

CREATING A MULTI-PLATFORM WRITING CAREER

with NY Times bestseller JONATHAN MABERRY

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CLASS OUTLINE & NOTES

NOTE: This packet contains a large amount of information useful in a variety of areas. Most of this is reference material for you to explore. The main topics of how to maximize your income as a writer will be discussed during the class. You are **encouraged** to take your own notes for topics discussed in the live event. If, however, you have any follow-up questions, you can always reach out to me via email – Jonathan_maberry@yahoo.com – and I will answer within a few days.

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GETTING TO KNOW WHO YOU ARE **AS A WRITER**

Below are some questions to help you shape your understanding of YOU as a writer. Some of this will be touched on in the live event.

- **What have you written?**
 - What is your objective assessment of its quality?
 - Make a list
- **What are your obvious weaknesses as a writer?**
 - Make a detailed list.
 - What will you do to address those weaknesses?
- **What are your obvious strengths as a writer?**
 - Make a detailed list.
 - What will you do to build upon those strengths?
- **What do you want to write?**
 - Make a detailed list.
 - Why?
- **Are you willing to try new things?**
- **What genres/sub-genres are a hard 'No' for you?**
 - Why?

UNDERSTANDING YOUR SKILL SET

- Fiction
 - Short Fiction Writer -a writer focusing mainly on non-novel-length fiction
 - Novella: 17,500 to 39,999 words
 - Novelette: 7,500 to 17,499 words
 - Short Story: under 3,00 words or less
 - Flash fiction: Short works ranging from 500-1500 words. This length is hardly set in stone, and different markets may shrink or stretch the word count.
 - The ultra-short: Usually a work of only a sentence or two.
 - Micro-story; a story of 300 or fewer words
 - Microfiction: 100 words; A drabble is a short work of fiction of precisely one hundred words in length. The purpose of the drabble is brevity, testing the author's ability to express interesting and meaningful ideas in a confined space.
 - Novelist -a writer of fiction that is 40,000 words or longer.
 - Media Tie-in Writer -a fiction writer whose work is for “licenses”, meaning they are writing in someone else’s fictional world.
- Nonfiction
 - Nonfiction Book Writer -some who writes any of a variety of ‘true works’.
 - How-to manual Writer -a writer of articles or books that explain the function of things.
 - Journalist - Reports news objectively for media
 - Magazine Writer –a writer for periodicals and nonfiction websites.
 - Features -a writer of main articles within a publication; these works are typical longer than other articles in the same magazine.
 - News -a writer of any kind of news story, with length and content varying greatly based on the specific market
 - Fillers -a writer of smaller pieces like columns, sidebars, trivia, etc.
 - Reviews -any writer who provides an informed opinion on the content and merits on topics such as films, restaurants, books, etc.
 - Reporter -a writer who does news pieces for a variety of markets including news programs, theme-specific events/groups, etc.
 - Technical Writer: Creates manuals, guides, and system documentation.
 - Copywriter: Writes persuasive content for ads, websites, and marketing.
 - Business Writer -a writer whose works are used internally within a company or specific business field
 - UX (User Experience) Writer - Designs user-friendly copy for apps and software.
 - Academic: Writes research papers for scholarly publication.
 - Historian/Biographer: Researches and writes about past events or people.
 - Essayist/Critic: Analyzes subjects or works for analysis.
 - Memoirist –a writer whose works focus on their own life and experiences

- Self-Help Writer -someone whose works focus on personal development; these can be books, how-to manuals, inspirational card sets, calendars, etc.
- Blogger- Publishes personal experiences or niche topics online
- Poetry
 - Poet -a freelancer who sells poems to available markets
 - Writer of Verse and non-verse text for the Greeting Card Market -a freelancer or staff writer whose verse is tailored to the commercial card market
 - Lyricist -a freelance or staff writer who writes song lyrics.
- Comic Books
 - Staff Writer -a writer employed exclusively by a comic book company.
 - Freelancer Comic Book Writer -a writer who pitches and sells comic book scripts
 - Graphic Novelist -a writer of book-length comics rather than individual issues
 - Web Comics -a writer of various kinds of comics published exclusively online.
- Scriptwriter
 - **Film Screenwriter:** Writes for feature films (spec scripts or assignments).
 - **Television Writer (Teleplay Writer):** Focuses on episodic TV, often in a "writer's room," for sitcoms, dramas, or streaming series.
 - **Video Game Writer:** Creates story, dialogue, and world-building for interactive games.
 - **Playwright:** Writes scripts for live stage productions, distinct from screenwriting.
 - **Soap Opera/Telenovela Writer:** Writes daily episodes with high volume and specific formatting needs.
 - **Game Show Writer:** Develops formats, questions, and challenges for game shows.
 - **Freelance Scriptwriter / Speculative Writer (Spec Writer):** Writes original scripts hoping to sell them without a prior commission, often seen as glamorous but tough.
 - **Commissioned/Assignment Writer:** Hired by studios or producers to write a script or rewrite an existing one.
 - **Script Doctor/Rewriter** -Hired to fix, polish, or rewrite existing scripts during development.
 - Showrunner: The head writer and executive producer for a TV series, overseeing all creative aspects.
 - **Staff Writer/Writer's Room Member:** Works collaboratively in a team for a TV series, developing episodes.
 - **Scriptwriting Specialties:**
 - **Concept King:** Excels at unique, high-concept ideas.
 - **Character Wizard:** Focuses on deep, compelling characters.
 - **Structuralist:** Master of plot structure and pacing.
 - **Genre Chef:** Specializes in specific genres (horror, comedy, sci-fi).
 - Playwright -writes various kinds of scripts for live performance
 - Ad Writer -a writer of advertising copy and campaigns
 - Speechwriter -someone who writes speeches for various kinds of events
 - Newswriter -a writer who writes for various kinds of news outlets

WHAT KIND OF WRITER ARE YOU?

- Hobbyist -any writer who is more comfortably focused on writing for pleasure and to entertain friends/family rather than pursuing sales.
- Semi-pro -a writer with a day job/career who does writing on the side. Or a hobbyist willing to try pay-markets on a case-by-case basis.
- Pro -a writer focusing on pay markets with an eye toward generating a substantial and reliable income.
- Working Pro -a full-time writer for whom writing-related sales are the primary source of income.
- Indie- a writer who retains all control of their work and self-publishes it for sale.
- Traditional- a writer whose works are published in professional markets.
- Hybrid -a writer who does some self-publishing and some traditional publishing.
- Ghostwriter -a writer whose work is published under another name, often a celebrity or subject expert
- Collaborator -a writer who prefers working with one or more partners
- Clean-up Writers -similar to a script doctor, this is (usually) an editor/writer who helps revise a work to publishing standards.
- Solo Genre or Multi-genre
- Which Lane are you Driving in (and at what speed)?

PUBLISHING OPTIONS

- **Indie: Independent publishing or self-publishing is a viable option for many writers.**

- **PROS:**

- You maintain 100% control of your work, income generated, and rights.
- You can publish as often as you want.
- You don't need to pass anyone's approval process.
- You can stop or start a series whenever you want.
- You maintain control of the format and design.
- You have say over the cover.
- You keep all the profits.
- Some writers organizations now offer membership to indie authors
- Some writers organizations allow indie works for award consideration.
- Some indie works have gone on to become major bestsellers. Here are

some examples:

- Beautiful Disaster by Jamie McGuire
- Eragon by Christopher Paolini
- Fifty Shades of Grey by E.L. James
- Humankind: Changing the World One Small Act At a Time by Brad Aronson
- Legally Blonde by Amanda Brown
- Legends & Lattes by Travis Baldree
- Milk and Honey by Rupi Kaur
- Only the Innocent by Rachel Abbott
- Rich Dad Poor Dad by Robert Kiyosaki
- The Atlas Six by Olivie Blake
- The Celestine Prophecy by James Redfield
- The Cleaner by Mark Dawson
- The Martian by Andy Weir
- Until I Met Her by Natalie Barell

- What Color Is Your Parachute? by Richard N. Bolles
- Wool by Hugh Howey

○ **CONS:**

- You pay for everything: editing, proofreading, design, layout, cover, printing, shipping, etc.
 - Despite the success of the books listed above, very few indie authors recoup their expenses.
 - You do all the marketing.
 - You have to negotiate with bookstores to carry your works. Most won't. Those that will generally do so on consignment.
 - Many of the more prestigious literary awards still exclude indie works.
 - It's much harder (though not impossible) to get optioned by Hollywood.
 - You have no agent or editor to provide guidance. This matters.
 - You do not go out of pocket for any part of editing, development, printing, or shipping.
 - You can buy your works at a professional discount and sell at whatever price you choose.
 - Your publisher will get your books in stores.
 - Your publisher often provides graphics and other materials for social media posting.
 - Your publisher will often help set up signings and appearances.
- Hybrid: **A hybrid writer does both indie and traditionally-published works.**
 - Traditional: **These writers work with agents and established publishing houses.**

PUBLISHING MARKETS

- **Articles:** Many fiction authors got their start writing nonfiction.
 - I did, selling over 1200 feature articles and thousands of filler pieces before switching to fiction in my late 40s.
 - The nonfiction core of your novel often makes for a solid article, particularly if you have some career credits associated with that topic (law, medicine, etc.)
 - Magazines pay pretty well, often in the .50 to \$2 per word range.
 - Nonfiction is quick, because most articles are in the 2000 word range, which is shorter than most short stories.
 - You can retool the same article topic for many different markets. I did this some years back with a pitch on bullying. I sold different versions of the article topic to magazines focused on parenting, business, teaching, martial arts, women's interest, senior citizen living, and more.
 - Writing nonfiction is an excellent palate cleanser between fiction chapters or fiction projects.
 - Writing nonfiction builds confidence as a writer.
 - Writing nonfiction expands your potential reader audience.
- **Nonfiction Books:**
 - If you are an expert (or even simply experienced) in any real-world area, writing a nonfiction book is a viable option.
 - Most nonfiction books do not need to be fully written in order to pitch and sell. Publishers often want to work with the writer to shape the work to suit the audience with whom the publisher is familiar. And there is also tailoring for length.
 - Memoirs, biographies, some historical works, etc are excluded and can be fully written before pitching. And probably *should* be drafted in full.
 - A nonfiction book proposal is almost always required. These are complex documents. **SEE APPENDIX 2**
 - **Here are some links to online articles about nonfiction proposals:**
 - <https://janefriedman.com/start-here-how-to-write-a-book-proposal/>
 -
- Reviews & Filler Material
- Social Media Channels

GETTING READY FOR SUCCESS

- **What are your goals?**
 - Short Term (this year)
 - Medium Term (18 months to 3 years)
 - Long Term (5 to 10 years)
- **What will pay the bills while you're building a career?**
 - Balancing a day job with writing time comes with challenges
 - Budget your time
 - Remember to leave time for fun and family
 - Look for 'moments' for short bursts of writing or note-making
 - Keep a sharp eye on anything that wastes writing time (e.g. diving too deep into research rabbit-holes, playing computer games, cruising social media, etc.
 - Time lost to poor process is money that won't be made.
- **Going corporate**
 - Incorporation
 - <https://www.legalzoom.com/articles/s-corp-vs-llc>
 - Financial Advisors
 - Ask around, do web searches, etc., for financial advisors
 - See if any will give you a free interview (most will) so you can discuss fees, investments, money management, banking, etc.
- **Getting a CPA**
 - An accountant will be able to find deductions you don't even know about.
 - Many expenses may be retroactively deducted on taxes, since diving into being a working writer is the same as starting a new business.
 - Keep track of all expenses.
 - Save receipts.
 - Download annual banking records
 - Download PayPal and Venmo sales & payment records
- **Managing Your Writing Income**
 - Set aside 14-20% off the top for taxes.
 - Discuss with a financial advisor about how much to invest while still leaving enough to pay bills
 - Fun Money: taking a sensible amount
 - Reinvesting: Using portions of income to upgrade any necessary writing tools (computers/devices, chair/desk, software, etc

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

- **Setting up your workspace**
 - Computer (if possible, invest in a good one and keep the receipts. It's a business deduction!)
 - Additional devices
 - A dedicated writing space
- **Negotiating with Friends and Family**
 - Bargaining with family (and some benign bribery!)
 - Discuss with them what your business goals are. These will make more sense to family than having you describe the actual project.
 - If necessary, get up early or stay up late to write. Not, however, at the expense of your health!
 - Set aside a dedicated space at home where you will write.
 - Establish a rule that if you are at your desk, typing or not, you are not to be disturbed. (One of the most aggravating things is when someone approaches your writing space and says something like, "Not to interrupt, but..." Yes, that is an interruption.
 - Remind and reinforce with friends/family this simple truth: Just because you're not typing doesn't mean you're not writing!
 -
 - **Building in rewards**
 - Every time you hit your minimum word count for a day, put a couple of bucks in a jar.
 - When that draft (short story, novel, etc) is done, that money can only be used for something fun.
 - If you miss scheduled writing days, remove five times as much as you would add on a successful day. This incentive system really works.
 - **Finding Time**
 - Even if you wrote one page a day (a double-spaced single page in Times New Roman—the industry standard font—at 12-point size is roughly 250-300 words) you would have 365 pages written by the end of the year.
 - There are very few days where someone can't write 250 words.
 - If you set a goal of 500 words per day, that results in a yearly total of 182,500 words. That is a hefty novel, or a shorter novel and short stories, or a couple of average-length novels, or 4.5 short novels (40k words).
 - If you doubled that and did 100 words per day, in a year you'd have 365,000 words done.
 - Even if you deduct weekends, sick days, and allowing for the unexpected, you can still generate 200-250k words in any given year.
 - Often it is not actually writing 'time' that is the issue. More often it is wasted time and unfocused time that chews up potential writing time.
 - **Setting word or page goals**

- **Session Goal:** These are writing sessions that may not be daily because of life/work/etc.
- **Daily Goal:** This is the most popular way of keeping track of how much you write.
- **Weekly Goal:** A variation of either of the two previous kinds of goals, with a built-in allowance for missed sessions due to unexpected events.
- **Setting Sensible Word Goals:**
 - Never set a goal that pressures you to hit a high number. This causes stress and that isn't a pathway to productivity or peace of mind.
 - After a couple weeks of keeping track of daily or weekly words written, calculate an average. Once you have a daily average, then set your target goal to be no more than 75% of that average.
 - In this way you'll be less pressured to hit a daily goal.
 - And every time you exceed that 75% you have the mental/emotional benefit of having exceeded expectations. This actually works!

