

# Sproing! Another week begins.

written by Holly

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By Holly Lisle

The print version of **Language Clinic** landed on my front step late last Friday, and it turned out beautifully. I'm going through and copyediting, will do final revisions, and have the thing available for sale in the next couple of days.

Other than copyediting most of that, I did nothing writing-related over the weekend except let my sizzlin' brain rest. Turned out to be a good plan. The opener for **Create A Culture Clinic** was really dragging, and I was having a hard time figuring out how to make the book useful from page one; I wanted to skip long-winded theory and go straight into creation, but theory kept wrapping its vines around my ankles and tripping me.

Something clicked last night. Here's how the thing will go. Maybe you've never created a culture. If you haven't you may be heading for a problem. Maybe you have created a culture, but it already has a problem.

## Ten Problems Your Culture Might Have:

- Your good culture is fighting an evil culture.
- Your culture is feudal Britain in drag.
- Your culture only exists to grind a religious, political, or philosophical axe.
- Your culture exists in the "American Dark Ages"—that is, you could give any one of your characters a driver's license and an ATM card and he would be indistinguishable from everyone you know.
- Your culture contains only paladins, clerics, bards,

rogues and healers, and maybe the occasional barmaid or whore.

- You can only list the things your culture is against, not the things it is for.
- Your culture contains nothing you disagree with.
- Your culture contains dwarves, elves, or ents... or all three.
- Your culture consists of you, your friends, and your local Starbucks, only far in the future, or far in the past. Or maybe even in the present.
- Your culture boldly goes where TV has been going for a long, long time.

The **Culture Clinic** will drop you right into the middle of religious, government, home and family design on page one, and you'll be slashing your way through the thorny thickets of everything that is trite and overdone, heading straight for those fresh, exciting cultural ideas that are born from your own experiences. You may not realize it yet, but you have had worthwhile experiences.

Figuring out the problem-solving direction of the book is going to make writing it this morning a lot more fun.

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