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App Store Rejection of the Week: Dark Hours

Friday, 7 August 2026

[UPDATE, SATURDAY 8 AUGUST: *The below story is retracted and preserved here for transparency. [See this follow-up for an explanation and apology.](#)*]

Terry Godier, “[Browsers Have Standards, the App Store Has Judgment](#)”:

A while ago I tried to submit an iOS app for [Dark Hours](#), my astronomy website for normal people. It was rejected on the grounds that it was astrology.

It has no tarot function, no horoscopes, and nothing that I, or anyone else I’ve asked, would associate with astrology.

I penned a nice little rant two years ago expressing my fury over the way that kooks promoting astrology often try to insinuate that their voodoo pseudoscience is even vaguely related to the hard science of astronomy. And it really is an unfortunate fluke of the English language that two subjects with a contentious relationship are differentiated as words by two letters. Even if you know the difference between the two, and care, if you’re reading quickly your eyes might conflate one word with the other.

But if you actually look at Godier’s [Dark Hours](#), for even just a few seconds, it is instantly obvious that it pertains to the science of astronomy and has absolutely nothing — zero, zilch, nada — to do with astrology. So even if Apple’s App Store reviewer misread the submission’s description, and wrongly assumed it was yet another quack astrology app, if they *launched* it and spent just a few seconds poking around, they should have instantly recognized their incorrect assumption. But that’s not what happened. They rejected the app on the utterly incorrect grounds that it pertained to astrology. If this was an honest mistake from a reasonable judicial board, you’d expect the interaction with Godier, the developer, to have gone something like this:

App Review: *REJECTED: Astrology.*

Developer: *No, it’s astroNoMy not astroLoGy.*

App Review: *Oh, sorry! Carry on, APPROVED.*

But that’s not what happened at all. Godier proceeded through a series of escalations up to the App Review Board and the Review Board responded that they determined the original rejection was *valid* because, I shit you not, “We understand that the app includes a live tarot reading feature.” Which isn’t even about astrology. It’s straight out of Kafka.

Dark Hours is not just merely *unrelated* to astrology (let alone tarot-card reading). It’s actually exquisitely well-designed and painstakingly crafted. It’s exactly the sort of app that the App Store ought to celebrate and highlight. It doesn’t just belong in the category of astronomy apps in the App Store, it will raise the quality bar for astronomy apps in the App Store. iOS-exclusive, native Liquid Glass UI, smooth scrolling, beautiful typography and layout, and way more useful as a native mobile app than as a website. [Go check out the website](#) and I’m sure you’ll agree that it’s the sort of thing that would be even cooler as an app. But it *is* an app, and the app *is* better and more useful than the website version, and Godier has fought to get it approved. But Apple’s App Review Board said no, on fallacious easily-refuted grounds. This isn’t just contrary to the benefit of developers, like Godier. It’s obviously contrary to the benefit of Apple itself, which should not just *accept* an app like Dark Hours, but *celebrate* it as an exemplar of the platform.

Mistakes happen. But in a functioning system mistakes get corrected, and mistakes as obvious as this one get corrected almost instantly and include a quick apology for the conflation. The App Store is not a functioning system.

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