- **Software for Writers**

- Word: The gold standard for writers. Easy functions and this is by far the most common software used by the publishing industry.
- Scrivener: A comprehensive tool for structuring, organizing, and writing long-form content, especially novels. It offers features for managing research, character profiles, and manuscript sections within a single project.
- Atticus: A newer option that combines writing, organization, and formatting, making it a good choice for indie authors aiming to publish.
- Google Docs: A free, cloud-based word processor with excellent collaboration features, making it ideal for working with editors, beta readers, and co-writers.
- LivingWriter: A book writing software with features designed for long-form writing projects, including outlining and character development tools.
- Vellum: Specializes in formatting eBooks and print books, allowing users to import text and generate professional-looking layouts
- Final Draft: The industry standard for screenwriting, offering features for script formatting, collaboration, and production.
- Storyist: A less expensive alternative to Final Draft, particularly for those seeking a more streamlined approach to screenwriting
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- **Talk to Text**

- This isn't always easy as many writers are 'visual' (i.e. needing to see the words on the page).
- Try using talk-to-text apps on all devices. One may be more comfortable than the others.
- When possible, obtain a digital recorder.
- Some popular talk-to-text apps:

- **Google Docs Voice Typing:** This free, built-in feature in Google Docs is highly accurate and easy to use, especially if you're already within the Google ecosystem.
- **Dragon Professional Individual:** A leading professional-grade software, Dragon offers high accuracy, extensive vocabulary, and integration with writing tools. It's a great option if you need advanced features like custom vocabulary and formatting commands.
- **Apple Dictation:** If you're an Apple user, their built-in dictation feature is also a solid choice, especially for those who like to combine dictation with typing and editing.
- **Microsoft Word's Dictate:** This feature is available for Microsoft Word users and offers good accuracy and ease of use within the familiar Word environment.
- **Gboard:** This Google keyboard app for Android devices also has a built-in speech-to-text feature that can be used in any app where you can type

RECORD-KEEPING FOR WRITERS

Everyone has ideas. Sometimes they are complete ideas that you can build a story on. Sometimes they are fragments. Sometimes they are random titles, snatches of dialogue, scene fragments, false starts, outlines, and so on.

There are few absolute rules for keeping track of your work. However two exceptions come to mind:

- **One is never trust to memory.** I write everything down. I have notebooks absolutely everywhere and I often use my cell phone to dictate random ideas. I do not rely on memory even in a shorter period of time as overnight or on a drive home from the store. I write every single thing down.
- **Second, never throw anything out.** I have thick file folders of ideas, some of which go back to my childhood. Every once in a while I will take a handful of those pages and type them into my computer and save them in a folder marked STORY FRAGMENTS AND IDEAS. Periodically browse through that 4 fresh inspiration. Quite a few of my novels, short stories, comic books, poems, and articles all started as fragments in one of those folders.

Here are some ways to organize your ideas and works.

- **Idea Files:**
 - I keep meticulous records on my computer.
 - I have a separate folder for each new project I'm working on.
 - I have folders for my short stories.
 - I have folders for projects in various stages of development.
 - And I have folders of things that I am pitching.
- **Contact info:**
 - I keep duplicates of contact information in two places.
 - One is a general folder of names and addresses appear it makes it easy to find things when I need a mailing address.
 - The other place I keep it is in whatever folder is particular to that project... which means the name and contact info for an editor, a collaborator, etcetera.
- **What to do with everyone's business cards:**
 - When I get business cards at a convention or some other location, I generally scan them in using a phone scan app.
 - If I don't have the app for some reason, I will use my cell phone to take a picture of it and then transfer that picture to a file within my contacts folder.
 - Later on I can go through and pull out the contact information that I find most useful and enter that into my e-mail contacts section.

- If any of the business cards I get are connected to a very particular thing... an event I'm going to, a project I may be developing, a project I'm actually working on, a group that I want to stay in contact with, etcetera then I duplicate the information and include it in the folder for that particular project

- **Calendars:**

- Everything goes on my calendar.
- I use a Word document calendar, which is useful when including URL's for things like zoom meetings and so on.
- I also duplicate or dates in my e-mail related app or a calendar app on my computer.
- I also give myself deadlines for projects even when they are not sold or if there is not an established deadline, say for a book or anthology submission. This is extremely useful when starting out so that you work to a deadline, even if one is self-imposed, which trains you to be able to plan the scope of work and be able to execute it in a timely fashion, thereby setting you up for being able to do the same when you have a real deal in place.

- **Manuscript Folders:**

- I create a new folder for each project.
- When I am starting a new novel, I create a master document for that novel.
- This master document has the entire work on it.
- I saved the document every single day with the same title except that I changed it to today's date. So if I work on a project for 30 days, there will be 30 master documents, each chronologically dated.
- Sometimes I will take subplots and create a new Word document for that subplot, and then cut and paste the individual scenes into the master document.
- At the end of every work day I emailed that day's master document to myself. That way I can access the file from any computer that has Internet access. It's a safe backup.
- I also buy external hard drives and back up everything on my computer on the first day of each month.
- When traveling, I put everything on my travel device... whether that is a laptop or tablet... but I also put all important files that I might need on a high capacity flash drive. I've made the mistakes that resulted in losing work, and now I go to these lengths to make sure that I never lose anything again.

RESOURCES FOR WRITERS

- **The novelist's bookshelf.** Here are some suggestions for useful books on writing, the writing experience, basic structure, etc.
 - Bird by Bird by Anne Lamott
 - On Writing by Stephen King
 - Save the Cat Writes a Novel by Jessica Brody
 - The Elements of Style by William Strunk and E.B. White
 - The Forest for the Trees By Betsy Lerner
 - Writing Down the Bones by Natalie Goldberg
 - Writing Past Dark by Bonnie Friedman
 - Writing the Breakout Novel Workbook by Donald Maass (***** my personal favorite)

- **Publishing Newsletters**
 - Use these resources:
 - <http://publishingtrendsetter.com/industryinsight/beginners-guide-industry-newsletters/>
 - <https://www.thegoodtrade.com/features/newsletters-for-writers>
 - <https://www.publishersweekly.com>
 - <https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/email-subscriptions/index.html>

SOCIAL MEDIA & BRANDING FOR WRITERS

- **Publishing is Watching:**
 - Everyone who matters in publishing pays attention to social media.
 - They follow trends and navigate the complex political waters, trying to avoid conflict while at the same time trying to build readership.
 - Many agents and editors will refuse to work with a writer who has no social media presence. And rightly so, because social media is by far the most useful tools to build a brand, make announcements (new sale, cover reveal, book deal news, latest review, etc). Therefore, any writer who opts out of social media will absolutely sell fewer books.
 - Even with the current challenges on social media, when used correctly it is the writer's best friend.
- **Avoid politics:**
 - We are not in the era of reasonable and reasoned debate.
 - Polarization, cancel culture, hate posts, and negativity are at an all-time high...so, there is little chance of being able to express a political view without massive backlash. I have stopped posting anything political.
 - There are other ways to support your ideological views.
- **Set a Tone for your Brand:**
 - I set a brand with certain desired 'notes' to it. They include: a sense of humor, professionalism, empathy, support for other creatives, absolutely no attacks or harsh critiques of other creatives, business acumen, intelligence, a bit of goofiness, and pop culture savvy.
 - These brand notes establish my social media pages as somewhere safe to go without the risk of constantly being pitched to.
- **Parse Your Career-centric Posts:**
 - On a day-to-day basis, most of your social media posts should not be sales-centric. That wearies people pretty fast. I typically post about my books, releases or appearances once out of every five or six posts.
 - Exceptions to this are leading up to, during, and just after a release, or when at an event (convention, etc).
- **The Necessary Platforms**
 - Facebook: This is the most useful for starting and facilitating ongoing discussions.
 - Twitter/X: This platform is best used for brief comments, often with links.
 - Although conversations are possible, they are less common and less easily managed than on Facebook.
 - This platform has been heavily politicized, and for writers it is best to avoid political discourse online. There's no win to it (better to be political in your local real-world space) and it is polluted with BOTs, AI-generated fakes, etc.

- This platform works best when you stick to those things related to writing, publishing, and the real-world groups (pop culture, historical, thematic, etc) that relates most directly to what you are writing.
 - Also, beware of “bestselling” authors who friend you yet seem to have few followers. These are almost always bots or scammers.
- **Bluesky:**
 - This is a fast-rising competitor to X/Twitter, and has better guardrails for inappropriate content.
 - Also, a huge number of people in the book world (writers, editors, agents, bloggers, booksellers, etc., are on Bluesky...many having abandoned X.)
- **Threads:**
 - This was an attempt to compete with X/Twitter, but its value is diminishing. Okay to avoid.
- **TikTok:**
 - Useful only if you began your account by friending book people (writers, bloggers, podcasters, reviewers, librarians, booksellers, etc).
 - Otherwise the weirdly inefficient algorithms will marginalize your post.
- **Instagram:**
 - Graphic-driven and with a long reach.
 - Difficult to post active links
 - Like Bluesky, many of the accounts for authors, actors, directors, booksellers, etc., are maintained by the actual people. This is not the case with Facebook and X, which is dominated by accounts run by ‘teams’ (assistants, publicists, etc)
- **LinkedIn:**
 - Although it can be cluttered with people trying to sell products (novel formatting, indie publishing offers, graphic design, etc) the site is still useful.
 - The main advantage to LinkedIn is that it allows you to post a full resume and current & past jobs.
 - This often opens the door for offers to do paid speaking gigs, convention panel invitations, anthology inclusion, etc.
- **Creating Content that Reinforces Your Brand**
 - How often you post is more important (most of the time) than *what* you post.
 - Daily posts can be anything that is NOT political, judgmental (like negative reviews of the works of other creatives), or obscene.
 - Posting links to movie trailers is excellent for anyone in the pop-culture space.
 - Posting links to uplifting news articles is great.
 - Post funny (but not mean-spirited, political, or obscene) memes is great.
 - Actual engagement with like-minded folks really does matter. Become part of communities. Engage, interact. Be real.
 - Posts that are *not* directly related to your career can build your career! For example I occasionally post things like:

- “Here’s the trailer for the new Superman film. Thoughts...?” (Instead of always sharing your opinion, you invite discussion.)
 - “What are your top five favorite (fill in the blank -movies or books of a certain genre or sub-genre), holiday movies, singers, etc. Again, by asking your community to share their favorites, you encourage engagement and your page therefore becomes a destination.
 - Posting pet pictures crossing ideological, political, and cultural lines.
 - It’s a great way to ‘relate’ to other people.
 - Pet pics are also useful when you want to post but having nothing pressing to say.
 - A VERY popular post is to ask your community to post *their* pet pictures.
- **Your Writer Website:**
- Websites are key for all writers. Whenever possible direct people to it. The URL should be in your automatic email signature, on your business card, and on anything you ever hand to potential readers, colleagues, booksellers, etc
 - Below are suggestions for what needs to be on even the most basic webpage.
- **HOMEPAGE**
 - This should have a nice, large photo of you. (Always remember that YOU are the brand. Anything you write is a byproduct of that brand).
 - If possible, add a feature where you can post book covers as they become available, with the option of being able to change them to keep pace with your evolving career.
 - Example: <https://www.jonathanmaberry.com>
 - **ABOUT THE AUTHOR Page**
 - Example: <https://www.jonathanmaberry.com/aboutjonathan.cfm>
 - **AUTHOR PHOTO:**
 - A headshot that showcases you as a professional.
 - Don’t get too cute –that kind of thing can turn off business pros. the photo at least once a year).
 - This should be downloadable in various sizes (72dpi for web posting; 150 for social media posts; 300dpi for anything that might involve hardcopy printing.)
 - These should be available as both .jpeg and PDF
 - **AUTHOR BIO:**
 - Have several versions of different length (100 words, 200 words, etc.
 - Have a shorter 50-word version useful for introducing you at events, panels, etc.
 - Update these periodically.

- Have different versions available on the ABOUT THE AUTHOR page in PDF format.
- Example:

- **NEWSLETTER**

- Every author should have a newsletter
- ALL authors should use restraint when sending them out.
- Newsletters can be monthly, weekly, or special announcement driven.
- Long, complex newsletters are rarely welcome in anyone's inbox.
- Short newsletters with a brief sentence or two, a graphic, and a link, are far more effective.
- There should be a newsletter signup on every page of your website.

- **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- If you have *any* published works in any genre, format, etc., then these should be listed. Omit nothing, even if what you've published is unrelated to what you're writing.
- Include links when possible.

- **CONTACT**

- This is where you include your social media links. For example:
 - Website: www.jonathanmaberry.com
 - Facebook: jonathan.maberry.5
 - Twitter: @jonathanmaberry
 - Bluesky: @jonathanmaberry.bsky.social
 - Instagram: @jonathanmaberry
 - LinkedIn: @jonathanmaberry

- **POINT OF PURCHASE LINKS**

- Never show favoritism when directing people to booksellers.
- The only exception is when a specific local bookstore will vend books but hold onto them until you can come in and sign/personalize.
- In all other circumstances, your website should have a list like this:
 - [Order from your favorite Indie bookstore](#)
 - [Order from Mysterious Galaxy](#)
 - [Order from Amazon](#)
 - [Order from Powell's](#)
 - [Order from Barnes & Noble](#)
 - [Order from Books-a-million](#)

APPEARANCES AND EVENTS

- **Book Festivals**

- These are great for beginning the process of being the public face of your career
- Do searches online. Every festival is a chance to develop confidence, to work on your messaging, to become a better salesperson, to make connections, deepen relationships with readers, meet colleagues, and sell books.
- I advise always starting with local festivals that either provide free tables (rare) or tables for lower prices.
- Build up to larger regional festivals
- If the festival offers panels:
 - Pitch some and volunteer to be moderator. (Conference and other even program staff members love this!)
 - Ask to be a panelist, which creates the opportunity for you to be seen and heard by a large audience of people who may not *yet* know you.
 - Come prepared by doing some homework on the panel topic.
 - Don't be a panel hog.
 - Don't be a silent body in a seat, either.
- Promote the event on your social media platforms.

