Do I still recommend John Locke? No.

written by Holly
September 26, 2012
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