Scary Monsters & Super Creeps Workbook

Please use this workbook as a supplement to the material in your slides. These questions are designed to help you put the lecture material to practical use as you work through the course.

Freewriting instructions are less detailed here, assuming you've read and heard full instructions in the slides and lectures.

Module 1.1

1. Define "monster" for the story you intend to write. If you don't have a story in development, that's fine. Define "monster" for yourself and the kind of story you'll write.

Your goal here is to think in terms of the role your monster will play in your story. How will it interact with other characters? How do you want it to affect your readers?

Will it be terrifying? Creepy? Fascinating? Misunderstood? A tortured soul? Will your characters' and/or readers' perception of the monster change over the course of the story? Think of Frankenstein's Creature and Beast from Beauty and the Beast. There was more to them than there appeared and our feelings about them changed over the course of the story.

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2. Will your monster be real? Will your other characters see it immediately? Will there be speculation and doubt? How long will it take to verify (if ever) the realness of the monster? In *Angelica*, we never learn if the ghost is real.

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3. What will your monster reveal or represent? In what ways is it a metaphor for something else? Examining this issue should reveal the themes you're preparing to write about.

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4. What kind of monster would you like to write? Remember, monsters can crossover into multiple categories.

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Module 1.2

1. What scares you? How might you use this as inspiration for your monster stories?

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Module 1.3

1. What fascinates you? How might you use this as inspiration for your monster stories?

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Scary Monsters & Super Creeps Workbook

Module 1.4 Freewriting

1. Use the space below or a blank sheet of paper to jot down things that scare or fascinate you. Circle the words that jump out at you. Draw lines between circled words that could start to shape a narrative. Don't censor anything.

2. Set your timer for 15 minutes and write a scene or simply journal about the elements you connected in your mindmap. Limit yourself to the mindmap ideas as a creative generating exercise.

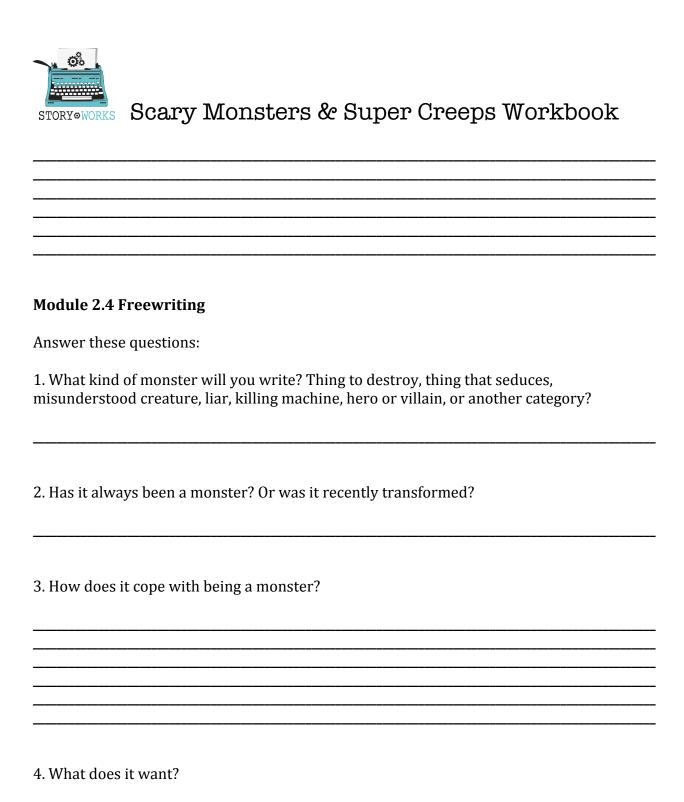Use your journal or add some paper to the workbook if you need more room than is available here.

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Module 2.1

1. What type of monster will yours be? You know already whether it is a natural beast, like a grizzly bear, or a paranormal creature, like a vampire, or a scientific mishap, like the result of an experiment gone wrong. But what role will your monster fulfill in your story, your characters' lives, and your readers' psyche?