- **Local Writer Events**

- Ask around at bookstores and libraries about writers groups in your area.
- Visit groups first before joining. You need to see if they will be of use to you (via new information, networking, events, etc.)
- If the group does appearances at book festivals or conventions, volunteer as staff.
 - This endears you to the organization
 - It gives you daylong access to people browsing the stands and tables.
 - It often gives you a chance to meet and become friendly with colleagues.
- If you have nothing yet in print, attend anyway. There are often publishers at these events.
- Promote the event on your social media platforms.

- **Library Events**

- The downside is that libraries typically don't allow writers to sell books.
- The upsides are many:
 - You get to know the staff of local libraries. This may include the book buyer for that library.
 - You help the library staff by offering new programming.
 - You can do talks about writing. (Though, when starting out, get one or two other writers to join you for a panel-style presentation.)
 - You can do talks about the subject matter of your work. This has a nice wide-range pull.
 - It's good for the community.
 - These events are superb for networking.

- **Writers Conferences**

- As with festivals, start with local ones that you can afford.
- Go as a conferee first. Learn what goes on at writers conferences.
- Network with everyone (and bring LOTS of business cards).
- Do NOT bring copies of your book to give to notable attending writers. They hate it; it puts them on the spot; they seldom keep the books; and it complicates the math on their luggage weight allowance if they are traveling from out of town. Business cards are always, always, always the better option.
- If there is an opportunity to pitch to an agent or publisher, grab it.
 - There are often additional small fees for this. They're worth.
 - This is the only time you can pitch a novel or other work that is not yet finished. You can't do that when emailing a query.
 - The pitch experience helps you with clarity of messaging, with concision in describing your work, with understanding the essential statements about your book (rather than boring someone with a plot breakdown. Trust me, they never want to know the full plot. Ever.), and it helps you make a connection in the industry.
 - If none of the attending publishing professionals are in your genre zone, pitch anyway. The practice is more than worth it, and they will very often have useful advice on both the pitch and where else to go with the work.

- **Conventions**

- There are conventions for everything.
- Every genre of fiction has one or more conventions.
- Conventions can be expensive. Start saving early.
- Conventions can be exhausting. Prepare by wearing comfortable clothing and shoes; bring water and protein bars; take rests; be sensible and be aware.]
- Meeting celebrities at conventions is tricky. Most often they have handler-gatekeepers.
- Go for the experience.
- Go to as many panels as possible. Meeting panelists before or after a panel is an excellent way to network and make connections. Again, have business cards (only).
- Don't hog the attention of any panelists you meet.
- If the energy feels right, you can ask if a key panelist wants to go for coffee or a drink. A lot of business is conducted this way at conventions.
- Post about your attendance, even if you are not yet on the programming schedule. It's a nice thing to do for the event.
- Post the titles, times, and locations of any panel you plan on attending.
- If panel photos are allowed, take them. Then post the pics, but make sure you include hashtags related to the event. Also, tag the people on the panel. This benefits them and can earn gratitude and help to make a connection.
- Propose panels. Conventions are always looking for panel ideas.
 - Go to their website to look for how to propose one.

- Line up potential panelists. In most cases, an approved panel comes with convention passes for the moderator and each panelist. This could get you in, help you make connections, and get your name out there.
- **Book Signings**
 - When you're a newbie writer, don't expect bookstores to stage a big event for you. These things are expensive and resource intensive.
 - Instead, ask the store's events coordinator if there are other writers launching books around the same time. A combined event often results in more overall sales for the store.
 - If your signing is poorly attended, do NOT whine about it to the staff, online, or anywhere else. This happens to everyone. In the age of social media, signings are far less well-attended than they used to be. Don't let the massive crowds drawn by mega-bestsellers like R.L. Stine, Rebecca Yarros, or Brandon Sanderson trick you into thinking you can expect the same mob.
 - Offer to "host" authors for their events. I do a bunch of "in conversation" events at local bookstores, conferences, and conventions.
 - These celebrate the release of another author's book.
 - Your books are often showcased.
 - You get to make a new connection with that author.
 - You provide a useful service to the bookstore, and they will remember.
 - Being the host helps you build confidence and it makes each new public appearance less scary.
- **Online Talks**
 - The Net allows for many ways to meet the public. Here are some things you can do online to build brand, network, advertise without appearing to do so, and have some fun:
 - Ask Me Anything: These can be done on any social media platform that has an option for a 'live event'. I do one every week. It allows fans, friends, and colleagues to join in for free, ask questions, share their interests, and get to know you and your works. I always give prizes for the two best questions each week.
 - Online Panel: With Zoom, Streamyard, or any of the other conference-call utilities you can stage a virtual panel.
 - Just line up one or more other writers who share a commonality (all debut writers; all sci-fi writers; all regional writers; etc.), schedule the event, and use social media to offer a link.
 - With Zoom, there are limits to how many people can join, so giving links one-by-one is the way to fill the room.
 - Do not just post the Zoom link, as there are creeps out there who will use it to invade and disrupt the event.
 - Other platforms have better guardrails. Read up to find which works best for you.
 - Also, take note that some of these platforms work better with some search engines than others. For example, Streamyard and Facebook live don't work well with Safari., etc.

- Virtual Book Launch: These are the social media era version of a big in-person store event. They cost nothing and have a much greater reach, because social media is global.
 - Set a time that works comfortably with east coast and west coast time zones.
 - Do a short reading.
 - Talk about why you wrote the book.
 - Ask attendees about their favorite writers and books.
 - Be cautious with offering prizes –buying the items and shipping them can very quickly eat into your profits without a strong guarantee of return.
 - Do a countdown to the event.
 - Spark interest along the way with posts about the cover reveal, when the book goes up for pre-order, etc.

FINDING MARKETS FOR SHORT FICTION:

- There are a few websites that focus on short works, though these are often built around one or more semi-related genres. Some examples are:
 - www.duotrope.com (pay site)
 - <https://thegrinder.diabolicalplots.com> (free version of Duotrope)
 - https://www.pw.org/literary_magazines
 - <https://www.newpages.com>
- Most of the writing magazines (Writers Digest, The Writer, Poets & Writers, etc) have market listings
- Many writers' organizations include market listings for fiction of all length, either on their websites or in their newsletters.
- Do a web search using the following search keywords: guidelines and your genre and/or subgenre. Set the search to find results in the last six-nine months as these are more likely to be open and active.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

- If submitting to a pay market, there will almost always be clear guidelines for writers.
- It's always recommended to follow these guidelines.
- They are useful to the editor (and assistants, in some cases) for weeding out subs.
 - For example, if the editor wants a story of a max of 5k words, don't send something of 10k words.
- Here's an example of the kinds of things an editor may include in submission guidelines:
 - Theme: We are looking for short mystery fiction with a strong regional feel. If it's in New York City, then let the city—or a neighborhood, street, etc—be a clear part of your story.

- What we don't want: No cross-genre fiction. We are looking for traditional mysteries, so please no science fiction, urban fantasy, horror, etc.
- Word count: We will consider works of between 5,000 and 7500 words.
- Delivery date: All stories must be submitted by April 15, 2022
- Format: All stories must be submitted as a Word document (no PDF or RTF); Times New Roman, 12 point font; double-spaced; no extra spaces between paragraphs; 5-7 character indent on each paragraph.

WRITING AND SELLING COMICS **& GRAPHIC NOVELS**

Every comic book publisher has their own preferred policies for taking pitches.

Traditionally, this involved the writer approaching an editor to pitch a story, and upon acceptance, writing the script and being part of a creative team assembled by the editor. In such cases, the editor would *not* want the writer to bring an artist along. In fact, it was common for pitches to be turned down if accompanied by artwork. The reasons being that the editor wants to pick his/her preferred artist; and to allow the editor to have input in the way the comic is told in both script and art terms.

However, since Covid, there have been substantial changes in this. Many publishers are now asking the writer to approach only when an artist is already onboard. This is a tricky thing, because that means that the writer has to find an artist, work out some kind of remuneration (upfront money, partial payments, or gamble on payment by the publisher in the event of a sale). That is viewed by a lot of folks as unfair and unrealistic. But, it is a hard and fast rule for some. One prime example is Dark Horse Comics, one of the largest of the second-tier of publishers (below Marvel & DC; on a par with Titan, IDW, etc.).

Here is a link to Dark Horse's current submission guidelines:

<https://www.darkhorse.com/Company/Submissions>

And here is a sample of that company's Submission Agreement:

Submission Agreement - Dark Horse Comics, LLC. - 10956 S.E. Main St. - Milwaukie, OR 97222

I am submitting to you the following materials ("the Material"):

_____ (list title and description here)

in accordance with the following agreement:

1. I represent and warrant to you, your successors, and assigns that the Material is original with me and that no other persons other than those who have signed this agreement have collaborated with me in creating and developing the Material.

2. Your consideration of the Material and any negotiations between us regarding the Material shall not be deemed an admission of the novelty or originality of the Material.

3. You may retain a copy of the Material and I release you from any liability for loss or damage thereto.

4. I hereby grant you the right to use the Material provided that you shall first conclude an agreement with me for such use or you shall determine that you have an independent legal right to use the Material or any portion thereof which is not derived from me either because the Material is not new, novel, or original or has not been reduced to concrete form or because other persons (which may include your employees and other persons presenting

materials to you) have submitted similar or identical suggestions, features, and material which you have the right to use.

5. This Agreement shall be construed solely under Oregon substantive law (except where the Supremacy Clause of the Constitution of the United States requires federal law to apply). The parties having chosen the substantive law to apply, no other choice of law (including Oregon's) applies. Any dispute shall be settled in the state of Oregon; if dispute resolution is required, it shall be conducted in Oregon. A party may enforce any settlement or arbitration in any other forum only in accord with applicable law. Any dispute between us which cannot be settled by the parties in a reasonable time shall be submitted to arbitration in Portland, Oregon, in accordance with the rules and regulations of the American Arbitration Association. I agree that any claim against you, your employees, officers, directors, or shareholders based on the Material must be brought within one year after the date of your first publication or other relevant use of the Material.

6. In the event of any dispute that requires dispute resolution, the prevailing party shall be entitled to receive reimbursement from the nonprevailing party for all mediation, arbitration, and other legal costs, expenses, and fees, in addition to any other recovery or award.

7. This agreement constitutes our entire understanding and my signature and the signature of any person who has collaborated with me in the creation or development of the Material shall constitute agreement to the terms and conditions set forth herein. This agreement may be changed only by a written instrument signed by you and me. This agreement also applies to any other material which I may submit to you unless it is agreed by us in writing to the contrary. The invalidity of any provision of this agreement shall not affect the remainder, which shall continue in full force and effect.

_____	Signature
_____	Name, please print
clearly _____	Street Address
_____	City, State, Zip Code
_____	Date
_____	Telephone Number

NOTE: In case of collaboration, each collaborator should sign and provide the above information.

Image Comics, on the other hand, focuses on ‘creator owned’ comics, and has a different approach:

SUBMISSIONS

Here at Image Comics we are actively seeking new talent—writers and artists alike—to join the creator-owned family. Thank you for your interest in submitting your work to us, please read our official submission guidelines below. Good luck!

HOW TO SUBMIT TO IMAGE COMICS:

Image Comics only publishes creator-owned material. **We do not contract creators; we're only interested in publishing original content for which you would retain all rights. Please do not submit any work that utilizes already-existing characters—Image characters or otherwise—as they will automatically be declined. We are not interested in AI generated artwork.**

Image Comics publishes creator-owned/creator-generated properties and WE DON'T PAY PAGE RATES. **Image takes a small flat fee off the books published and it will be the responsibility of the creators to determine the division of the remaining pay between their creative team members.**

Things often change from proposal to the printed page. **If the intended title of your book is awkward or unwieldy, we may suggest changing it. If your logo is unreadable we may suggest changing it. There have been cases where we've designed logos, helped redesign characters, and done cover sketches. However, no changes will be made without creator approval.**

Artists: **We accept inking, penciling, lettering, or coloring samples. These will be kept on file and you may be contacted if and when the occasion presents itself. If your art-only submission is not kept on file, you will not get a response. DO NOT SEND ORIGINAL ART as your work will not be returned.**

Writers: **We accept proposals only (see Proposal Requirements below)—please do not send storyboards, scripts, notes, or manuscripts—anything other than a proposal that meets the below specifications will be automatically declined.**

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS:

1. A brief, typed **cover letter** that summarizes your project and your previous work, if relevant. Include contact information (name, e-mail address, address, phone and fax numbers) clearly printed on the top of the page. Submissions are responded to via e-mail *only*.
2. A typed, one page, **synopsis** of the overall story arc (*not* just of the first issue). Please keep this as succinct as possible and do include major plot points and spoilers. Tell us what sets your story apart from other comics and be clear as to who the target audience is (“Everyone” is not realistic—there is no single book on the market today that everybody buys). You can tell us whether you see it as a full color or a black-and-white book, a miniseries or an ongoing series, a prestige book or an original graphic novel. There are times, however, when we may suggest what format we think will be most successful for your story in the current market.
3. **Photocopies of fully inked and lettered sequential story art pages** (any size, but no character sketches or bios). DO NOT SEND ORIGINAL ART as your work will not be returned. Please include a minimum of five pages that are fully inked and lettered. We may make suggestions based off these, but we are primarily concerned with your understanding of the medium and how to tell a sequential story. **Color is OPTIONAL**. If you have a colorist and plan on this being a colored book, it would be advisable, we may suggest a different colorist if we decide to acquire the project.
4. A **cover** mock-up—this lets us know whether or not you understand the market and gives us a good barometer on your design sense. With creator approval, this may go through a redesign if we decide to acquire your project.
5. **Email all submissions**
to submissions@imagecomics.com. **We are not accepting physical submissions at this time.**

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

- **The creative team in your pitch is the one we expect to see actually working on your book.** If the artist you

pitched with leaves the team, you will need to re-submit your proposal with the new creative team line-up. This also means that with all ongoing titles we need to be made aware of and approve all changes to the creative team.

