

GUERRILLA FICTION WRITING WORKSHOP



INTRODUCTION

What is Guerrilla Fiction Writing?

Guerrilla warfare is unconventional warfare and combat, whereby a small group of combatants uses ambushes, raids, etc. to combat a larger and less mobile formal army. These tactics are useful when the smaller force is less trained and less equipped. A force of will is necessary when prosecuting this sort of warfare, because small losses may deter the smaller force from future combat.

Guerrilla fiction writing is the unconventional creation of characters and plots whereby a writer may create fiction that will surpass that created by more experienced writers. This tactic is useful when the writer is less trained and less equipped than those against whom the guerrilla fiction writer must compete for publication. A force of will is necessary when prosecuting this sort of writing, because small losses may deter the writer from future writing.

What does Guerrilla mean?

Guerrilla means *small war*, the diminutive of the Spanish word *guerra* (*war*). The Spanish word derives from the Old High German word *werra* and from the middle Dutch word *war*; adopted by the Visigoths in A.D. 5th century Hispania. The use of the diminutive evokes the differences in number, scale, and scope between the guerrilla army and the formal state army they fight. The word was coined in Spain to describe their warfare in resisting Napoleon Bonaparte's French régime during the Peninsula War; its meaning was broadened to include any similar-scale armed resistance. *Guerrillero* is the Spanish word for *guerrilla fighter*, while in Spanish-speaking countries *guerrilla* as a noun usually means *guerrilla army*.

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The guerrilla band is an armed nucleus, the fighting vanguard of the people. It draws its great force from the mass of the people themselves. The guerrilla band is not to be considered inferior to the army against which it fights simply because it is inferior in fire power. Guerrilla warfare is used by the side which is supported by a majority but which possesses a much smaller number of arms for use in defense against oppression. " – Che Guevara, 1960

What is a Guerrilla Fiction Writer?

It's no secret that getting published is difficult. Sometimes even writing something decent is hard enough. So with all of these roadblocks how does one break through an editor's stranglehold on a project, magazine or anthology?

Sometimes it seems like it's never going to happen.

Sometimes it seems that writing is all you do with no sense of accomplishment.

For some writers the traditional method of sitting down at the computer to await inspiration just doesn't work. Some of us need particular inspiration or tools to help ourselves. Just as a guerrilla fighting against a corrupt government needs to develop new tactics and methods to achieve success, you as a writer need new tactics and methods to succeed. It's a warzone out there and without something new and something that works, your chance at success is hopelessly lost.

The guerrilla fiction writer is you! This workshop will teach you new and innovative techniques for idea creation, character development, and grammar usage. Not only will you learn and perfect these tactics through exercises, but you will develop your own guerrilla marketing strategy to help you win the publishing war.

Who is the enemy?

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So I guess you're asking, 'If I'm the guerrilla, then who is the enemy?' The short answer is everyone and everything else. The long answer is a little more complicated.

You are your own enemy. The way you're writing isn't fulfilling your dreams. Maybe you don't know how to generate ideas or create killer characters in the most effective manner. Maybe your grasp of grammar isn't as strong as it should be. Maybe your plots seem tired and overdone. Whatever the reasons, solutions are at hand.

"Guerrilla warfare is an inevitable form of struggle at a time when the mass movement has actually reached the point of an uprising and when fairly large intervals occur between the 'big engagements' in the civil war." --Vladimir Lenin, 1905

Other writers are your enemies. Yes, even your friends! If there is one slot left in a mass market anthology and each of you are vying for that slot, will you step aside and let your friend have it? If the answer is yes, then you might as well quit right now. If the answer is no, then read along and understand that for you to be successful you must put yourself first.

Professional writers are your enemies. Believe it or not, there is a cadre of quiet professionals out there who are full time writers. They write from five to twenty pages a day, are able to edit previous works, and still have lives. I call these folks mercenaries: professional writers for hire who write because they have to write.

Then there are the editors. These are the worst of your enemies, because these are the very souls you must impress. These editors often hire mercenaries to do their work. Sometimes they need other writers, but not often and not in great quantities. I'm not talking about micro-press editors, but professional editors who pay professional rates. To me, there are no other kinds of editors. These enemy editors are master tacticians. They know character and plot. They are expert grammaticians. Very little gets past them that is not quality, so learning quality is your ultimate goal.

Where is the battlefield?

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On the page.

Whether it is a notepad or a computer screen, the battle is always on the page. In addition to rules, tactics and exercises, you will learn that the great unwashed masses are conspiring to cause you failure. Imagine two Frenchmen in an early morning duel, their swords crossed, their eyes locked. One is concentrating, keen to every movement and angle. The other is listening to the crowd, constantly making comments, interrupting his own concentration until the other thrusts, stabs, and withdraws.

One duelist stands and one lies bleeding.

Which one do you want to be?

"Nine-tenths of tactics are certain and taught in books: but the irrational tenth is like the kingfisher flashing across the pond and that is the test of generals. It can only be ensured by instinct, sharpened by thought practicing the stroke so often at the crisis it is as natural as a reflex." -- T.E. Lawrence

You will learn time management. The internet isn't a bad place unless you use it unwisely.

You'll learn how to create characters that will kill your opponents' characters.

You'll learn plot structures so that you can *choose* to follow or ignore the rules.

You'll learn ways to market which you've never conceived.

All upon the battlefield of the page.

But what if I don't want to have enemies, or a battlefield, or warfare?

Then quit now.

Seriously. This is all a metaphor to reach that spark of competition inside you. Without the need to compete, without the need to do better, there is no desire for achievement. You must first defeat yourself before you can defeat anyone else. That battle will be your hardest. I will show

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you how to succeed, we will go over the steps, and we will have exercises to practice what we've learned, but all the wishes in the world won't allow you to overcome your enemies without deep desire, a necessary commitment, and that force of will we talked about in the beginning.

Class Schedule. For each of the next seven weeks you will have a lesson. In that lesson you will have reading. Further research will be encouraged. You will also have homework. Homework is issued with each lesson by Monday of each week. Homework is due by midnight on the Friday of the week it is assigned. This gives me time to provide comments regarding your work. You will also be expected to create a short story. For the sake of this course, you are encouraged to create one from scratch. I don't want you using any previously inspired ideas, characters or plots. For you to completely understand this technique, you must come as a blank slate. As part of the course, I will provide a line edit of your short story manuscript, including critiques on pacing, theme, characterization and plot.

Here is the class schedule:

- Guerrilla Fiction Writing Workshop Lesson I:**
How to create killer characters.
- Guerrilla Fiction Writing Workshop Lesson II:**
How to create murderous archetypes.
- Guerrilla Fiction Writing Workshop Lesson III:**
How to navigate the minefield of ideas.
- Guerrilla Fiction Writing Workshop Lesson IV:**
How to create strategy for your characters.
- Guerrilla Fiction Writing Workshop Lesson V:**
How to use grammar as a lethal weapon.
- Guerrilla Fiction Writing Workshop Lesson VI:**
How to edit and refine your plan of attack.
- Guerrilla Fiction Writing Workshop Lesson VII:**
What kind of guerrilla fiction writer are you?

