

# **SURPRISED!!! Two characters who went missing reappeared today with a helluva story...**

written by Holly

May 27, 2022

By Holly Lisle

I didn't know what to expect when I sat down to write today, and what happened when the words started rolling in came at me from out of left field.

The whole writing time was pretty perfect – it answered a question I thought I'd lost track of, allowed me to bring back two folks I loved, and just FLEW as I worked my way through the scene.

1369 total words for the day and 52,059 on the novel... and I'm in great shape to pick this back up on Monday.

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

---

## **Longview #4: Write-in revision completed**

written by Holly

May 27, 2022

By Holly Lisle

I finished up the write-in revision this morning, and while I was at it, completed the story blurb:

## TALES FROM THE LONGVIEW, EPISODE 4: Gunslinger Moon

*When freedom is silenced, how does it speak?*

Ex-PHTF slave WE-39R (This Criminal, from Episode 1), renamed Jex, is part of a team the Longview's Owner has tasked with finding the meaning behind Bashtyk Nokyd's enigmatic final diagram. Drawing the most undesirable assignment, Jex and an unlikely ally fight their way to pieces of the truth.

Note the new title. I'd written up one hundred possible titles for the episode, and asked several people to select possible winners from among them. Got back the selections, but Matt read the story and all one hundred of my possibles, and he said, "None of those," and spent a few minutes in silence. After which he said, "Gunslinger Moon."

And he was right. It's perfect.

***Editor wins when editor is right.***

So. This is the story of the team the Owner sets to the task of figuring out what the hell the philosopher meant with that diagram he drew at the dinner table (shown above).

This episode is the quiet before the storm.

The storm comes in ***Episode 5: The Vipers' Nest***, a BIG chunk of which is already written.

And Episode 6, for which I haven't even a hint of what the title might be, will conclude the series.

Oh, right. Type-in revision tomorrow! Should be able to have it finished in one day.

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



can offer your skills in the RMW Market with my recommendation as your first client.

This is the program to apply for if you want to get to read a lot of fiction, and work with writers to help them make their fiction the best it can be, and to learn how to get it out into the world to reach other readers.

If you maintain your active status as an intern, you will get hands-on experience and training in doing:

- Professional-quality crits
- Manuscript Content Editing
- Manuscript Copy Editing
- Manuscript Text Layout and Manuscript Formatting
- Cover copy and promotional copy
- Cover Design
- Fiction copy and launch building

Each of these skills is needed not just by me, but by the members of ReadersMeetWriters.com

And I'll be recruiting FROM the membership of ReadersMeetWriters.com for my first interns. Here's the program.

**BEGINNING INTERNS—You'll work with my previously published work doing:**

- Reading and bughunting
- Manuscript layout and pre-formatting (for novels) and ebook creation (for short fiction)
- Writing cover copy and other promotional copy
- Designing cover art
- BASIC fiction launch training

**ADVANCED INTERNS—Interns who perform well and reliably and hit deadlines consistently will move on to working with my new fiction as I write it, doing:**

- Reader crits of first drafts
- Content editing of final drafts
- Manuscript copyediting
- **ADVANCED** fiction launch training

**BEGINNING INTERNS** will receive my downloadable training for bug-hunting, manuscript layout and formatting, writing cover copy, designing cover art, and basic fiction launches, and you'll get my input on each step you complete.

When the split-tester becomes available, we will split-test cover-copy, cover art, and launch elements, and you will be able to see which of your own work is best (you'll do multiple entries), and how your work stacks up against the work by others—and you'll be able to use what you learn to improve your skills.

By successfully completing each section, interns will receive my recommendation and points in ReadersMeetWriters.com, as well as the courses I offer that include additional training.

Interns will also receive an acknowledgment in each book on which they are an active participant.

I have room for twelve interns who will work in teams of three on the 19 projects I have ready to go. I will open up replacement slots for any interns who drop out of the program.

**Interns with whom I work well and who enjoy working with me will progress to the **ADVANCED PROGRAM**.**

All advanced interns will take How To Revise Your Novel at an accelerated pace, and will use this course to understand how to revise and edit fiction. You will each receive first-draft manuscripts of previously published works of mine to use for practice, and once you have completed the course and a full edit of a first-draft manuscript, will work with me on live fiction as I create it.

**ADVANCED INTERNS** will also take the advanced fiction launch training I am currently developing, and will set up test launches. Successful test launches will become live launches. When each **ADVANCED INTERN** runs a successful live launch, that intern will receive fiction launch certification for use in RMW. I will contract with one or two certified fiction launchers to plan, set up, and run my own launches, and will recommend certified fiction launchers to RMW members looking to hire them.

This intern program will be a lot of work, will not cost you anything, but also will not pay you anything.

