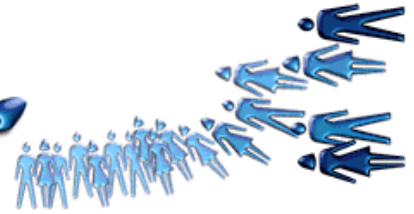


Holly Lisle's How To

Think *SIDEWAYS*



Handout 2---Lesson #11

# Five Synopses

By

Holly Lisle

<http://HowToThinkSideways.com>

**NOTICE: You Do NOT Have the Right  
to Reprint or Resell this Lesson!**

You Also MAY NOT Give Away,  
Sell or Share the Content Herein

If you obtained this course or lesson from anywhere other than  
<http://HowToThinkSideways.com> , you have a pirated copy.

Please help stop Internet crime by reporting this to:  
<mailto:support@howtothinksideways.com>

© 2008 Holly Lisle

**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.** No part of this course, including but not limited to pdfs, audio, video, or other mediums, including mediums that may be added in the future, may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, photocopying, or recording, without express dated and signed permission in writing from the publisher.

**DISCLAIMER AND/OR LEGAL NOTICES:**

The information in this course has been built from my life and experiences, and it is what works for me. While I have made every effort to translate the decidedly quirky workings of one human mind into a process that will be applicable and accessible to other human minds, I cannot guarantee that this course will work for you, or that my processes will be applicable to your needs and purposes. Nor can I guarantee your success. This course is not intended as a source of legal, accounting, medical or other advice, and is written for information purposes only. While every attempt has been made to verify the information in this course, mistakes happen, and I make them. I will not assume responsibility for errors, inaccuracies, or omissions. I reserve the right to alter and update this course as my processes change, as I new learn new things, and as I improve existing methods.

## Five Synopses

I've included several synopses in this handout.

Word count on **Red Glass Box** is 579. This is a well-put-together synopsis that garnered enough interest in the project that I ended up writing a three-chapters-and-outline proposal for it. It didn't sell, but the synopsis did what it was supposed to do.

Word count on the **Midnight Eyes** proposal is 676. This synopsis led to an extended editor outline and to the the eventual sale the book, which came out as **I See You**. There is an error on my part in the second synopsis. I didn't give the ending. This is

Finally, to demonstrate pitching a three-book series by synopsis (not a rookie trick—you want to have some sales under your belt before you go for three books from an unknown editor) I've included synopses for the three books I **still** want to sell in my *Ghosts & Gremlins, Inc.*, universe. I'm having a hard time selling *funny*—it doesn't fit the box my various publishers keep squeezing me into. The synopses for each of the three books is very short, and follows a format of heroine, hero, situation.

These are formatted as I presented them. Note the different font sizes.

Synopsis for RED GLASS BOX  
By Holly Lisle

A small boy's memories of his own past life -- and death -- lead his mother to the scene of an unsolved murder, where the killer, the truth, and the fragile hope of true love await.

Genna Oakes, upbeat, spunky divorcee and mother of four-year-old Ryan, ignores Ryan's chatter about "Kevin," assuming Kevin is Ryan's imaginary friend. Until Ryan digs up a red glass box that contains a bag of cut gemstones worth a fortune and a wedding ring (with the initials K.R. to M.O. 10-9-97) in their tiny back yard. Ryan says these items belong to Kevin, who wants to go home.

Genna calls in the police, who connect the box to a local embezzlement case seven years back. And the person from whom the money was embezzled -- Andy Lindstrom, the missing Kevin Lindstrom's brother -- walks into her life. There's an immediate click between them, and in spite of Andy's determination not to get involved with a mom (because a mom will expect commitment), and despite Genna's policy never to date another good-time Charlie like the husband who split on her when he found out she was pregnant, they do get involved.

Genna's house used to be Lindstrom property; the police figure Kevin hid the box there, planning to come back for it. But Ryan insists that Kevin wants to go home. That sounds like Kevin is already back. Ryan asks Andy spooky questions to about things only Kevin knew, and when Genna and Andy ask Ryan where Kevin is ... Well, he's in the back yard. Buried a few feet deeper than the box was. Killed by a shotgun blast.

Andy's father has a heart attack when he hears his missing son has been discovered dead; Kevin's evil bitch of an ex-wife and Kevin's ex-best friend, now married to each other, have conniptions; and, Andy realizes he's been angry at the wrong person for seven years. Then Ryan says the wrong thing in front of the right person -- "There was a bank key in the box." -- and things get ugly for Genna and Ryan.