- **Do not hand Image Comics employees submissions at comic book conventions.** Your submission will be misplaced or discarded.
- Due to a high volume of submissions we are unable to respond to each proposal individually. **If you do not receive a reply within one month of submitting consider your proposal declined.** If you do not include an e-mail address in your proposal it will automatically be declined.
- **Please do not include praise or testimonials.** We are only interested in your work as it stands on its own merits.
- **We are not looking for any specific genre of comic book.** We are looking for comics that are well written and well drawn, by people who are dedicated and can meet deadlines.
- Finally, since **Image Comics, Inc. owns no intellectual properties**, you can be assured—accepted or not—that your property will remain yours.

Each company has a different method of approach. The easiest way to find guidelines is to pick a specific company and do a Google search for “guidelines” and the company name.

PITCHING COMICS

The Writer-Only Pitch:

There are a lot of different forms a pitch can take:

- The Quick Pitch (often used when the writer has an established relationship with an editor. These are usually informal pitches done via email, with 1-3 paragraphs. Here are two samples:

PUNISHER: NAKED KILL (1-shot)

Game of Death meets *Die Hard*. Frank Castle gets wind of a terrible new spin on the human slave trade market: porn snuff films, made right here in the city. Problem is, the studio is on the fiftieth floor of one of the most heavily guarded buildings in the world. Nitrate sniffers, metal detectors, full-body searches, and virtually impregnable from the outside. Frank has to go in alone and unarmed and make his way to the top of the skyscraper, staying silent, using only what he can find as a weapon. If he sets off an alarm the captive children will be killed outright. Frank has to rely on *Hadaka korosu*, the obscure sub-science of jujutsu called ‘the art of the naked kill’, the use of commonplace objects as weapons. But Frank Castle is the Punisher, and in his hands anything from a plastic trash-bag to a paperclip is a deadly weapon. Every floor he has to climb, every fight he has to win, makes him madder and more determined to bring his own terminal brand of justice to monsters who would exploit and destroy innocence.

And...

THE DEATH POEM OF SENSEI OTORO

Otoro is one of the last of the great samurai, now working as a ronin as he enters middle age. He is hired by a local and very powerful daimyo to go to a small island and rescue the daimyo’s family –particularly his infant grandson and heir. An epidemic has swept through Japan, turning the infected into flesh-eating ghouls. Otoro has to fight his way through a legion of the living dead to rescue the child, even if the mission results in his own death. After all, a samurai prays for an honorable death.

The story would be adapted from my novelette of the same name, though expanded to include additional characters and scenes to make it a thrilling 4-issue limited series.

When something more formal is required, the pitch can be a page or more. Here's an example of a 1-page pitch for a 4-issue limited series:

SHANG-CHI: NO MAN'S SON

A 4-Issue Limited Series

Shang-Chi is adrift, his connections with groups and organizations severed. He feels unconnected to his own proper path; and he's deserted his heritage and won't even speak his father's name. He begins drifting through Asia. In Thailand he's attacked by a powerful Muay Thai killer who believes Shang-Chi is a government agent. Shang-Chi defeats him, but the guy is seriously good. After the fight, Shang-Chi is approached by his old ally, Black Jack Tarr, who is crippled from injuries received on a mission.

Tarr tells Shang-Chi that he's been cut loose from active field work and that Freelance Restorations has crumbled. Tarr has formed an alliance of other agents who have become 'detached' from active service because of injury, age, or change of administration. These agents, however, are seasoned enough to know that there are unresolved threats out there that are going unchecked. They've been looking for the perfect field agent. They need a *fist*.

"I'm more than a fist," Shang-Chi tells him; to which Tarr replies, "Which is why you're at the top of our bloody list."

The first mission involves bringing down a terrorist organization that is working within the human trafficking black market: they're infecting women and children before transporting them to foreign buyers. This gets the pathogens through customs without notice; and once in another country the pathogen is harvested from the unwilling host and sent to secret labs so they can be weaponized. The head of security for the trafficking group is Ong Kek, a legendary Muay Thai fighter and a champion on the underground death match circuit.

Shang-Chi has to infiltrate the death match circuit and gain acceptance to Ong Kek's mob –and then destroy them from within.

Guest stars would include Iron Fist, Elektra, and the Sons of the Tiger.

By using his skills to help the innocent and helpless, Shang-Chi begins to realize that he has a true destiny.

And, when a formal pitch is needed –either for the editor to pass up the line or when approaching a publisher where the writer has no footprint- something more extensive is required:

GODZILLA VS CTHULHU: DEATH MAY DIE

Pitch:

A cult called Nightmare's Children has formed among the inmates at the Deer Island Prison off the coast of Boston. They have been using prison fights to make blood sacrifices to Azathoth, the most powerful of the cosmic gods. They believe that these sacrifices will appease the Outer God, who will free them and elevate them to demi-godhood.

THE CULT

- The chief priest of the Nightmare Children is becoming an avatar of Azathoth, chief of the Outer Gods –the most powerful beings in the pan-dimensional universe.
- The chief priest/avatar tells his human cultist followers wants to expand the nature of the sacrifices beyond the 'weak and corrupted' souls of the prisoners, or even the bitter guards.
- So he summons Cthulhu to come and destroy Boston and 'release' the power of the millions of souls there.
- Azathoth promises Cthulhu even greater power and freedom from his endless sleep in R'lyeh.

SPIES AND ALLIES

- The Cult has been infiltrated by a group of disparate people united to fight this coming conflict.
- They have planted Mike Kozlov in the prison, and he has joined the cult as a spy.
- The former Russian strongman gets into a fight and takes some bad hits in order to be placed in the prison infirmary, which has a new 'temporary' doctor --Stella Fontaine.
- Fontaine is on Deer Island as part of a joint covert research project to try and make sense of the apparently supernatural abilities of the Nightmare's Children.
- Fontaine uses her own network to get Kozlov's warning out to crime boss Agatha May, who is a reluctant member of this resistance cell. She is organizing a 'shared interest' group of good and bad guys who each wants to save the world for their own reasons –some of which are pure criminal self-interest.

THE RITUAL

- The Cult performs a ritual to raise Cthulhu rises from his slumbers in R'lyeh in the South Pacific.
- The ritual invokes Tsathoggua, who can access the dreamlands in order to convey the prayers to Cthulhu.
- As Cthulhu is waking from his slumbers, the spirit of Tsathoggua whispers to him that there is a source of great power. He directs Cthulhu to a bunch of glowing blue eggs hidden beneath the ocean.
- These eggs were laid by one of Godzilla's species, and the nesting mother is killed during the feast.
- Godzilla awakens from *his* slumber, outraged and hungry for vengeance. He follows Cthulhu's trail **and catches up to him in Boston Harbor.**

THE FIGHT

- When the monsters arrive, Fontaine calls on help from the military, who send a squadron of airplanes and two big dirigibles armed with prototype atmo-smasher cannons.
- Big-ass fight. Both of the giants inflict terrible damage on each other and ruin much of the prison. Dr. Fontaine and her aides fight them alongside surviving guards, while the monsters fight each other and the planes/airships.
- Godzilla and Cthulhu go at it. Big battle, lots of damage.
- When Cthulhu seems to be losing ground, the avatar of Azathoth summons a Fisher from the Outside, a monstrous kaiju-like half bird/half serpent.
- The Fisher and Cthulhu start to kick Godzilla's ass.
- Fontaine, realizing that the balance of power has been tipped, sends the dirigible's with their atom smashers to fire on Godzilla. Her companions try to stop her, fearing she's lost her mind. But the weapons fire and Godzilla vanishes in a mushroom cloud of blue fire.
- Cthulhu and the Fisher roar in triumph, and avatar of Azathoth cries out in triumph.
- But then a blast of blue flame burns through the Fisher's body. Godzilla, more powerful than ever, rises. And he's really fucking pissed.
- The avatar of Azathoth begins summoning more Fishers, but Mike Kozlov attacks him. They fight, but the strongman prevails and breaks the avatar's back.
- Godzilla's radioactive breath is charged up from the atom-smasher weapon, and with it he burns Cthulhu nearly to death and drives him back into the ocean depths. The massive expenditure of energy leaves Godzilla greatly weakened. He staggers off into the ocean and is gone.

EPILOGUE

- We close on Godzilla and Cthulhu each lapsing back into slumber to heal. And maybe fight again.
- The avatar is in the morgue.
 - Azathoth appears as a shadow above his body and whispers that he may not die, may not sleep. “There is much work yet to do...”
 - And the avatar’s eyes snap open.

COMIC BOOK GLOSSARY

Here are some key words and phrases used in the comics industry. This is by no means a complete glossary, but these are among the most commonly used.

Alternative Comics: A natural successor to the Underground Comics of the 60s and 70s, Alternative Comics that explored a wide variety of topics and themes that would not work as well with the mainstream audience. Ranging from adult and socially complex books like *Maus* to raunchy sex, wild comedy, politics, culture clashes, the Establishment, counter-culture, and explorations of cultural subsets. Many of these comics explore themes that, though often marginalized as ‘fringe’, take unflinching looks at important issues.

Annual: Typically a special issue published once per year. Annuals frequently have more than one story, sometimes with different creative teams. Some annuals include reprints as well as new material. There is no standard for annuals, and they are often influenced either by ‘house style’ or ‘editor style’.

Ashcan: (1) a comic produced solely to establish a publication date for copyright purposes. Most of the times these sent to the 'Ashcan' to be destroyed but some survived in some cases. These were not distributed and only a few copies were ever made. (2) A mock-up for a new title proposition. (3) A promotional only comic, or one sold cheaply as an introduction to a new title

Beat Sheet: A breakdown of story points in a way that indicates how much of the anticipated script will appear on each page. This is the stage between outline and script. It’s particularly useful for floppy comics so that ads, title pages, and other non-story elements do not interfere with the overall flow.

Book Page: The exact number of pages a story covers when in print form. Most comic book single issues are 20, 22, or 24 pages; and many one-shot comics are between 24 and 34 pages (with variations).

Book: Often used as shorthand for a comic book series, limited series, or one-shot.

Caption: Words, either omniscient POV narrative or first-person POV from a central character, presented (typically) in boxes as opposed to dialogue which appears in circular or ovoid ‘balloons’.

Comic Creator: Any member of the creative team working on a book.

Comic: A single issue of comics; or a specific title (Spider-man, Superman, etc).

Comics: Stories told using sequential artwork. Comics often (but not always) have dialogue, captions, and sound effects, however there are many examples of art-only comics (Moebius' *Arzach* being a prime example).

Cover Variant: A separate piece of art for a project, often used as a sales incentive to collectors. With special projects at many of the medium to large publishers, well-known artists may be brought in as celebrities to do special variant covers, which then become collector's items.

Creative Team: In most cases, this is the group of industry professionals who each play a unique part in the creation of a comic. The editor is the boss, and usually picks the team members. Editors in comics are very hands-on (far less so than in novels). The writer pitches the story, creates the outline/synopsis, the beat sheet, and the script. The penciler does the rough sketches to map out the art. An inker finishes those sketches. The colorist provides tone and hue. And the letterer does the words. Sometimes a separate artist is used for the covers.

Encapsulation is the capturing of prime moments in a story. Not every moment of a story is presented in comics. For the artist, encapsulation involves choosing what will be presented in which panels, how many panels will be used to present the action, and the size and layout of the panels. The layouts of the panels can influence the way the panels interact with each other to the reader.

Floppy: The soft-cover, magazine-style books that are most often published monthly. These are the staple of the comics industry.

FX / Sound effects: These appear in the script to indicate noises, relying on onomatopoeia and without caption boxes or word balloons. They include things like *Wham! Kakoom!* And others entirely of the writer's choosing. Not all writers used these, but they are more common than not.

Graphic Novel Limited Series: Original comic book stories published in book form and with multiple volumes. These include *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*,

Graphic Novel: A original comic book story published in book form without its contents being previously published as individual issues. Examples include *The Death of Captain Marvel*; *Maus*; *X-Men: God Loves, Man Kills*; *A Contract with God*; *Batman: The Killing Joke*; etc. This format is sometimes referred to as a Bookshelf Comic.

Graphic Storytelling: An academic label for comic books in all their varied forms.

Gutter: This is the space between panels.

Limited Series: A run of comics with a self-contained arc. Often these stories allow creative teams to explore special circumstances (Marvel's Infinity War was told in a series of limited series; Afterlife with Archie; Watchmen; **Batman's The Long Halloween**; Union, etc.)

One-Shot Comic: A single issue, often published as a 'floppy', that tells a self-contained story. These one-shots are often a few pages longer than a standard monthly issue.

Ongoing Series: An open-ended run of a specific title. These are the cornerstones of most of the superhero comics markets (Marvel, DC., etc), though they can also refer to ongoing non-superhero titles (*The Walking Dead*, *Saga*, *Black Science*, etc.)

Outline: The complete story told in any form from a bare-bones or bullet-pointed list of events/beats or a full synopsis done in prose form.

Page Rate: The contractually-agreed payment per finished, printed page of a comic. For example, a standard single issue of a comic might be billed as \$200/page. Even if the script is 35 pages, the invoice will be for the page count of the final version that appears in stores. Page rates vary wildly depending on the career status of the writer, the projected budget for the project, the payment policies for any individual publisher, etc.

Panel: A single piece of art typically enclosed within a box on a page. Panels vary greatly in size and shape, and can even be double-page spreads with a single image. Comic book writers decide on the number of panels and provide the art direction. Panels are used to break up and showcase specific sequences of events in a narrative.