You'll receive free training; you'll receive points and recommendations in RMW if you do well; you'll receive acknowledgement in the books you help fix.

And as I'm able to move from the intern-training model to hiring contractors, I will.

If you want to apply for an internship, watch your email from the RMW list. If you are not currently a member, you can join ReadersMeetWriters.com, which is still in its BETA stage. I'll send an email out early next week.

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

---

## **Back to 33 Mistakes for a bit**

written by Holly  
May 27, 2022  
By Holly Lisle

For the next few days, I'm working like mad to get all the 33

Mistakes books I have up on the website.

My editor ended up not being able to do them, and I want to have them done before I start writing the **How To Revise Your Novel** course. My authors have already been waiting a long time—I don't want all of them just hanging there, waiting some more while I write HTRYN.

I have some great stuff, too. Russia, Contemporary Life, Hostelling, Early American History, Camping...

Watch for them as they show up in the shop.

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

---

# New Editor for the 33 Mistakes Books

written by Holly

May 27, 2022

By Holly Lisle

No secret that I've been swamped, or that I've fallen behind on a lot of projects that I have going.

So I'm delighted to announce that Lazette Gifford is going to be the production editor for the **33 Worst Mistakes Writers Make** series. We have a couple of details to work out still, but some of the manuscripts I have on hand are going to her tonight, along with contact details for the authors.

I'll still be doing acquisitions, but I'm not taking any more queries until we get the current books caught up.

If you have a book or several that have been caught in my bit of limbo here, e-mail me and I'll get you caught up on the details.

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

---

# Stress, Migraines, and Stuff You Love

written by Holly

May 27, 2022

By Holly Lisle

As noted elsewhere—I hauled ass like nobody's business for eight months to create a way for me to write the novel I wanted to write without having to do it to anybody's specifications but my own.

My mad plan worked, and for the first time since I was an RN, I had a regular, reasonable income that did not depend on me writing at a hard run in order to keep us all fed.

I got started on the **Dreaming the Dead**—the novel of my passion—and I was having a wonderful time with it, sitting down late at night every night and getting as many words as I got before I fell asleep. No pressure, no specific deadline (a vague one in the back of my mind only), and not even any dedication to the idea of writing to a market or marketing the book when it was done. I was writing for the sheer love of writing—to spend time with characters I could not find anywhere else, to explore a fascinating problem, to uncover mysteries and wonders.

Yes, I fully intended to send it to my agent. When it was done. When I was damn good and ready.

And then...

And then...

**Brief aside here:** You might have noticed, if you've been around here or in Think Sideways, that I ... ah ... am not a good relaxer. I am very good at deadlines, very good at pushing hard toward goals, very good at driving myself.

Taking my time? Taking it easy? Doing things just for fun? Not my best skill. I know this about me, but I sometimes forget it. **End Brief Aside.**

I forgot why I had worked so hard last year and part of this one. I forgot that THIS book was supposed to be special, different, NOT the same ferocious race to the finish line, doing the absolute best I could in the absolute least time humanly possible so that I could get paid and we could eat.

I forgot. And I set what seemed like a reasonable deadline for myself. 2000 words a day, more or less.

I also forgot that my life is different now. When writing fiction was all I had, writing fiction WAS all I had. I could put the rest of the world aside for long stretches and just push for the finish line.

I wrote, I got frustrated and guilty because I wasn't getting other things done. When I got other things done, I got frustrated and guilty because I wasn't writing. Over the last couple of days, I got hammered by headaches, stress, and guilt, my productivity on everything dropped to miserable levels, and I started hating life. In one week. From one change: the decision to write Dreaming the Dead to a "publish it" deadline.

I sat down this morning and took stock of what I have going on

that is NOT the novel–stuff I love and am thrilled to be doing and want to complete.

You can look at the mindmap I did here, or the outline version here.

The fact is, my life is full of cool and wonderful work. And writing fiction is the cool and wonderful play I had planned for the end of each day.

I need to get back to my original plan.

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

---

# The Hard, Cold Publishing Numbers

written by Holly

May 27, 2022

By Holly Lisle

I'm not sure why I got sucked into this today. Maybe so it would stop looping through my head driving me crazy.

This is the second model I came up with, and I've been playing with portions of it since Friday. I wrote it all out today, and ran the numbers. It's pretty scary.

=====  
THE NEVER-ENDING MAGAZINE NO MORE  
=====

The biggest change in my model, and the one that could actually make this idea work, would be to create it on the

SEASON model, based on TV series and their DVD aftermarket sales.

