

Plot: You Are the Master of Your Story

A Story Works Fiction

Self-Directed Master Class

Alida Winternheimer
alida@wordessential.com

Overview:

In this 9-week workshop, we will explore plot together from opening to closing scene. As a workshop, you'll develop a new, full-length novel from scratch with guidance every step of the way. Besides the pre-writing work of crafting a plot arc, I will teach you my Storyboarding process that I've used with coaching and editing clients for nearly 10 years. You'll leave the workshop with a dynamic storyboard ready to guide your drafting process without quashing your creative freedom along the way.

Each week, watch a presentation in your virtual classroom, where I will present the unit's lesson, students from the live session and I discuss the readings and homework, then I answer student questions. In the self-directed workshop, you can ask questions in each module by typing them in the comments field below, and I will answer. You can also reach out to me by email.

Reading and writing homework is given each module.

Note the old adage "you get out of it what you put into it" applies to these workshops. In this self-directed course, you get to progress at your own pace. I encourage you to fully engage with all of the materials. Do every assignment. Take every recommended step along the way. Reach out to me when you have questions and join the live calls I offer Story Works Fiction students (See the Library tab at www.storyworksfiction.com and watch your email for announcements.)

I ask that you learn the methods I'm teaching so that you can add these tools to your writer's toolbox, then make them your own. A tool or process that doesn't quite feel like a great fit in your hand today, may be just the thing for your next book project. Or you might learn one of my methods, then make a tweak, an adaptation, and hone it for your own process later. Storycraft is comprised of a teachable set of skills and methods, but ultimately writing is an art form, and every artist can and should do things in the best way for her- or himself.

Required Materials:

- Ability to download PDF and audio files, and stream videos.
- *True Grit* by Charles Portis

- The edition I use is (at present) \$7.51 on Amazon (the cheapest paperback). It's useful to have the same edition for referencing page numbers in classroom discussion. Getting the Kindle edition or another version is fine, of course. This novel should be available anywhere you like to buy books. Buy the teacher's version on Amazon: <https://amzn.to/37FAeb2>
- Cover image below.
- Ability to stream 1 movie. More are optional for examples used in discussion.
- Additional readings are be provided as PDFs.

Time:

- Plan on spending 4-6 hours/module on the lessons and assignments. Of course, depending on how much writing you do, you could spend more time on each module.
- The course is designed to move through one module per week, but you can go faster or slower.

Syllabus

Week 1

Topics:

- Introduction to Course
- What is Plot?
- The 5Ws & the H in Storycraft
- Beginning Your Novel with its Brilliant Premise

Week 2

Topics:

- Treating Your Characters Write
- Setting the Stage
- Act I
 - Introductions & Set up
 - The Hook & Hooking the reader
 - Tension
 - Inciting Incident
 - Point of No Return 1
 - Agency

Week 3

Topics:

- Act I continued

- Storyboarding Instructions & Example

Week 4

Topics:

- Act II
 - Continuity
 - Plot Brings Out Your Character's True Character: Discovery
 - When the Going Gets Tough: Stakes & Tension
 - Teasing the reader: Intrigue & Reveals

Week 5

Topics:

- Act II, cont.
 - When It's Not Climbing: Soggy Middle & Plateaus
 - Blue Ribbons & Licking Wounds: Success & Failure on the Road to _____
 - The Dark Night of the Soul: Are Turning Points Guaranteed?
 - The Little Death: Climactic Moments
 - Are You In?: Point of No Return 2 & Agency

Week 6

Topics:

- Subplots & Supporting Characters
 - Friends & Frenemies: Subplots
- Any remaining Act II topics

Week 7

Topics:

- Act III
 - The Climax
 - Kind & Scale
 - Has it Been Earned?
 - Will the Reader Celebrate it?
 - Resolution
 - Loose Ends
 - Explanations

Week 8

Topics:

- Act III, cont.
 - Endings
 - Happily Ever After
 - The Twist
 - The Hook in a Series
 - Ambiguous
 - The Difference Between Happy & Satisfied
- Theme
 - The Hero's Journey of One Kind or Another: Character Arc & Your Plot
 - Relationships
 - Personal Weakness
 - Vicarious Living & Growth Potential

Week 9

Topics:

- Dialogue
 - Advancing Your Story through the Spoken Word
 - Does Anyone Really Talk Like That?: Natural Artifice
 - Subtext, O Beautiful Subtext: What's Between the Lines