Pencils: The original art in a comic book. Often the penciller is one part of a team, with an inker coming in to 'finish' the art, which is then sent onto the colorist and, lastly, the letterer.

Pitch: A sales instrument used to propose a story to an editor. These can be as short as a single paragraph (mostly used to interest an editor with whom a writer has an established connection) or something that includes a full synopsis. There is no one accepted form, which allows writers to tailor the pitch to their own styles and to the anticipated style of the publisher, comics line, or editor.

Roughs/Thumbnails: These are quick sketches to show how the artist intends to interpret the art direction from the script. This is the stage where the majority of art editing and discussion take place.

Script Page: Since the art direction and dialogue often take more Word document pages than the finished comic, a script page is not counted as part of the overall contracted number of 'pages' for a story. So, a 20-page printed comic may have as its base a 30-page script. The author is paid by the Book Page (aka printed page) and not the script page.

Script: A complete document of a single comic or full graphic novel. Scripts include details on each panel accompanied by art direction, sound effects (FX), dialogue, and captions ('inner thoughts' in a first-or-third person narrative).

Sequential Storytelling: Another academic and trade phrase to describe comic books.

Series Arc: As the tendency in the current industry is to collect 3-6-issue arcs into book-sized volumes (aka 'trades'), it is very common these days for

Splash: A large panel, often full-page, and most often used as the opening or closing page. The intention is to capture the reader's attention as well as set mood, tone, place, and time.

Spread: An image that spans more than one page. Also known as a two-page spread or double-page spread.

Street-Level: Comics featuring characters whose skills are either based entirely on technology (Batman), unusually high natural or acquired skills (The Punisher), or super powers that are not appropriate for fighting the upper tier of threats (Daredevil, Chew, etc).

Superhero Comics: A cornerstone of the comics industry featuring clashes between enhanced beings.

Superhero: A character in a comic book who has unusual abilities (super strength, flight, invulnerability, etc.), or exceptional skills that allow him/her to fight crime with a high likelihood of success (Batman, Shang Chi, etc).

Supervillain: A person or being possessing extraordinary abilities who uses those skills to commits crimes.

Thought Balloon: A puffy dialogue balloon that presents what a character is thinking. Rarely used in modern comics.

Tier: A single row of panels.

Trade: A perfect-bound or hardcover collection of (mostly) previously published floppy issues of comics. Over the last decade or so, comic book companies have encouraged their writers to tell stories in 3-6-issue arcs that can be easily collected into a trade. Note: many people call all book-bound comics 'graphic novels', but if the material was previously published in individual issue form, it is correctly called a 'trade'.

Underground Comics: Also known as underground comix, this is a form that emerged in the 1960s and often included titles and stories that were unsuited for the mainstream. A lot of early underground comics included adult material, drug culture, extreme violence, oppositional politics, social issues, and more. Among the more well-known were titles like *Mickey Rat*, *The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers*, *Snatch*, *Funny Animals*, *Fritz the Cat*, and many others.

Webcomics: Comics published via the Internet.

Webtoons: This is both a company (Webtoon) and a style, the latter being comics formatted to be read on a device such as a cell phone or tablet.

Word balloon: Dialogue captured in one or more balloon shapes. Part of the skill of a letterer is to make sure the word balloons do not unnecessarily obscure the artwork.

DEVELOPING THE STORY

Once the story is sold to the editor and contracts are signed, the editor will ask for a full outline/synopsis. This tells the entire story. If it's a limited series, it covers all of that. If it's a graphic novel, it goes from end to end. It's not teaser material, so all of the reveals and whodunnit's are included.

Here's an example of a limited series synopsis:

CAPTAIN AMERICA: HAIL HYDRA

Jonathan Maberry –Writer

PART 1: 1944

We open with Captain America and Bucky tearing through a secret German lab. They've been following tips that the Thule Society is creating a secret doomsday weapon that will guarantee Hitler 'ultimate victory'. Based on an ancient book called the Lazarus Codex, the weapon is a designer pathogen that can reanimate and perpetuate dead tissue. (No, the bodies don't rise as flesh-eating zombies, but they are revenants risen from death. The formula also reanimates soldiers recently killed in battle, so they can rejoin the fight even after a defeat). The Lazarus Plague is not yet perfected, but the Thule scientists are working fast (their chief complaint is that 'modern' science is not yet advanced enough to match their evil designs.

Cap and Bucky totally trash the lab and destroy several prototype 'super soldiers' in the process. They discover one enigmatic thing painted on the wall: a symbol of a tentacled skull. It's not something they've ever seen before.

OSS agents arrive to take control of the scene, thanking Cap for stopping another Nazi plot. Once Cap is gone, we see that the OSS agents are actually part of an ancient group called Hydra. Hydra has secretly funded radical research of all kinds –scientific and occult. They retrieve all of the bodies and technology. One of them remarks that this 'unfortunate incident' has set the *program* back twenty years. A new figure enters the scene –Baron Strucker. He casually says: "We *have* twenty years. We have forever. Hydra is eternal."

PART 2: 1964

Captain America has been recovered from suspended animation by the Avengers. Working with the Avengers, Cap fights a group of Hydra ‘sleeper agents’ in Washington DC who have been activated by a new strain of the Lazarus Plague. Not only are these agents inhumanly strong and dangerous –but Cap recognizes two of them as men killed during his raid on the Thule stronghold twenty years ago.

Hank Pym analyzes one of the super soldiers and discovers that his flesh shows signs of necrosis—the man is both dead and alive. Fearing that Hydra is about to launch an attack by immortal Nazi warriors, the Avengers ‘let’ the captured soldier go and track him to his base, which they then thoroughly destroy.

Again, in the last panel we see that things are not quite over as a hidden panel in the destroyed base opens to reveal Hydra scientists. This test has revealed some flaws in the Lazarus Project, but as the chief Hydra scientist points out: “A flaw revealed is also a pathway to perfection.” The Lazarus Project continues...

PART 3: 1975

Nick Fury contacts Cap and the Falcon and asks them to undertake a politically delicate but critically important covert mission to Vietnam. There are reports that MIA Americans are being used for medical testing in a hidden camp. When Cap and Falcon get there, they find that the camp has been wiped out –the Americans and the Vietnamese murdered. All of the surrounding villages are likewise destroyed, and Cap tracks a wave of murder and mayhem as the newest generation of Hydra Super Soldiers are being field tested.

As Cap and Falcon lay into these immortal killers, the dead MIAs and Vietcong also rise –they are also infected by the Lazarus Plague. Each wears a device that feeds the pathogen into their systems and controls their minds/actions.

Cap thinks he sees the full scope of the plan now, and he calls on SHIELD for backup as they wipe out this army of the living dead. Fury takes samples back for tests, promising to share them with Reed Richards and Hank Pym.

The end of this battle is watched by Strucker and his Hydra scientists. They are very pleased with this latest field test. With the new developments in genetics and sequencing computers, they estimate that the Nazi New World Order will dominate earth in less than thirty years. The clock is ticking.

PART 4: 1990

Captain America and the Nomad (Jack Monroe) collide with Flag-Smasher, who is working with Hydra to pave the way for the launch of the Lazarus Plague. Flag-Smasher wants to use it to raise all of the dead from Arlington Cemetery. Not only would this give Hydra an army, but the event would do untold psychological harm to the American people.

Cap and Nomad attack the Hydra team in Arlington and fight to keep the noble American dead in their graves. When they have to fight some soldiers from WW II that Hydra has raised, it deeply affects Cap – it's a cruel, cruel trick.

Fury sends Dum Dum Dugan with a set of chemical bombs that SHIELD and Pym have developed since the attack fifteen years ago.

With the chemical bombs and some extreme violence, Cap and Nomad win the day and the Hydra scientists finally recognize the flaws in their science. They can fall back now and perfect the Lazarus Plague. Next time...the ultimate weapon will be ready to conquer the world.

PART 5: 2011

Reports come in from all over the globe of atrocities committed by corpses that have risen from the graves of Nazi war dead. When Steve Rogers sees footage of this, he recognizes some of these walking dead –they are some of the original super soldiers he and Bucky destroyed in 1944.

Steve Rogers calls on the new Captain America, Falcon, Nick Fury, the Avengers and SHIELD to make a final, decisive stand against Hydra's ultimate weapon: the resurrection of all Nazi war dead and the rise of an unstoppable army.

Cap has a secret weapon. He has automatic weapons capable of firing glass bullets filled with the counter-agent. There's a big crash-into-the-bad guys scene that mirrors Cap & Bucky's entrance from issue one. The senior Hydra scientists try to flee, but we see that they've become addicted to the Lazarus Plague. The counter-agent kills them, effectively cutting off the head of the monster. The Lazarus Project is over.

But Hydra has a saying: cut off a head and two shall take its place. The bodies of the dead scientists are stolen from the morgue. On the wall is a small symbol: a skull with tentacles.

CAPAH003_HL.indd 1 2/1/11 10:15 AM

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Here's an example of a beat sheet:

CAPTAIN AMERICA: HAIR HYDRA #3

Pages 1-3: We open in China (209 BC) XÚ FÚ, court sorcerer of the Qin Dynasty, stands at the foot of Penglai Mountain, in the presence of the immortal ANQI SHENG. (This is Xú Fú's second mission to see this immortal, hoping to obtain the Elixir of Life. He returned from his first mission, claiming that he could not find the immortal; but told the emperor that he learned from a vision that if he brought with him six thousand virgin boys and girls that their 'purity' would part the veils of shadow that hide the sacred mountain. The emperor agreed, and Xú Fú then set out.) We learn this backstory in dialogue and discover that this is really part of devil's deal Xú Fú made with the immortal—who is a very corrupt being—and that the children are sacrifices for the immortal's monster god. In return he is given a tiny crystal vial. It is not, after all, the Elixir of Life, but an essential component that can be found nowhere else. Xú Fú never returns to the emperor. As the god devours the children, the sorcerer and his armed guards (who wear Chinese versions of the Hydra symbol), head down the mountain to the ships waiting for them.

Page 4-5: CUT TO Wakanda. Captain America and the Falcon have gone to visit T'Challa to get an upgrade on Falcon's costume (this is when the Falcon first got to fly). The Falcon soars with great joy—although erratically. T'Challa suddenly receives a call to investigate an attack on a village by *zombies*. (Not the Marvel Zombies variety, of course.) These zombies are straight-killers—mindless and frightening.

Page 6-7: CUT TO FLORIDA, 1521 AD – A team of explorers led by COUNT DUENDE (a Hydra alchemist) are cutting through the forest. They reach a grove by a fountain where Ponce de Leon and his men are enjoying themselves, having found what they believe is the Fountain of Youth. Count Duende tests the formula—and determines that, while not the fountain of youth, it is nevertheless another key component of the Elixir of Life. He orders his men to sack the settlement and make it look like an attack by indigenous peoples. "Blame it on the natives," he says.

Page 8-11: Cap, Falcon and T'Challa arrive at the village and find it under siege from several reanimated corpses. T'Challa does not believe that this is a 'zombie' attack because contrary to popular belief zombies did not originate in West Africa (they were created as part of Haitian Vodou). During the fight it becomes clear that the 'zombies' (they aren't flesh-eaters) are attempting to loot an ancient grotto believed to be a storehouse of secrets from the days of King Solomon. As the zombies are defeated they crumble into dust, but they leave behind a single clue: a

hydra (the polyp <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hydra001.jpg>) in a crystal disk. Each of the monsters had one embedded in their chest. Cap realizes that he is seeing an old enemy rise again.

Page 12-13: CUT TO SECRET HYDRA LAB/Modern Day: Dr. Geist peers into a fishtank filled with hydra (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hydra001.jpg>). He is training new Hydra scientists and explains to them that the organization did not take its name from the mythological creature, but from these tiny, freshwater polyps. Unlike most creatures on earth, the hydra regenerate and do not seem subject to *senescence* (biological aging). **NOTE: This is the bit of true science that inspired this storyline.** Geist says Hydra's holy search has been for the key to bestow similar immortality on humans. We pull back to see all sorts of failed experiments (horrible monsters in tanks and cages) and new things growing on slabs.

Page 14-15: Since returning from Wakanda, Cap has been using all of his contacts in Avengers, SHIELD, etc. to look for 'zombie attacks'. Reports of such attacks send them to Haiti. There they meet biologist (Dr. Lewis) who explains that he's been working on the link between zombie mysticism and science. (We borrow from the true story of ethnobotanist Dr. Wade Davis.) Lewis has collected all of the different variations of *coupe poudre* (zombie powder) and is running a crude computer model to synthesize a perfect formula that draws on the best qualities of each. There has been a rise in zombie reports and purported attacks. Falcon holds up one of the small crystal disks with a hydra inside and asks if Lewis has seen one. Before he can answer, the lab is attacked by zombies.

Page 17: CUT TO SPAIN/THE INQUISITION. Count Duende –now FATHER DUENDE-- is overseeing an interrogation of a suspected alchemist. Under torture the man admits that he has been courting dark powers in order to discover the secret of immortality. The man begs forgiveness from the Church and prays for a quick execution; however Torquemada pulls back his hood to reveal that he, like so many others throughout history, is an ancestor of Dr. Geist. Instead of condemning the alchemist, he offers him a job with the Order of the Hydra.

Page 18-21: Big fight as Cap and Falcon duke it out with the living dead. Some of the zoms are like the ones in Africa: they really are animated corpses and when they're defeated they crumble to dust. But seeded among these zoms are ALPS –Erlking and the others. Cap isn't surprised by this –he's been expecting it since finding the Hydra disk.

The Alps have come to take Dr. Lewis' research –specifically the perfected *coupe poudre*. Cap goes toe-to-toe with Erlking, who has become more powerful. Their battle sends them crashing down a hill, apart from the main fight.