Here's how the season model would work. You would buy a season of the Serialzine: Either a six-issue, three-month short season (you'd get your next sub every two weeks), or a 12-issue, six-month long season. All stories started in the season would end in that same season, so they would be, for the most part, started in Episode One, and finished by Episode Six. Writers would certainly want to leave more for their main characters to do after the conclusion of the season, but within the season, you would receive somewhere between four and eight complete novels/novellas and a handful or double handful of short stories, depending on the length of the season.

Along with your sub, you would receive a season membership in the private sections of the serialzine community, with overlap until the next season came out. Lifetime subscribers would receive permanent residency rights in the community.

There would be a small public board for Q&As from folks who hadn't subscribed, and any member could post there as well, but the meat of the community—voting, discussing stories, badgering writers for more stuff, figuring out how to sell your own stuff—would take place in private.

Whenever you bought—the day the season opened, the day the first subscribers got their final issues, two years later—YOUR subscription would start with Episode One, and every two weeks, you'd be mailed the link to the next issue, so no one would ever come in partway through a story. No spoilers (unless you went to the SPOILERS board).

For writers and affiliates, continuing sales of each season would create a wonderful little recurring stream of income. (It does create some issues with publication duration, and it might be necessary to have a hard limit on how long any given

season would continue to be available. **Or maybe not.** This is just me, but long as I owned everything but first serial rights to a magazine series, if the magazine wanted to keep paying me forever for the right to keep the serial version in print, I'd be okay with that. Don't know about you.)

**When their stories were accepted, writers would receive a permanent Green Room membership.** I think we might need to have a non-disclosure agreement in place in the Green Room so that writers could use the Green Room to openly discuss the next stories they were working on there with each other, post snippets, brainstorm, create mastermind groups to help each other with their careers, and so on.

=====

## STORIES

=====

One story per issue would be complete in that issue, and would be a sort of "how this character became a hero" story, with the idea that you were creating a character designed for a series, and that if you got good reader feedback, you would write longer things for future seasons.

We would have a vested interest in continuing to work with writers who stuck with their series characters through more than one season. Each season's work would have to stand on its own, but continuing characters, including the hero, would encourage readers who joined with season two to go back to season one to pick up the earlier story about a continuing character that they loved.

Top vote-getting authors would be eligible to appear in sequential seasons if they had something ready to go. We would, however, want to continue bringing in new writers, so each complete-in-one-issue story would be reserved for new faces.

Authors would **ONLY** sell the serial rights to your story. You

would retain all other rights—ebook, print pub, foreign, licensing, and on and on and on.

Ditto this on art rights: The artwork would be single episode use only, will all other rights retained by the artist.

=====

## ARTWORK

=====

Each episode of a series would use a cover by a different artist, but each cover would contain that artist's interpretation of each of the story heroes IN THAT EPISODE. For example, (I'm going to use all my stories as one cover because I know my own protagonists' names), Episode One would have a cover of Cadence Drake, Talyn, Hawksparr, solo episode character Medwind Song, and Dayne Kuttner in some sort of "Sopranos looking at the Camera" pose by Artist #1.

Episode Two would have a cover of Cadence Drake, Talyn, Hawksparr, solo episode character Earwax, and Dayne Kuttner, as interpreted by Artist #2.

=====

## THE EDITOR

=====

The editor would read slush, select the ones he or she loved and thought were ready to go, and the ones that were promising with some work. The ones he (for the sake of convenience) thought were ready to go would come to me and I'd either give them a go, a no-go, or suggestions on what I thought they needed in order to be publishable. The ones that were "promising with some work" would go back to the author from the editor with a request for revisions. The editor could say "no thanks" at any time. Final approval on all stories, though, would come from me. My name on the magazine, you know.

=====

## THE PUBLISHER

=====

I would pay people—authors, editor, affiliates, artists, website, tech folks, and everyone else. Would deal with advertisers. Would select the final stories that would go into each issue. Would deal with website issues, sign-up and subscription issues, and customer service. Approve final cover art.

=====

## THE BIG BAD UGLY NUMBERS

=====

Here's where my stomach churns just a little bit. SFWA requirements for a pro market are here. A market has to meet pro-market standards for a year before your writers can be considered a pro by SFWA (not important to some folks, I know, but important enough to others that it becomes important to me), so if you're trying to be a place where writers can break into pro writing, there's not a lot of sense in doing this if it doesn't start out professional in attitude, payment, and quality.

My objective is to create a market you can use to start your pro writing career.

Here, then, is:

=====

## WHAT A SEASON COSTS

=====

These are all short-season figures (three months, six issues).

50,000 words per serial x 4 stories x \$.05/word = \$2500/  
author x 4 authors = \$10,000

One 8333 word short x \$.05/word per issue = \$417 x 6 authors=  
\$2500

(These story lengths are estimated for my convenience. Stories

would be figured by actual word length, and we'd fit them in as they fit. In essence, though, you'd get five authors and about 40,000 words of fiction per issue.)