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Module 2.2

1. How will your monster appear to other characters? Especially the human characters? Will it be seductive or repulsive? Will it seek out contact or shun it? Will it infiltrate your characters' lives to control them? Or will the human characters seek to control your monster?

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Module 2.3

1. How does your monster feel about being a monster? Was it born as it is, or was it made or transformed? Even if it was born, it has to deal with other characters, some social system. Is it despised? Ostracized? Does it long to belong somewhere? Or does it live in a society of monsters where it fulfills some important social role?

If your monster is within, as in the werewolf, vampire, or Jekyll and Hyde figure, how does your character's human side relate to its monster side?

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Module 2.4 Freewriting

Answer these questions:

1. What kind of monster will you write? Thing to destroy, thing that seduces, misunderstood creature, liar, killing machine, hero or villain, or another category?

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2. Has it always been a monster? Or was it recently transformed?

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3. How does it cope with being a monster?

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4. What does it want?

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5. What makes it monstrous? Loss of humanity, killing indiscriminately, deception & infiltration, other?

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6. Can your monster blame another for being a monster? A sire, a scientist, an attack? Write some notes about this, not a single word answer.

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7. If it's the hero, who's the villain? If it's the villain, who's the hero? Write some notes about this, not a single word answer.

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Module 2.5 Freewriting

Write your monster's origin story using all of the thinking and prewriting you've done thus far to help shape this important piece of your monster's backstory—or perhaps of the main story you're writing.

Use the space here to freewrite either the beginning of the origin tale or to brainstorm some prewriting. Then go to your writing space and write that tale in full. Happy writing!

Module 3.1

1. What kind of monster narrative are you more interested in writing at this time? The A-B-A-B Cycle or the A-B-C-D Chain? Why? Write some notes about which structure appeals more to you and why.

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Module 3.2

1. We've discussed several examples of both types of narratives and read an excerpt from _Coraline_, an A-B-C-D Chain story. How will the structure you are more interested in work as a foundation for the story you plan to write? Write some notes about the basic structure of your story. Who will "hunt" whom? When will the table turn? How often will it need to turn? At the end of the story, how will your protagonist have the means to "vanquish" his or her foe?

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Module 3.3

1. Will your monster have a point of view (POV)?

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2. Why? What are the benefits of giving your monster a POV? The possible drawbacks?

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3. How will your monster's POV advance the story?

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4. How do you expect your reader to respond, emotionally or empathetically, to the monster's POV?

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5. What will your monster's POV contribute to the reader's understanding of plot events that is *unique* and unavailable from any other source?

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6. Can you write your monster's POV without creating spoilers? Write some notes about how you intend to use the POV and avoid spoilers.

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Module 3.4

1. What are some ways you can engage reader empathy for your protagonist or other sympathetic characters? Consider all five senses and physical responses we can't control (sweat, heart rate, etc.).

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2. When you intend to elicit a specific feeling, like fascination, creeped out, frozen in terror, etc., how can you do that? If you aren't sure what you will be writing yet, pick a feeling, like creepy, and make notes about how you might strive to create that feeling in your reader. If you aren't sure what to write, pick a scene from a book (like the excerpt from *Angelica*) or a film that evokes that feeling in you and identify all the elements in the story that make you feel creeped out.

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Module 3.5

1. Write a sketch, a mini-scene, in which your POV character is a witness to something terrible, as in the excerpt from *Dracula.* A character who is not the protagonist, like Arthur, will be most affected by the action of the scene. Use a combination of empathy for the Arthur character and the POV character's perspective to make your reader feel the impact of your scene. You may just write some notes here and use your journal to write the sketch.

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Module 3.6 Freewriting

1. Write your human's and monster's first encounter scene.

Set your timer for 20 minutes. You may use this space for prewriting. Jot down some ideas about the encounter. Setting? Characters in the scene? Kind of interaction? Emotional objective?

Use your journal or add some paper to the workbook to write your actual scene. After the freewriting exercise gets you going, finish the scene and polish it up for use in your story or book.

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