As they battle, Erlking taunts Cap with hints about the quest for immortality and the rise of a new order of mankind—not super soldiers but a true race of new gods. He begs Cap to join him, calling him brother and saying that he is already one of the new immortals. When Cap refutes this, saying that his longevity was the product of the Super Soldier formula and stasis in ice for decades. Erlking counters with: “We have studied the surviving notes of the Super Soldier program. Longevity was never part of that formula. And, my brother, ask yourself...why have you not aged a day since the Avengers pulled you out of the water?” This stuns Cap, and in that moment Erlking dives from a cliff into the ocean. Falcon tries to catch him but isn’t yet skilled enough with his flying abilities.

Page 22: The battle is over, with the zombies totally destroyed, and Dr. Lewis’ records are saved. Falcon tells Cap that they’ve finally gotten a handle on the secret Hydra cabal, but Cap doesn’t seem to be paying attention. Erlking’s words have hit Cap hard, filling him with doubt. He stands looking out to sea, and the clouds in the sky appear to form the symbol of the Hydra. Is Cap a monster?

Here’s an example of a graphic novel synopsis:

NOT NORMAL IN SMALLVILLE

Themes:

Physical and emotional challenges of puberty, feeling disconnected from those around you, self-imposed guilt, grief and loss, thoughts of self-harm, seeking help, relationships (straight and LGBTQ), friendship, trust, developing trust, science, forensics, teamwork, and a lot of snarky humor. This is Smallville horror story, with weird science,

Logline:

It started in Smallville. It threatens the whole world. And Clark Kent – strange visitor from another world-- is positive he is the patient zero of a global plague.

Summary:

Not Normal in Smallville (YA) explores how quickly a person can feel alienated from everyone around, even loved ones. When a strange and unknown mutative disease form begins affecting teens in his hometown, Clark Kent wonders if this is something caused by his alien DNA. And then something even more alarming happens –something dark and powerful is hunting in town. First pets go missing, then a homeless man, and hunters...then some of the kids from school. There is plenty of

evidence of violence –blood, torn clothing, a destroyed doghouse—but no bodies. Is there a killer in Smallville? Or is it a monster? Clark begins gathering evidence, using Kryptonian science to analyze it, but the more he learns the scarier and more confusing things get. And the more he’s convinced that somehow he is to blame. Then his best friend, Pete, outs himself as a mutated creature. John Luther, Lex’s father, tries to cover it up before it hits the national press because negativity would affect the stocks of his new company. And because Lex is also infected. So is Lana Lang. In fact, everyone infected was at a bonfire Clark hosted on the Kent farm. When tragedy strikes, Clark is devastated, but he has to find a way to stop the infection before it spreads. Not just through town, but around the world he has come to call home.

Synopsis:

Something is wrong in Smallville. And 17-year old Clark Kent thinks maybe it’s him. Or, at least, because of him. Because he is not like everyone else. He’s unlike anyone else on earth. He’s a very strange visitor from another world, and he has never felt more like an alien than now.

On the last night before school starts, as all of his friends gather on the Kent farm for a bonfire and to watch a lovely meteor shower, things start going wrong. It’s the third night of a meteor shower and LANA LANG, Clark’s almost-a-girlfriend, says that everyone needs to make wishes on the stars. She says that her horoscope app says that all wishes made on that day will come true. We hear some of those wishes, and they’re not all happiness and fun. Lana wishes Clark would see past his own shyness and insecurity so he could realize how much she loves him. Clark’s best friend, PETE ROSS, also wishes Clark would notice *his* feelings, which he’s harbored for years. Pete’s dad is a homophobe and so Pete has never taken the risk of outing himself. Besides, Clark seems so straight –how would he react? We hear the thoughts of several others, each expressing a need to be different (better looking, smarter, stronger, happy, thinner, understood, etc) Clark wishes he could live a normal life. Either to be raised on Krypton with his actual parents, or to truly be the son of John and Martha Kent. Despite the smiles all around the blazing fire we see that each of them is troubled. None of these feelings are shared. Clark’s middle-aged dog, KRYPTO, sits with his head on Clark’s thigh, and from his eyes we see that he is in tune with his master’s mood (Krypto dreams of being a spy puppy again).

Clark is having a weird time lately because he’s been dealing with his first-ever cold –a phenomenon he thought was impossible, given his Kryptonian physiology and powers. When some of the other kids start getting sick, he is horrified at the thought of what *his* kind of germs could do to them.

But then he gets better and school starts and everything seems normal.

Except that nothing is really normal in Smallville.

When Clark and his friends arrive at school for the first day of the semester, they find the parking lot full of cops. Someone broke into the science class and killed all of the lab rats. The whole room is wrecked and a lot of science equipment stolen. The suspect is JACK CAMDEN, a member of the football team and a known troublemaker. Jack comes from a very troubled home and —like his brute of a father—has become a bully. The cops can't find Jack, though. Clark wonders if he should look for him, but decides to leave it to the authorities.

The following day Lana calls him in tears. Her dog, Moose, is missing. Clark hurries over to help her look and finds the doghouse destroyed and Moose's leash bitten through. Her father thinks it was a coyote, but the amount of damage to the doghouse is too weird, and there are no wolves in Smallville. Out of sight of Lana, Clark pockets some of the leash to analyze at home. Because this is well before the creation of the Fortress of Solitude, Clark uses a small lab hidden beneath the barn. His space capsule is there, but the computer system is badly damaged and even though he's been trying to recreate enough Kryptonian science to repair it, it's a hard job. Even so, he is able to determine that the saliva on the bitten leash is not coyote or wolf, or even that of a wild dog. It's human. Kind of. There's also some other kind of DNA there and Clark sets his equipment to sequence it. That will take some time.

We get glimpses of other teens developing the beginnings of symptoms. Not all of them are aware of it. And we see that there are tensions between teens and their parents, who keep asking them to 'try and act *normal* for once', 'stop being so grouchy', etc. And parents lamenting that their kids are 'going through a phase', or 'acting out'...with some hints of 'I wasn't like that when I was there age'. This will be seeding throughout the book. Some of this is normal, but we know there is something deeper at work. Out in the dark, one of the teens wanders into the woods, his body clearly having gone much further with the mutation than the others. We see his torment as he becomes something monstrous.

That following night, Clark gets a strange call from Pete, who missed school because he wasn't feeling well. Pete asks Clark about their friendship. Is it real? Is it genuine enough to deal with any kind of truth. Clark, mystified, assures him it is. Pete asks Clark if they would still be friends if Pete was 'different', not the person Clark thought he was. Clark insists that, yes, they're friends to the end. Pete sobs and hangs up unexpectedly, leaving Clark even more confused about the call. We cut to

Pete's house, where he is staring into a mirror. He has green blotches on his throat and face, from which black spiny growths are protruding. He sits there, trembling, weeping.

As the first weeks of school pass, the 'flu' takes a toll. A lot of kids are absent. A homeless man who sometimes sneaks onto school grounds and sleeps under the bleachers goes missing, and all they find are his blankets and backpack –bloody and shredded. More animals vanish. Clark takes a more active interest, but he becomes more and more concerned because the rumor mill is saying that it's an unusual strain, unknown to science. At the same time there are more pets missing, and also slaughters of livestock on some of the farms. The two events don't appear to be related, and even Clark isn't connecting those dots. Why would he?

Clark and Lana begin actively dating and things are going great, then one night she just ditches him at the movies. When he calls her she texts back that she isn't feeling well. He asks –terrified—if she thinks it might be this new flu. Lana does not answer. When he goes looking for her, she's gone. Really gone, because Lana has caught the disease in a big way. She is the first to morph all the way into something truly alien.

Lois Lane, a teen conspiracy-theory blogger from nearby Metropolis, gets a heads up from a friend in Smallville and comes to town to break the story. Unfortunately it puts the town in a bad spotlight as CDC and military move in to contain what they think is an outbreak of a new super flu. What they find is something totally new to science. Clark uses his enhanced hearing to snoop and hears the two CDC docs talking privately, saying that this is what they've always feared –a possible *alien* infection.

The soldiers encounter a horribly transformed Pete Ross who has been driven mad by the disease. Pete has superhuman powers but has become a shambling nightmare of a creature –more plant than human. Clark tries to intervene but doesn't dare reveal his real powers, and the hesitation is fatal. When the soldiers bungle an attempt to capture and quarantine Pete, things go wrong and Pete is gravely injured. He dies in Clark's arms.

Lois sees the consequences of her actions –the blog was sensational but ill-considered. And Clark sees what happens when someone with powers is afraid to use them.

Clark has to come at this a new way. He collects more samples and evidence, and dives deeper into the Kryptonian science information. He *needs* solve this before he kills everyone. Things escalate as the CDC shut down the town and troops impose martial law. Other kids with the disease are rounded up –some even turned in by their parents.

The situation escalates as more of the kids become sick and transform. Lana, now a monster, begins terrorizing the town, and Clark has to stop her. He uses his powers as carefully as he can, but she is badly injured and put on life support. The military –afraid they’re losing control— consider sterilizing the entire town. Clark knows he can stop that with his physical powers, but he *needs* to solve it all the way to the core. And, using his homeworld’s science and his own blend of alien and human knowledge/insight, he refuses to let any more of his friends die.

Clark finally discovers that the disease is not because of him, or even from him. It came to earth –much like him—from the depths of space. The meteors everyone had made wishes on were really seed pods. Clark determines that each carried chlorokinetic-transmorphic elements, which are something written about in old Earth alchemical texts. These elements are naturally transformative, tending to change from the host matrix to something else –in this case a plant-based parasite. It’s basically a parasitic plant that has, because of evolutionary needs on whatever world it’s from, developed to attack animal predators. It doesn’t seem able to effectively attack fully mature animals, so instead attacks *immature* hosts. It lodges in the frontal lobe of these younger hosts. It has to do with neuromaturation (the way the brain matures). Human brains are made up of white matter and gray matter. The gray matter stores all the information, and the white matter forms the connections between the different parts of the brain. Gray matter matures when humans are about twelve years old, but the white matter doesn’t completely develop until humans are in their early twenties. These parasites, then, lodge in the frontal lobe and take over, and are able to impose its organic matrix on the host.

Clark then blends Earth and Kryptonian science to create a treatment. But will he be in time? And can he save the day without outing himself as an alien?

Heroes don’t always throw punches. Sometimes their greatest powers are how much they can love their friends, and how much they are willing to try and do the right thing.

NOT NORMAL IN SMALLVILLE is a small-town horror story that grows into a major bioterror threat.

The next step is to deal with edits on the pitches. Rarely does a comic book pitch resemble the final version. The editor will have extensive notes, and often there are notes from the art team and letterer. Edits happen throughout, including some that change the story direction. Writers need to keep their ego in check and roll with the changes.

THE SCRIPT

When the beat sheet is approved, the editor then tells the writer to go ahead and write the script. Script pages are not the same as book pages. Depending on the amount of dialogue and art direction, it may take multiple script pages to equal what will become one finished page of art.

There are a lot of variations on script formats. The one below is relatively common in structure and requires no software beyond Word.

NOTE: See Appendix 6 for a sample comic book script.

WRITING & SELLING GREETING CARDS

SOURCE: <https://www.greetingcard.org/for-new-companies/tips-for-writers/>

- The visual design of a greeting card is first to capture a customer's attention, but the words will make the sale. More than three-fourths of card purchasers base their selection on a card's text and the special me-to-you connection that those words create.
- Greeting card writing is a unique writing style that in some ways is more competitive than freelancing artwork to greeting card publishers.
- Spend time in card stores and the card aisles of various retailers reading cards. Concentrate on the me-to-you voice of greeting cards, and how the words work with the imagery to set the tone, emotion and impact of a card.
- Take note of different writing styles and the publishers whose cards hold special appeal to you. The more you learn about card companies and greeting card verse, the more successful you'll be in determining what type of verse you want to write, and the publishers most likely to be interested in your work.
- Stick with what you feel most confident writing, but remember to "match" your submission to the publisher. For example, don't consider a sentimental verse for a company that specializes in offbeat, humorous cards.
- Writers are generally paid a flat fee for their work, with ownership rights transferring to the publisher. Compensation varies from publisher to publisher, but in general, writers can expect to receive anywhere between \$25 and \$150 for a submission that's accepted. Humor or "punchline" writing tends to command a higher price than verse. Greeting card publishers purchase less freelance verse than they do artwork, so expect to face a highly competitive market.
- Before you consider submitting any work, learn which greeting card companies accept outside submissions, and obtain a copy of their submission guidelines. You can generally determine if a publisher accepts outside submissions by writing or phoning the company, or by locating a submission-guidelines page on their website. GCA-member publishers who accept outside submissions are indicated on this website by a "submission guidelines" link after their contact information. Only those companies with a "submissions guideline" link accept outside submissions.

- When submitting to a publisher, be sure to put your name, address and phone number on every page in case a submission is mislaid, or the pages are accidentally separated. Include a brief cover letter. If you wish the publisher to return your work, include a self-addressed stamped envelope as well.
- Make a file and keep a complete record of what you submit. This includes a copy of each verse; the name, address and contact information of the publisher receiving the submission, and the date it was sent.

GAME WRITING

Game writing, also known as narrative design, is the craft of creating the story, characters, dialogue, and overall narrative experience within a video game. It involves much more than just writing dialogue; it encompasses world-building, character development, and crafting interactive narratives that players engage with. Game writers collaborate with various teams, including game designers, artists, and voice actors, to ensure the story seamlessly integrates with the game's mechanics and overall design.

Here's a more detailed look at what game writing entails:

Key Responsibilities:

- **Story and Narrative Development:** Creating the core narrative, plot points, and overall story arc.
- **Character Creation:** Developing compelling characters with distinct personalities, backstories, and motivations.
- **Dialogue Writing:** Crafting believable and engaging dialogue that fits the characters and the game's world.
- **World-building:** Creating a rich and immersive world with its own history, lore, and unique elements.
- **Interactive Storytelling:** Designing narratives that adapt to player choices and actions.
- **Scriptwriting:** Writing scripts for cutscenes, in-game events, and other interactive elements.
- **Collaboration:** Working closely with designers, artists, and other developers to ensure the narrative is integrated into the game's design.