65% of short season minimum for authors to meet SFWA \$.05/word guidelines = \$12,500

20% of short season minimum for publisher = \$3846

All overhead comes out of publisher's percentage, so for the publisher, (me) from the number above, subtract:

\*art budget

\*web design and maintenance

\*website and bandwidth fees

(significant if we host mp3 versions + community)

\*budget to pay audiobook reader(s)—no clue what this would cost

\*budget to pay for conversion to formats other than PDF

\*consultation with a lawyer on serial-rights-only contracts

\*community moderators (maybe a free season sub plus perks for moderating in lieu of pay)

\*other terrifying stuff I haven't thought of yet (please point out anything you can think of)

Divvy up what's left over the three months for a short season, and this becomes a pure labor of love for me—or a big tax loss leader, because I would make a lot more money working on my own stuff. And frankly, I'm not in the tax bracket where I need big write-offs just yet. So how much it costs me to do this (in terms of time lost to more profitable projects) becomes a factor, too.

15% of short season minimum for editor = \$2885

(Pretty much a labor of love for the editor, too, at the minimum rate)

Total minimum costs per short season = \$19,231

(Three months, six issues)

=====  
Double that for a long season.  
=====

Total costs per long season = \$38,462  
(Six months, twelve issues)

=====  
THE BIG "DROP DEAD" WE HAVE TO MAKE THIS  
MUCH PER ISSUE OR WE DIE NUMBER  
=====

Total cost per issue = \$3206

This is a lot of money (and compared to paper publishing, I know it's not much at all, but for a start-up ezine, it's a LOT.)

=====  
TO COVER COSTS  
=====

Advertisers come after subscribers. If you have no subscribers, you'll have no advertisers. SO we have to get subscribers first.

To cover costs by simple subscription, the formula is MINIMUM of X PEOPLE times Y PRICE.

The minimums below are our "drop dead" subscription numbers—the number of subscribers below which the season would drop dead (if we didn't have enough alternative income to make up the difference.) For affiliate sales, because affiliates would get 50% of each sale they made as recurring income, (minus paypal fees) two subs would be required to equal one straight sub. So these are REALLY minimum numbers, which assume no sales would come in through affiliates. Realistically, if we have affiliates, add 30%-45% of subscribers to this number.

The presence of community membership might make the higher-priced subs viable. I don't know.

Anyway, here are the "drop dead" numbers.

535 people at \$6/per issue, which is, I think, WAY more than the market will bear.

\$36/ per short season \$72/ per long season

642 people at \$5/per issue. Ditto above.

\$30/per short season \$60/ per long season

802 people at \$4/per issue. Probably ditto above.

\$24 per short season \$48/ per long season

1069 people at \$3/per issue. Which we MIGHT be able to get.

\$18/ per short season \$36/ per long season

1283 people at \$2.50 per issue.

\$15/ per short season \$30/ per long season

=====

There could be a couple of split sub prices:

=====

A sub that included all media EXCEPT audio could be \$2.50 per issue, while a sub that included all media PLUS audio could be \$5 per issue, for example. That might help defray the big bandwidth costs associate with hosting audio.

Maybe if you didn't want to be part of the community, that would be .25 off each issue. (Community being one of those big bandwidth eaters, she says from experience.)

=====

There could be lifetime subs.

=====

If you bought a lifetime sub with the first issue, it would be, say, \$200. And there would only be a limited number, but

the people who bought them would not just get a lifetime sub. They would also get some kind of cool perk. Their own private Hero Members bulletin board in the community? Votes on upcoming cover art? A private teleseminar chat with the authors who wrote that season? I don't know. Suggest stuff. Prices for lifetimes subs for people who bought later would be higher—the folks who take a chance on a new market would receive a break.

How many lifetime subs would be available? Maybe ten or twenty per season? Not enough to fund the thing, but certainly enough to help.

=====

### Advertising

=====

Some possibilities:

1/16 page= \$0.15 per subscriber

1/8 page= \$0.20 per subscriber

1/4 page= \$0.30 per subscriber

1/2 page= \$0.50 per subscriber

Subscriber numbers update live and are posted in the advertising area. No ads available until there are a minimum number of subscribers for the season, and ads available for a season until the week before the season goes live. What's the minimum number of subscribers before I'd sell ads? Don't know yet. Probably 33% to 50% of our season "drop dead" number (the number where, if we don't have that many subs or alternate funding equal to that number of subs, we drop dead). Remember, this is all just roughing things out.

If there were 600 subscribers the day you bought, you'd pay, per issue, NOT per season:

\* \$90 for a 1/16 page ad.

\* \$120 for a 1/8 page ad.

\* \$180 for a quarter-page ad.

\* \$300 for a half-page ad.