Genna gets threatening calls. Then a home break-in where her computer is stolen. Her house catches fire while she and Ryan are sleeping. Andy moves the two of them to his place while local police search for Kevin's murderer. An ex-girlfriend of Kevin's crawls out of the woodwork to say she had just accepted Kevin's proposal of marriage a few days before he took off. The ex-wife is forced to confirm that Kevin asked for a divorce. She has no alibi for anything, and neither does her new husband.

Andy proposes, Genna accepts, they call Andy's folks to pass on the happy news. It isn't happy news to Andy's father, a traditionalist who considers divorce an abomination, and marriage to a divorcee adultery. When Andy won't call the wedding off, Mr. Lindstrom drops by with a gun and, highly emotional, gets ready to kill Genna and Andy the way he killed his shameful son Kevin. Ryan tells Mr. Lindstrom he loves him in Norwegian (the same thing Kevin did before the old man shot him); Mr. Lindstrom breaks down just long enough for Andy to get the gun away from him. Kevin, with the truth about his death known, fades from Ryan's memory. He has gone home at last. And for Genna and Andy, love and trust trump fear of commitment and hurt, and true love triumphs.

Synopsis for MIDNIGHT EYES  
by Holly Lisle

32-year-old paramedic Dia Courvant steps out of her shower, reads the little love note her husband wrote on the steam-covered mirror the day he died four years earlier, and throws on her uniform on her way to work. On her doorstep sits a basket of flowers with the message "Thank you for saving my life" attached. She can find neither a name nor a florist tag. Made uncomfortable by the fact that someone knows where she lives, she still takes the bouquet inside.

At work, Dia and her colleagues and friends, including the handsome 24-year-old EMT Ryan Jenkins, whom Dia knows has a crush on her, deal with the night's emergencies, and she mentions getting the flowers. The guys offer various suggestions, but the only person to understand her nervousness is Ryan. He follows her home and waits while she checks the place out, to make sure she hasn't picked up a stalker.

And over the next few days as the gifts continue to come in, becoming more personal, Ryan is the guy who is there for her, suggesting that she call the police, making sure she gets home safely, and checking out the contents of packages for her while showing her how to preserve them as evidence. She always gets the feeling that he'd push to deepen the relationship if with her if she showed interest, but along with the other guys on the rescue squad, he knows the story of how her paramedic husband died while covering her shift, and that she was the first responder to the scene where she found him dead. He knows she's not looking for romance. But she's spending time with him, and that seems to thrill him.

For Dia, the packages and her anxiety stir up dormant nightmares that ended for her about two years after Mac died. Now there's something new in them. While Dia sees Mac and the two friends who also died in the wreck, now the dream drags her to the man who's life she managed to save—the young man who had swerved in front of the racing ambulance to avoid a child on a bike—a child who then vanished into the night and never came forward. She keeps feeling there's something the dream is trying to tell her.

Dia calls the cops after a package that includes a death threat lands on her doorstep. And FLPD homicide detective Brig Hafferty shows up. The sparks between them are immediate and impossible to ignore, but Dia is staying true to Mac's memory. Then the message on her mirror vanishes, to be replaced by one suggesting that Mac is angry about her attraction to Brig. Dia trusts Brig, the threats don't sound anything like Mac, Dia doesn't believe in ghosts—she blames the stalker. Then, beneath a threat, she finds written in handwriting she knows as well as her own, the words, "Not me."

So Mac is with her, but not threatening her. Brig becomes convinced that Dia is right is suspecting there was no child who caused the accident, and that the man whose life she saved was responsible for a murder, and a series of other "accident" murders. Brig starts digging into the past, finding ugly truths. Meanwhile, Ryan declares his love for Dia; the stalker starts killing EMTs and paramedics to force her to meet with him. And then Brig finally connects the dots and discovers that Ryan was the man Dia saved that night, just with a changed name. Ryan has built his life around getting close to Dia. While Brig is trying to find Dia to warn her, Ryan takes Dia on one last ride, declaring that Fate meant for the two of them to be together, and that they're going live a life of risk and thrills. Or die trying. And it's left for Dia to survive, and for Brig to get to her before the clock runs out.

