○	Once a week
○	Twice a week
	Vote
	View
pollcode.com free polls	