This might seem steep, but remember that each season is complete unto itself, would remain evergreen (it would stay on sale) and has a community plus affiliates selling subs to back it up. The numbers on the day you buy will be the lowest numbers that season ever has. And new subscribers to that season, because they will start with Episode One, will see all ads. They might not read them, but they will see them.

Opinions? Suggestions? Comments?

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

---

# The “Couldn’t Get WordPress To Let Me In” Responses

written by Holly

May 27, 2022

By Holly Lisle

Oh, boy. I’m not putting names on these because they were sent to me privately and not all of them had the “couldn’t get WordPress to work” comment.

	SIDE NOTE: I host my weblog myself, on my own site, which means your WordPress.com ID won't work here. You need to create an ID for this weblog. To do that, just click the LOGIN link to the right, and when you get to the login box, click the link underneath that says "Register."	

Along with the many public posts, there have been some private e-mails. Some have been cautionary:

*"My gut tells me that it isn't a good idea. Even the big-name fiction publications like Analog and Asimov's don't sell all -that- well anymore. The system you've concocted works very much in the author's interests—but I don't know if people would be able to stomach a magazine full of serials.*

*When people buy something, they want the whole thing—they don't want a small piece, they don't want a chunk. They want something whole. Admittedly there are many series books—but each book in itself contains a whole story. I don't think it'd work.*

*I don't like to smash things, least of all dreams, but that's an expensive venture to undertake, and if there's no interest in it, there's no point in it.*

**And:**

*Personally, I can't see myself keeping track of five story lines in my head at the same time, and having to wait for two months for the next installment. I do like short novels, but I like to be able to read them in a short burst. So put me down as a "No, thanks."*

Some have offered solid problems that need to be dealt with:

1) *With regard to incentive to buying back issues. Say you have an AMAZING story that has been running for a while. A new subscriber picks up the latest issue, reading the latest installment of the story, and BAM, they read spoilers... It's almost like turning to halfway through a new book by your favourite author, isn't it? Is that reader \*really\* going to want to pay to go back and read the earlier sections now that the story is spoiled for them?*

2) *The \$1 pay-per-vote; is this on TOP of the subscription fee? Or does the sub include a built-in vote?*

3) *Filesharing. I wouldn't say this is a concern if you're offering an electronic edition of an entire completed book, because even if someone buys the e-book, they will likely go get the real book for their shelf. But we're talking about entirely electronic distribution until the end of each series; in which time someone could pay to download the latest issue, and share it with 1000 people via bit-torrent, rapidshare, etc. And that's 1000 people that don't have to pay a subscription.*

*In any case, I'd definitely be up for that editor's position.  
=)*

And:

*My only thought about the model is it doesn't address overhead. Were you planning to go with Lulu to do that as well?*

**And:**

*1. RE: Suckitudinous Fiction: You could actually put a piece in each issue that conveys exactly what you mean by 'Suckitudinous Fiction' if you can find authors who are willing to submit pieces that fit this criteria. A sort of "How NOT to write good fiction" piece just for fun.*

*2. There is no indication as to how submissions will be judged/accepted. Who will be reading them for content and craft? Who will decide what authors get published in each issue?*

*3. If you accept an author's submission for a serial—do you want the entire piece upfront? If so, good. If not, what if said author flakes out on the story—as in the piece becomes weak and drags or just does not deliver the quality of the first part?*

*4. Who will your editors be? Will they go with people they know (i.e., friends) or be totally unbiased?*

*5. While "big name" authors are fine, they already have many venues that, sadly, do not question their work. (Some are even getting their latest works published that may never have made it through the front door just because their \*NAME\* is stamped on the manuscript.) Do Big Names really need another venue? If your goal is to offer a place for new authors to gain a footing and a following, then make them the draw and let their voices speak for them. Your editors (see #4 above) will be able to weed out the excellent from the mediocre and, while that might make it a bit harder to sell in the beginning, the quality of the publication and the work it contains will build the reputation for you. A quality product*

does not always need Big Names to get it flying. It could actually be a drawback if I, as a new and struggling author, want a place to call home as I fledge into the world. I would not want to compete with those names just yet. And, I would see them as taking up space that should, under your proposal, go to the new voices out there.

Sorry to be sending this to you as an e-mail rather than putting it in the comments section on your site. I wish I could figure out how to get in there. lol But, these are my comments for now. I like your plan, save for those questions already being asked as well as my questions. It sounds exciting and doable. I would be interested both as a writer and as a reader.

And...

While I like the idea of your model in theory, I wouldn't subscribe. I'm just not interested in getting little chunks of little novels, so widely spaced out in time. My flavour of serial fiction is the television or long novel series.