**HEARING VOICES**  
GHOSTS & GREMLINS, Inc.

by

Holly Lisle

The woman: Cheerful-on-the-outside Piper Hempstead, G&G founding partner, researcher, and on-air expert, calls herself the Three-Date Queen, but has decided to hand over her crown to anyone who will take it. Her biological clock is screaming like an air-raid siren, but she's decided earplugs will fix that. Instead, she's on a quest for clients who aren't making things up ... and the perfect cat.

The man: Gabe Sedam -- whose first wife left him for a string of other men, and whose second wife left him for his first wife -- wouldn't touch another beautiful woman if she paid him. If he can ever get his new business built, he's going to take up the hobbies of growing peaches, growing curmudgeonly, and chasing away neighborhood children.

The problem: The piece of ground Gabe bought to put his software development company's new offices on was, legend has it, the place where a few boys of the Blue and the Gray clashed and died in a private skirmish. And though his contractor hasn't had trouble getting work crews to come out to the site, he's had the devil's own time getting them to stay. Tools go missing, men report objects floating out of reach, and more than one construction worker claims to have come around the corner to find a ghostly face leering at him. Gabe thinks the contractor overbooked and is claiming haunting in order to get some free extra time on the job -- and he wants to prove it. Piper comes to the site expecting to prove it. But what she and Gabe discover instead is that the past can be put to rest -- and the present can come back to life in unexpected and wonderful ways.

**CHASING PHANTOMS**  
GHOSTS & GREMLINS, Inc.

by

Holly Lisle

Settled, comfortable Maddie Mirabello has been engaged to the same prominent businessman for seven years. Her relationship is predictable, her life is predictable ... even her work is predictable -- something that she never expected when she got into paranormal research.

Wandering musician Ronan Gadarn has inherited a lot of money and the old family farm from his paternal great-grandmother -- with the stipulation that he live in the house for one full year. He's been there only one week and has come to the conclusion that the farm is trying to get rid of him.

The farm: Gadarn House was brought over stone by stone from Wales and rebuilt. It is rich with echoes of the Old Country, both inside, with its beautiful old wood and fine furniture, and outside, where after dark, massive black dogs with glowing red eyes roam the grounds and ghostly hunters on horseback gallop through the cotton and tobacco fields and beneath the pecan trees, blowing eerie horns and scaring the socks off of anyone who wanders into their path. Ronan wants the apparitions gone; Maddie, who comes out to figure out what they are, is swept up in their mystery and wildness; and both Ronan and Maddie discover a fertile field between rootless wandering and freeze-dried stasis, a miraculous, haunting middle ground where love can grow.

**CATCHING FIRE**  
GHOSTS & GREMLINS, Inc.

by

Holly Lisle

The woman: Rational Jean Briggs, new partner and researcher who has worked her way up from a G&G gofer, believes the world runs on order and logic, and that it is an explicable place if only you have enough data. She's dedicated her life to finding that data, and setting the confused and the lunatic fringe straight. It's a time-consuming quest that has never left her with room in her life for romance.

The man: Obsessed millionaire Neal Terhune is a fervent UFOlogist who has invested a fortune in proving that UFOs are real, that aliens walk among us, and that the government knows all about it and is covering it up. He, too, has spent so much time in his pursuit of the truth as he wants it to be that he has never found love, or even looked for it.

The town: Hope Harbor, a tiny coastal fishing town in North Carolina, off the beaten path and mostly ignored, becomes a hotbed of UFO sightings and reports of little blue-green men. Both Jean and Neal arrive as soon as the reports start surfacing, each intent on proving their point -- and both stuck sharing the same crowded rental cabin. Each is convinced the other is either deranged or oblivious, and they cross swords early and often, only to find that the heat they generate is hotter than the landing circles they finally locate. They track their string of clues to answers that neither of them ever imagined, for the secret behind the UFOs is more magical than they could have believed. And the answers they find mark them, change them, and give them the best of all possible gifts -- each other.

The main purpose for a synopsis is to accompany a query letter or agent's cover letter. You use them when you are pitching blind to a new editor, and either your query and synopsis are uninvited and unagented, or when your agent says "Just send me a synopsis, and we'll see what we can stir up."

Because I'm not in this situation often, I don't have a wide range of synopses to share with you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Holly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, thin vertical line extending downwards from the end of the word.

Holly Lisle  
Creator, ***How To Think Sideways***