That said, I suggest really looking at the community-related suggestions you're getting, because I am the customer who chooses which series to try based on the buzz I hear about them from people I trust or the critical excitement in communities that share my interests. If I try 'em and like 'em, I gobble them up as soon as they're released in my preferred format.

For me, "Ola™ No-Title" would be the TV that I don't watch, and the book later published by the author would be the season-on-DVD that I buy and watch in two days. I guess that's not directly useful to you as the cable company, but it might be something to think about as the writing patron.

And some were pretty encouraging:

*I love the idea of a magazine full of serial stories. I'd subscribe to it.*

*CLIFFHANGERS would be a good name.*

*I think, though, if you limit yourself to two sci-fi stories, two fantasy stories, and one genre to be decided later, you're doing just that: limiting yourself. Maybe one sci-fi, one fantasy, and three to be determined later. The three could always include another sci-fi or fantasy story.*

*If the subscriber base is composed chiefly of writers hoping to get into the magazine, so what? I don't know how many subscribers your blog and newsletter get, but I'd guess it was considerably more than a couple hundred. I'd also guess that a number of them would subscribe just to be supportive. It's a business write-off for a working writer anyway.*

Some I have not included because their authors asked me not to or included personally identifying details that I do not believe they wish to share.

## **And Then...**

Much to my astonishment I also managed to create a tempest in a tepot over my tiny remark that porn sells but I'm not interested in selling it.

Here's the quote that pissed 'em off.

*It's still selling fiction on the internet, albeit with printed novels taken from each issue eventually available, and I've seen that, at least with current models (unless you're doing porn, which is out of the question), selling fiction on the Internet is about as effective and fun as nailing your hand to a wall.*

**I'd think it would be obvious to anyone with a brain that ANY writer who is writing both adult and YA fantasy under her own name is not going to be even remotely interested in including anything that could be categorized as porn, or romantica, in a magazine she's ALSO putting out under her own name.**

Was I insulting porn? Romantica? No.

I was noting that porn/romantica is the ONE type of fiction that you can sell on the internet and know it will go. The stuff sells, and sells very well, and where there's one big market for it, there's certainly another. And some of it is very well written. I'm simply not interested, even a little bit, in being that market.

Yes, when money was a nightmare a couple of years ago, I bought a handful of Ellora's Cave's offerings with the idea of cooking up a pseudonym and doing a few of them, just to bring in the extra bucks. Some I thought were funny as hell, a few were pretty hot, some I didn't care for, but in the end, no matter how much money I might have made doing them, I figure you only get so much time—and so many books to write—before you die. You better make sure every one you do is one you want to claim.

I looked at my career, I decided I'd rather sink my time and effort into another novel on the Tonk than one where the main point is to see how many guys can lick whipped cream off the tied-up heroine before the hero decides he isn't mad anymore and comes in and chases them off so he can bang her. Yeah, that was one of the ones I read while sampling the genre. It was funny. Cute. But it had no theme, no subtext, no deeper meaning. It didn't make me think, it didn't challenge my beliefs, it didn't echo in my mind after I read it. It didn't change the way I looked at the world even a little bit. If I'm not looking for the *Why* of the world in what I'm writing, or in what I'm reading, I'm wasting my time.

This is me.

You are you. Your mileage may vary, and you may drive wherever you like with the gas you have left.

## And Finally...

I think I figured out a way to answer most of the problems with my first model. Give me another couple of days to get my thoughts in order and run numbers to see how doable it is.

As far as I'm concerned, if I'm not going to be able to pay writers AT LEAST the SFWA minimum pro-market rate right out of the gate, the thing is a no-go.

But I think I've figured out how to do that.

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

---

# So, About That Publishing Thing

written by Holly

May 27, 2022

By Holly Lisle

As I mentioned in the Writing Updates a short while back, I figured out how to do the publishing thing. Now, not five or ten years from now.

But knowing **how** to do it and knowing **if** I should do it are two different things.

Here's the thing. I came up with a wonderful business model

that would create a great magazine and publish people's books as a natural part of that, that would pay authors a huge percentage of what the magazine would make, and that would be doable within the year, even with finding an editor and writers for the stories.

But it all comes down to this:

## **Is there any demand for it?**

It's still selling fiction on the internet, albeit with printed novels taken from each issue eventually available, and I've seen that, at least with current models (unless you're doing porn, which is out of the question), selling fiction on the Internet is about as effective and fun as nailing your hand to a wall.

Look, here's model. You find the holes—the things that wouldn't work, the things that suck, the things that would break. And figure out, at the same time, if this is genuinely something you would sign up for, **not as an author**, because I know right now if I open this up, we'll have authors coming out our ears. But as a subscriber, because without a big boatload of subscribers, we can't pay the authors, and the whole thing dies.

## **Start With the Product**

The magazine. No title yet. The one I've come up with is pretty dorky. So...

**01' No-Title** would feature:

- Science Fiction (two each issue), Fantasy (two each issue), and Surprise Me (one each issue)
- Story-driven content—if the story could be a poster child for Suckitudinous Fiction, it's out. (No, we

aren't trying to win a Pulitzer. We're trying to write gut-grabbing adventures.)

- 100% Serials
- A strong focus on original, well-detailed worlds and compelling characters
- A sense of fun.
- Bi-monthly publication (once every two months, not twice a month)
- CLIFFHANGERS

That's the magazine.

## **Then Look At The Business Model**

- Every issue except the first one would start one series and end one series. Each series would feature 5 10,000-word(ish) installments, and the actual books being serialized would run 50,000 words. Very short novels, in other words—not the kind that would sell to a traditional publisher, but the kind that would be profitable for authors to produce on Lulu in a sell-direct fashion, and that would be fun and affordable for readers to buy.
- Subs would be \$6 per issue bought one at a time, \$5.25 per issue bought every six months, and \$4.50 per issue bought annually. The sub would cover the ezine site costs, publishing, editing, and paying authors. More on how people get paid in a minute.
- Readers (ahem, that would be you) would have a strong incentive to buy back issues if you joined late to fill

in on stories you joined in the middle, and to keep buying issues to find out what happens next in each series you're following. **Yes, I am flagrantly attempting to create book crack, and to get y'all hooked hard.** I'm not even ashamed of myself.

- Readers (you again) would have a pay-per-vote button that would cost a dollar a pop, and 100% of your vote money would go directly to any writer whose story you liked, to reward him or her and encourage the future production of more stories with the same character, the same world, or whatever. With your vote, you would get to send a note to the author with what you loved and what you want more of. (Authors, you see? Instant direct feedback from people who really want more of what you're doing, plus funds to help you do it.)
- Payment would go like this. Publisher—me. 20% of each issue. Editor—don't have one yet, if we do this, will be open for applications. 15% of each issue. Writers. 13% of each issue. Yes. That adds up to 100%.

That might not seem so exciting. But consider—all the back issues will remain on sale, and while people who come in late will have a one-time opportunity to buy all back issues for a reduced price (for which all writers will get paid), if they pass up on that offer, they then will be buying them piecemeal at \$6 a pop (for which all writers involved in the relevant issues will get paid).

Here's the real beauty part. If you're a writer who wrote the best 50,000-word serial ever, as voted by readers (who have also tipped you the better part of a buck to urge you on) and that vote is visible to everyone, and readers read a later story by you, or the last half of your first story, many will, I think, go

back and buy the earlier issues just to get your story. You benefit. But so does every other writer who is in that issue. And maybe the readers will get hooked on those other stories, and go back to get them, too. And any time any issue sells, no matter how old, the writers in that issue All. Get. Paid.

I already have the better part of the software to do this. Margaret Fisk built the shop backend for me, and it will handle recurring multiple payments to multiple authors. I would have to figure out how to tie it into PayPal subscriptions (Okay. No. **I** wouldn't. I would have to see if I could get her to do it. But to defer to passive voice here for a moment, that would have to be done.)

- The same month the serial was completed, the author could bring out a Lulu version of the book, and I'd take the blurb and Lulu button and add it to the author's page. The author would retain full rights to the print version—the magazine would just send customers his way. (The author would have to agree **NOT** to bring the book out before that, to maintain the magazine's exclusivity.)

## **And Here Are The Problems**

So here's how payment breaks down for writers. If we could get 100 subscribers at the lowest rate (annual), the writers would make \$58 per issue ( $\$4.50 \times 100 = \$450 \times .13 = \$58.50$ ). For a five issue-story, that's \$292.50 (not including reader votes, which can't be guessed). **That is really, really not great, and the problem is, I don't even know if 100 subscribers would be an obtainable number.**

As numbers of subscriptions go up, of course, authors do better. A lot better. At 200 subs (annual—always figure the least you can make and you’ll never be disappointed), the author will make \$117 per issue, or \$585 for the five-part series. At 500 subs... well... that’s \$292.50 per issue, or \$1462.50 for the whole novella. **Which is not that bad. And doesn’t figure any subs at a higher price, or reader votes, or any Lulu sales.**

Subs would cost:

Newsstand—\$6 per issue

Twice a year—\$5.5 per issue—\$15.75 per sub(you save \$2.25)

Annually—\$4.50 per issue—\$27 (you save \$9)

This is a cool model. But right now it’s just a model, because it probably wouldn’t be worth doing for 100 subscribers, and how many people would be willing to subscribe?

Where am I overlooking problems, and what do you think about what I have already? Please be honest—I don’t want to spend a ton of energy getting this started only to discover that everyone wants to submit stories, but nobody wants to read them.

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

---

# **Making the money to open OneMoreWord Books**

written by Holly

May 27, 2022

By Holly Lisle

Post copied from OneMoreWordBooks.com

Now I know what I want to do. I want to publish fantasy serials—related world- or character-based stand-alones set in well-developed, fun universes.

I want to be able to offer a good advance, I want to be able to offer good royalties and an excellent contract. I want to have a strong, interesting, atypical online presence for the house that may include the development of role-playing games based on the series, interviews and online presences for authors, and other goodies.

And what I need now is money.

I've gone over all sorts of sources for funding, and here's the thing. I don't do government handouts—I didn't do them when the kids and I were squeaking along below the poverty level, and I won't do them now. Morally, ethically, personally, I don't approve of government handouts. So I won't be applying for any grants. I'm not interested in using other people's money in the form of selling shares, and by doing so losing control of the business and the way it's run. HOW it's run is as critical to me as what it is. I don't want to incur the moral obligation of accepting donations, and I won't even consider the potential financial devastation that comes with taking out loans.

Which means I'm simply going to have to earn and save, and build slowly.

I have limited control over my professional publishing career—I could have a magnificent windfall with a New York Times bestseller or five, and suddenly have the money to do this. But it hasn't happened yet, and after 30+ books, I'm not holding my breath, and I'm not making business plans based winning the publishing lottery.

Ben Franklin's adage and life philosophy, Do Well By Doing

Good, offers guidance. Find ways to pay forward, find ways to create new and desirable services and products, make sure people benefit, that the work is worthwhile, that something good comes into the world because of it, but also make sure the work can pay its own way. Do what you can yourself, bring in volunteers when it outgrows one person, pay if it's a for-profit venture. (Forward Motion was never intended to make money, so I built it around an entirely volunteer culture. I hope with this project to be able not just to teach folks to fish, but to pay them for the fish they catch.)

I have a way to do that. The income I do have some control over is my little online bookstore. I can—and will—write more books for that. My own titles and my own work will be the primary source for funding the publishing house, though I'll add additional writing-related nonfiction as well. I don't make much money from selling other folks' books because I don't charge them much for having the books on the site (currently 10% of the cover price after PayPal and affiliate fees). So other people's writing non-fiction will help a little, but not much. And fiction is currently selling at the less-than-breathtaking speed of about one copy of each title per month—adding fiction to my list will not help my plan at all—and it doesn't do much for the writers, either—so in almost all cases, I just won't.

My only way to increase my publishing fund other than to write more books is to add more affiliates. So I will be pushing the HollyShop Affiliates program, because that's my distribution, and the farther I can reach with the books I have, the more work each book does for me, and the more I can put aside to fund the publishing house. **If you'd like to have a part in getting OneMoreWord Books off the ground, join the affiliate program, get other people to join through you, let me pay you for your help, and help me make enough money through the store that I can regularly bank it. We can all do good by doing well.**

I'm good at living and working on shoestrings; have been doing it all my life. I figure I can do more with a dollar than a big corporation, because to start with I'll do most of the work myself, and I won't pay me. But I still figure that an advance of \$5000 plus initial print publishing costs of \$10-\$15,000 per book, plus website development that includes content development of probably another \$15,000, minimum, plus guerrilla advertising and distribution, and I'm looking at needing \$50,000 in a OneMoreWord account before I can even start looking at manuscripts, and at least \$5000/month in set-aside income (money I don't have to live off of and can just pump into the business) simply to keep the doors open. That's a tiny start-up cost for a business, but it's a whole lot of money to me. And while my objective is to take the business to profitability while creating jobs for writers, artists, editors, web designers and others, and to do it by offering wonderful books, the best business plan in the world cannot guarantee that will happen quickly. Or at all.

I'll be taking OneMoreWord Books site offline in a month or so; I don't want to babysit a board I won't be using, because those things turn into spam magnets. I have my goals, I have my direction, and I have my plan, and now it's time to do the work to make this happen.

I'm going to archive the OneMoreWord board messages and work from them. Everything you've said has helped me find my direction and figure out what it is that I want to do beyond writing, and what I have to do to get there. Thank you for taking the time and the effort to throw things at the wall with me.

Beyond this last discussion here, such conversation as we have about the publishing company will go back to the weblog until I'm ready to start locating website programmers and looking for manuscripts. Then I'll bring OneMoreWord Books back, and let you know through the weblog. Realistically, I think I'm looking at about five years. I have optimistic and gloomy

timelines, too, including the “this whole wonderful project dies an ugly death” one, which is why none of this is going to happen using other people’s money.

But I think OneMoreWord Books is a dream worth fighting for. So wish me luck. And pitch books for me if you’re willing.

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