Essential Skills:

- Strong writing and storytelling skills:
- Proficiency in crafting compelling narratives, developing characters, and writing engaging dialogue.
- Understanding of game design and mechanics.
- Familiarity with how games work and how narrative can be integrated into gameplay.
- Knowledge of different game genres and narrative structures:

- Understanding how narrative differs across genres like RPGs, adventure games, and puzzle games.

Collaboration and communication skills: Ability to work effectively with diverse teams and communicate ideas clearly.

Problem-solving skills: Ability to adapt the narrative to fit the game's design and address challenges that arise during development.

How to Get Started:

- Play lots of games: Gain experience with different genres and storytelling approaches.
- Practice writing: Develop your creative writing skills through various exercises and projects.
- Build a portfolio: Showcase your writing samples, including game-related writing if possible.
- Consider a degree in creative writing or game design: While not always required, a degree can provide valuable skills and knowledge.
- Network with other game developers: Attend industry events, join online communities, and connect with professionals in the field.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Online articles:

- Nailing Video Game Script Writing – What You Need To Know: <https://www.spacedraft.com/knowledge-base/video-game-script-writing-html/#:~:text=5%20tips%20for%20writing%20a%20great%20video%20game%20script&text=Focus%20on%20believability%20%20even%20in,and%20feel%20of%20your%20game.>
- **Game Writing Guides:** <https://www.annamegill.com/books>
- **Game Writing Narrative Skills:** <https://www.amazon.com/Game-Writing-Narrative-Videogames-Development/dp/1584504900>
- **What Does a Video Game Writer Do? And How to Become One:** <https://gamedesignskills.com/game-design/video-game-writer/>

- **YouTube videos on game writing:**

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL63OqEfxhQdoPrt0ni6YY28r4s02EOJVg>

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

QUERY LETTER SAMPLE:

Dear Mr. Bloggs,

If you have to kill the same terrorist twice in one week then there's either something wrong with your skills or something wrong with the world...and there's nothing wrong with Joe Ledger's skills.

PATIENT ZERO is a mainstream thriller in which a Baltimore cop is recruited by a secret government organization to help stop a group of terrorists from releasing a plague that can turn people into murderous zombies. The story is grounded in hard—but very scary—science and follows Joe Ledger as he goes from a cop with a troubled past to a hero leading a unit of first-team shooters against the world's deadliest threat.

Joe Ledger and the DMS (Department of Military Sciences) would immediately excite readers of James Rollins' *Sigma Force* novels, Vince Flynn's Mitch Rapp series and Lee Child's Jack Reacher books. Joe Ledger is a hero with heart --conflicted, compassionate, idealistic and extremely dangerous. *PATIENT ZERO* is a standalone novel with series potential. It's a fast-paced character-driven high concept thriller that pits Joe Ledger and the DMS against terrorists with cutting edge bio-weapons. He's the hero we need for these troubled times.

I've been primarily a nonfiction writer, with articles published on subjects ranging from martial arts to business, and have published nonfiction textbooks for courses I taught at Temple University.

PATIENT ZERO is 140,000 words. I would be happy to send a synopsis, sample chapters, or the complete manuscript. I'm experienced and active in social networking, which will allow me to be an active participant in co-promotion, using Facebook, X, Threads, Instagram, AMAs, blogs, vlogs, websites and other forms of viral marketing to build buzz for this book.

Although *PATIENT ZERO* can stand as a solo adventure, I have outlines for additional potential stories. I would also be willing to write short stories or novellas tied to the novels that can be posted as eBooks or sold to magazines and anthologies to help cultivate and maintain readership.

Your own remarkable track record with thrillers of every stripe is impressive, and you've done so well with best-sellers as well as first-time authors such as Joe Schmoe, Jane Doe and Bessie T. Seller that it's clear you *get* this genre. I look forward to hearing from via email.

Sincerely

Jonathan Maberry
PO Box 555
San Diego, CA 55555
Email: Jonathan_maberry@yahoo.com / (855) 555-5555
www.jonathanmaberry.com
@jonathanmaberry **for** X – Threads - Facebook – **Bluesky**

APPENDIX 2

WRITING – YEARLY LOG 2026

PENDING / COMPLETED

TITLE	WORD COUNT	THEME/MARKET/GENRE
1. Blood of the Covenant	5700	Horror
2. Department-T	7000	(Department-T)
3. Wild Words on a Winter's Night	1000	(World of Warcraft)
4. Memories of Honor	1000	(World of Warcraft)
5. Domestic Disturbance	5000	Horror
6. Dragonsong on the Morning Breeze	9000	Fantasy / Mina Harker series
7. I Can See Clearly Now	5800	Science Fiction
8. In Sunshine or in Shadow	5400	Fantasy / Kagen the Damned
9. The Gray People No One Sees	4600	Fantasy
10. The Skin We Wear	5400	Horror /Sam Hunter
11. Terror Forming	5900	Sci-fi REPRINT
SO FAR: 52830 words (as of 8/5/2026)		
1. Mercury Falling Outline	4000 John Wick	COMIC BOOK
2. John Wick: Mercury Falling issue #1	4379 John Wick	COMIC BOOK
3. Death Poem of Sensei Otoro #1	3129	COMIC BOOK
4. Death Poem of Sensei Otoro #2	3327	COMIC BOOK
5. MY0: Darwin Codex issue 4 of 4	3347 Sci-Fi	COMIC BOOK
SO FAR: 18,182 words (as of 8/3/2026)		
6. Derelict	110 Lines / 207 words	POEM
7. There is no Name for What I Am	56 Lines / 189 words	POEM
8. Sniper's Lullaby	58 lines / 210 words	POEM
9. The House by the Creek	48 Lines / 156 words	POEM
10. Born to it	44 Lines / 187 words	POEM
SO FAR: 949 words (as of 8/3/2026)		
11. He Was Legend	5200 Words	ESSAY
SO FAR: 5200 words (as of 8/3/2026)		
12. SAVAGE DREAMS	162000 words	NOVEL
13. AVALON STATION	145000 words	NOVEL
14. JERSEY DEVIL	140000 words	NOVEL
SO FAR: 447000 words (as of 8/3/2026)		

15. Writing & Selling Horror	6000 words	WORKSHOP PACKET
16. Writing a Series	4819 words	WORKSHOP PACKET
17. Choreographing Fight Scenes	28473 words	WORKSHOP PACKET
18. Creating Compelling Characters	666 words	WORKSHOP PACKET
19. Writing and Selling Short stories	12348 words	WORKSHOP PACKET
20. Plotting the Novel	35920 words	WORKSHOP PACKET
21. Revision Strategies	25648 Words	WORKSHOP PACKET
SO FAR: 113874 words (as of 8/3/2026)		

22. Intro Dr. Taverner	1322 words	INTRODUCTION
23. Intro Astronaut Among the Flowers	889 words	INTRODUCTION
24. Doctor Doom	2904 words	INTRODUCTION
25. Vellum Leaves & Lettered Skins	1465 words	INTRODUCTION
26. Meeting Ray Bradbury	1128 words	INTRODUCTION
SO FAR: 7708 words (as of 8/3/2026)		

TOTALS as of 8/5/2026 708743 total words

SHORT STORIES:	52830
COMIC BOOKS SCRIPTS	18,182
POETRY:	949
NOVELS:	447,000
WORKSHOP PACKETS:	113,874
FOREWORDS & INTROS	7,708

PROJECTS

SWORD AND SORCERY

- **DUE DATE:** Feb 10
- **EDITOR:** Eric from Scary Stuff Podcast
- **LENGTH:** 2-5K
- **SPECIAL THEME:** swords and sorcery
- **WORD RATE:** small flat payment plus a contributor copy
- **GUIDELINES:** No real thematic restrictions: whatever sounds good to you fantasy-wise. We've had subs ranging from Robert E. Howard homages to more Tolkein-y stuff to metatextual stuff, so we'll be covering a bit of a range of tones with the end result. Anything you want to write that you feel fits "sword and sorcery" is good with us. :) Our default guidelines do note that we try to avoid anything with assault/abuse and extreme violence, but we're a bit looser on the violence part given the nature of the book.
- **COMPLETED WORK:** "In Sunshine or in Shadow"
- **FINAL WORD COUNT:** 5400

MISS MINA / HERO STORY 2

- **DUE DATE:** Feb 15
- **EDITOR:** David Hedgecock
- **LENGTH:** 5K with wiggle room
- **SPECIAL THEME:** Hero looking for Shangri-La.
- **WORD RATE:** .10
- **GUIDELINES:** Extensive guidelines on file.
- **COMPLETED WORK:** “*Dragonsong on the Morning Breeze*”
- **FINAL WORD COUNT:** 9000

MATHESONTENNIAL –NONFICTION ESSAY

- **DUE DATE:** February 15.
- **EDITOR:** Anthony Taylor
- **LENGTH:** Up to 5k
- **SPECIAL THEME:** essay on one of his works or a group of works, or similar subject.
- **WORD RATE:** N/A
- **GUIDELINES:** A 5K chapter essay on one of his works or a group of works, or similar subject and personal notes about my friendship and mentorship by Richard Matheson
- **COMPLETED WORK:** “*He Was Legend*”
- **FINAL WORD COUNT:** 5200

ABERRATIONS II

- **DUE DATE:** May 10
- **EDITOR:** Chris McNally
- **LENGTH:** 2,000-5,000
- **SPECIAL THEME:** Humans vs. nature. Preferably abominations of nature.
- **WORD RATE:** .03AUD
- **GUIDELINES:** Humans vs. nature. Preferably abominations of nature. Hybrids. Chimeras. Mutants. Experiments gone wrong. Invasive species. Relict species. Previously undescribed species. You get the idea. No? Okay, think of books like Peter Benchley’s *Jaws*, James Herbert’s *The Rats*, or movies like *Lake Placid*, *Komodo*, *Alligator*, *Orca*, *Bats*, etc. **No military horror please** (we have a series for that). No zombies, either (we have an anthology for that too). Just regular folks facing an abnormal threat. Emergency services personnel (cops included) are fine to use as characters but no military (ex-military as a background for a character is okay, though).
- **COMPLETED WORK:** Reprint: “*Terror Forming*”
- **FINAL WORD COUNT:** 5900

DISRUPTIVE INTENT

- **DUE DATE:** March 2026
- **EDITOR:** David B. Coe and Sarah J. Sover
- **LENGTH:** 5-7k for story; 750 words for accompanying note
- **SPECIAL THEME:** Inner workings (see guidelines)
- **WORD RATE:** .05/word
- **GUIDELINES:** On file (extensive and specific)
- **COMPLETED WORK:** “Blood of the Covenant”
- **FINAL WORD COUNT:** 5700

THE ECHO OF THE HOUR

- **DUE DATE:** 4/10
- **EDITOR:** Lisa Mangum
- **LENGTH:** 5K
- **SPECIAL THEME:** Time travel (see guidelines)
- **WORD RATE:** n/a
- **GUIDELINES:** Stories may be in any genre (fantasy, sci-fi, contemporary, Western, horror, steampunk, mystery, romance, historical, humorous, etc.), but must be appropriate for a “PG-13” audience. I am not looking for alternate histories or narratives centered on revising known historical events. (We did that in A Bit of Luck. 😊) The Echo of the Hour Tales of Time and Seasons. For this anthology, Superstars alumni are invited to explore the many ways time shapes lives, choices, and consequences. Stories may unfold over seconds or centuries, but I’m especially interested in stories that showcase the many facets of time—how it can be both malleable and rigid, broken or repaired, hoarded or wasted, borrowed or stolen, reversed or weaponized. Time can heal as easily as it can destroy. While the anthology will be centered on the idea of time and our relationship with it, all stories must end with an iconic sound that marks the passage of time—the ringing of a bell or the ticking of a clock. The final bell may signal an ending, a beginning, a reckoning, a revelation, or something stranger still. The sound may ring, buzz, chime, knell, or toll, but it should clearly mark the passing of an important moment. *The Echo of the Hour* will be the twelfth Superstars anthology edited by Lisa Mangum, assisted by Briannon Holifer, and published by WordFire Press. After direct production costs, all WordFire Press profits will go toward the Superstars Writing Seminar scholarship funds.
- **COMPLETED WORK:** “The Gray People No One Sees”
- **FINAL WORD COUNT:** 4600

OUR MONSTERS, OUR SELVES

- **DUE DATE:** May 1, 2026
- **EDITOR:** James Chambers and Jamal Hodge
- **LENGTH:** 5,000 words
- **SPECIAL THEME:** explore themes of loneliness, isolation, and being too seen
- **WORD RATE:**
- **GUIDELINES:** Anthology Guidelines: *Our Monsters, Our Selves: The Horrors of the Depths Between and Within Us*. What are the horrors of being alone and of being too seen? Of being trapped within ourselves or by those around us? Of the monsters that hide in others—and inside *ourselves*? Emotionally distanced, isolated, unable to make genuine connections, we stray onto dark paths... Surrounded by dishonest people and sycophants, who love their illusions of us, but are blind to our needs and wounds. Walled in by delusions and assumptions of unbelonging that exist only in our minds. Narcissistic, self-obsessed, and unable to see the true self of others—or even ourselves—except for how they serve us. Accepting of how others disregard our commitments and self-sacrifices and take us for granted. Numbed by festering apathy within ourselves, emptied of feeling toward our day-to-day lives and the people in them, devoid of the will to address the wrongs of the world around and within us. Basking in the attention of millions of virtual followers—yet unable to make connections in real life. To be so broken or stigmatized that the world blinds itself to our humanity, our very existence. To be the only one of your kind, the only one of your mind... the one left behind. These are some of the ways we find ourselves alone, distanced, estranged, and isolated even in the hyperconnected, peak-population 21st-century world. This dark fiction anthology will explore crushing loneliness, suffocating popularity, and the many ways we find ourselves ostracized or overexposed—by our own doing or that of others—and alone in a world more interconnected than ever. *It will explore how detachment and isolation spawn monsters.*
- **COMPLETED WORK:** “Domestic Disturbance”
- **FINAL WORD COUNT:** 5000

THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY

- **DUE DATE:** April 25
- **EDITOR:** Preston Grassmann <prestonowen73@gmail.com>
- **LENGTH:** 5000
- **SPECIAL THEME:** *An Anthology of Occult Investigations.*
- **WORD RATE:** .03/word
- **GUIDELINES:** *Through a Glass Darkly* follows seekers of hidden knowledge - students of arcane philosophy, connoisseurs of cosmic lore, analysts of the dream-rebus and alchemical symbols, all drawn into investigations that defy natural laws and sanity itself. This is an anthology for fans of both classic and modern masters of occult detection, with genre-defying tales that push the classic tropes of the genre into new and unsettling territories. From Algernon Blackwood's John Silence to Clive Barker's Harry D'Amour, acclaimed horror and speculative fiction writers will take us beyond the veil of our world, where nothing less than the soul is at stake.
- **COMPLETED WORK:** “The Skin we Wear”
- **FINAL WORD COUNT:** 5400

WORLD OF WARCRAFT Microstories

- **DUE DATE:** 8/5/2026
- **EDITOR:** Megan Walker
- **LENGTH:** 1000 each
- **SPECIAL THEME:** Intro of new characters
- **WORD RATE:** \$1/word
- **GUIDELINES:** On file/extensive
- **COMPLETED WORKS:**
 - **Memories of Honor**
 - **Wild Words on a Winter's Night**
- **FINAL WORD COUNT:** 2000

ZERO GRAVITY: COZY TALES FROM OUTER SPACE

- **DUE DATE:** August 6
- **EDITOR:** Janina Scarlett
- **LENGTH:** 4,000–6,000
- **SPECIAL THEME:** Cozy upbeat SF
- **WORD RATE:**
- **GUIDELINES:** Divine Feminine Publishing is seeking cozy, quirky, science fiction stories set in space and/or on other planets for an upcoming anthology celebrating humor, wonder, and humanity in the vastness of space. We're looking for character-driven sci-fi adventures with heart, where curiosity, compassion, and clever problem-solving matter more than explosions. At least 50% of characters in each story must be women and/or gender diverse characters. If your story feels like curling up with a hot cup of Earl Grey while watching the galaxy drift by through the porthole of a starship, we want to read it.
- **COMPLETED WORK:** "I Can See Clearly Now"
- **FINAL WORD COUNT:** 5800

ELECTRIC DREAMS & DARK CURRENTS/NIKOLA TESLA

- **DUE DATE:** August 1, 2026
- **EDITOR:** PATRIC RYAN
- **LENGTH:** 5,000–7,500 words (flexible for established contributors).
- **SPECIAL THEME:** Given your vast experience in horror, one idea I'd love to see you explore is a **Cthulhu-inspired story featuring Tesla**. Of course, your creative interpretation is entirely welcome
- **WORD RATE:** \$0.10
- **GUIDELINES:** The anthology, *Electric Dreams & Dark Currents of Nikola Tesla* — *The Teslaverse Anthology*, reimagines Nikola Tesla across genres — from science fiction and thriller to historical fiction, speculative fiction, and horror. Tesla is presented as a recurring, narrative-driven character, a visionary whose inventions and persona inspire

imagination across worlds and time. Stories should explore Tesla's genius, inventions, or mythos while remaining true to each author's voice and preferred genre.

- **COMPLETED WORK:** "Department-T"
- **FINAL WORD COUNT:** 7000

EPISTOLARY

- **DUE DATE:** September 1
- **EDITOR:** CJ Ives Lopez
- **LENGTH:** 5K
- **SPECIAL THEME:** Letter-based horror/dark fiction (epistolary core: correspondence, packages, postal artifacts). The story must be told in an epistolary format. This includes journal entries, letters, interviews, podcast transcripts, newspaper clippings, etc. (Dracula, Frankenstein, House of Leaves)
- **WORD RATE:** \$0.08/word (paid on acceptance of final edits)
- **GUIDELINES:** Pending
- **COMPLETED WORK:**
- **FINAL WORD COUNT**

SUPER HEROES, SUPER PROBLEMS

- **DUE DATE:** September 1
- **EDITOR:** Kevin J. Anderson and Allyson Longueira
- **LENGTH:** up to 5000 words (firm limit)
- **SPECIAL THEME:** ABSOLUTELY NO copyrighted characters or worlds. Original stories only that have never been published in any format.
- **SPECIAL SUBMISSION RULES:** A Microsoft Word manuscript format to [THIS LINK](#).
- **WORD RATE:** 8¢/word on acceptance
- **GUIDELINES:** Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird! It's a plane! It's... my alarm clock. Being super means dealing with super problems, as well as mundane ones. Superheroes, Super Problems is an original anthology exploring the balance between the extraordinary responsibility of being a superhero and the ordinary struggles of human existence...and the limitations of Spandex. From Gilgamesh, Beowulf, and Moses to Superman, Batman, and the Incredibles, characters with superpowers are as old as storytelling. Behind every hero stands a great villain, and let's not forget about their minions, not to mention the civilians living in a world where superheroes cause traffic jams and flight delays. We love their powers, but we want to know their problems. The cape is no escape—it's a trap. Imagine a superhero has been battling villains all day long, but his kids refuse to eat the dinner he made. Or a gloating villain returns to her lair only to find her chihuahua has chewed through the cord to her death laser. Superhuman strength can't save a hero's child from cancer. Superpowers won't make someone immune to prejudice or fanaticism. Perhaps the world's greatest defender is accused of a hideous crime, or struggling with the pain of a divorce behind the mask. A seemingly well-organized hero might be battling addiction, and saving his city is the only escape he knows. As their superpowers fade, a

hero may need a service animal. Your hero could be caring for an aging supervillain parent or struggling to open up in therapy while hiding their secret identity.

- **COMPLETED WORK:**
- **FINAL WORD COUNT**

NIGHTMARE MAGAZINE

- **DUE DATE:** September 15
- **EDITOR:** John Joseph Adams
- **LENGTH:** 5k, with wiggle room
- **SPECIAL THEME:** Any kind of horror
- **WORD RATE:** .08
- **GUIDELINES:** *Lightspeed* and *Nightmare* are seeking original science fiction/fantasy and horror/dark fantasy stories. No subject should be considered off-limits, and we encourage writers to take chances with their fiction and push the envelope. We do not accept [simultaneous submissions](#) or [multiple submissions](#). You may submit one story per open submission period.
- **COMPLETED WORK:**
- **FINAL WORD COUNT**

NEW PROJECT

- **DUE DATE:**
- **EDITOR:**
- **LENGTH:**
- **SPECIAL THEME:**
- **WORD RATE:**
- **GUIDELINES:**
- **COMPLETED WORK:**
- **FINAL WORD COUNT**

APPENDIX 3

SHORT STORY MASTER LIST & WORD COUNT

Includes Flash, Short Stories, Novelettes and Novellas

Red indicates written in the current year

1.	A Christmas Feast	5000	(A Tale of the Rot & Ruin)
2.	A Day in the Life	8300	(A Tale of the Rot & Ruin)
3.	A Footnote in the Black Budget	7100	(A Joe Ledger adventure)
4.	A Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight	14272	(A Joe Ledger adventure)
5.	A House in Need of Children	11000	(A Sam Hunter case)
6.	A Small Taste of the Old Country	7500	Horror
7.	A Terrible Aspect	5700	(Mr. Church/Lucia Hunter)
8.	Against That Time, if Ever That Time Come	6800	(A Joe Ledger adventure)
9.	Alive Day	27000	(Joe Ledger/Lizzie Corbett)
10.	All the Devils are Here	17800	(A Joe Ledger adventure)
11.	Altar Boy	7500	(A Toys adventure)
12.	And What I Saw There Saw Me	6200	(OmniPark Short Story)
13.	Apocalypse Tango	15200	(a V-WARS story)
14.	Artifact	8900	(A Joe Ledger adventure)
15.	Atoll	8800	(A Joe Ledger adventure)
16.	Back in Black (with Bryan Thomas Schmidt)	28000	(A Dead of Night/Joe Ledger story)
17.	Bad Times in the Bob	6000	(A Joe Ledger adventure)
18.	Banana Republic	7000	(Planet of the Apes)
19.	Bats! Bats! Bats! (Fun for the Whole Family!)	6600	(A Pine Deep story)
20.	Bear With Me	4000	Middle-grade fantasy
21.	Being Emily-Claire	8200	Horror
22.	Bewilderness: Destroyer of Worlds	37000	(Serialized Novel)
23.	Bewilderness: Threshold	30000	(Serialized Novel)
24.	Bewilderness: What Rough Beast	30000	(Serialized Novel)
25.	Blood of the Covenant	5700	Horror
26.	Borrowed Power	11800	(A Joe Ledger adventure)
27.	Breaking News	9500	(a V-WARS story)
28.	Bug Hunt	11000	(A Joe Ledger adventure)
29.	Burning Heaven to the Ground	15000	(A Joe Ledger adventure)
30.	Cadaver Dog	8500	(A Dead of Night story)
31.	Calling Death	5000	Horror
32.	Changeling	14500	(A Joe Ledger adventure)
33.	Chaos Lords of Mars	5000	John Carter of Mars/Lovecraft
34.	Chokepoint	7100	(A Dead of Night story)
35.	Clean Sweeps	4000	Military Science fiction
36.	Cold Beers with the Guys from Summer Camp	5600	Horror
37.	Collector	8400	(A Monk Addison story)
38.	Complete Garbage	5000	Kaiju horror
39.	Cooked	5000	Horror
40.	Countdown	3400	(A Joe Ledger adventure)
41.	Crazy Town	9300	(A Sam Hunter case)
42.	Critical Mass	4600	Science Fiction/Horror

43.	Days Gone Quiet	4500	(A Dead of Night story)
44.	Dead & Gone	18500	(A Tale of the Rot & Ruin)
45.	Dead to Me	4500	(A Monk Addison story)
46.	Death Poem of Sensei Otoro	13000	Historical horror
47.	Death Song of Dwar Guntha	6000	(John Carter of Mars)
48.	Deep Black	5200	(An ALIENS story)
49.	Deep Trouble	5100	Science Fiction/Horror
50.	Deep, Dark	8000	(A Joe Ledger adventure)
51.	Department-T	7000	(Department-T)
52.	Doctor Nine	5000	(A Dead of Night story)
53.	Doctor Velocity	6300	Fantasy
54.	Dog Days	9000	(A Joe Ledger adventure)
55.	Domestic Disturbance	5000	(Horror)
56.	Dragonsong on the Morning Breeze	9000	(Fantasy)
57.	Dream a Little Dream of Me	12300	(A Sam Hunter case)
58.	Elizabeth and Mr. Collins	148	(Drabble fiction)
59.	Embedded	1100	(a V-WARS story)
60.	Escalation	2500	(a V-WARS story)
61.	Faces	9600	(A Monk Addison story)
62.	Family Business	20000	(A Tale of the Rot & Ruin)
63.	Family Values	8000	(Horror/Thriller; w/ Wayne Brady)
64.	Fat Girl with A Knife	8000	(A Dead of Night story)
65.	First Night Memories	5200	(A Tale of the Rot & Ruin)
66.	Fishing for Stars in the Summer Woods	12000	(a Joe Ledger Adventure)
67.	Flint and Steel	18800	(GI Joe)
68.	Follow the Shattered-Brick Road	5000	YA fantasy
69.	Freckle & Hide	5000	MG fantasy
70.	Gameworld	10600	(A PREDATOR story)
71.	Gavin Funke's Monster Movie Marathon	6200	(A Dead of Night story)
72.	Ghost Creepin' Blues	12,300	(A Pine Deep story)
73.	Ghost Men of Sunrise Mesa	13500	(A Red MacGill weird west)
74.	Ghosts of War	7400	(A NecroTek story)
75.	Going to the Bronx for a Quick Bite	9100	(A Sam Hunter case)
76.	Gorilla My Dreams	4100	Fantasy
77.	Goth Chicks	13645	(A Sam Hunter case)
78.	Grit	7800	(A Monk Addison case)
79.	Hell Dogs of Eldorado Canyon	7100	(A Red MacGill weird west)
80.	Hero Town	11000	(A Tale of the Rot & Ruin)
81.	Heroes Don't Wear Spandex	6300	(a V-WARS story)
82.	Hitler's Dog	9400	(Monster Hunter International)
83.	Holding Out for a Hero	8100	(A Joe Ledger adventure)
84.	Höllenlegion	5600	(Island of Dr. Moreau)
85.	House on Hummingbird Lane	5000	(Horror)
86.	I Can See Clearly Now	5800	(Science Fiction)
87.	I Say Your Name in the Dark Nights	11000	(A Kagen the Damned adventure)
88.	In Summer's Woods	979	(A Kagen the Damned adventure)
89.	In Sunshine or in Shadow	5400	(A Kagen the Damned adventure)
90.	In the Land of the Dead	5800	(A Tale of the Rot & Ruin)
91.	In Which Eeyore Tries to See Forever	8000	(Winnie-the-Pooh/Lovecraft)
92.	Ink	6100	(A Monk Addison case)
93.	Invasive Species	2100	(Science Fiction/Horror)

94.	Ironheart	5400	Science fiction
95.	Jack and Jill	13000	(A Dead of Night story)
96.	Jingo and the Hammerman	5500	(A Dead of Night story)
97.	Junk	24,000	(a V-WARS story)
98.	Kyōdai (with Louis Ozawa Changchien)	9200	(ALIENS VS PREDATOR)
99.	Last Bites	1100	(a V-WARS story)
100.	Le Belle Dame Sans Merci	1800	(a V-WARS story)
101.	Let God Sort 'Em Out	5800	(a V-WARS story)
102.	Like Part of the Family	8300	(A Sam Hunter case)
103.	Lone Gunman	6226	(A Sam Imura/Dead of Night Story)
104.	Long Way Home	8200	(A Pine Deep story)
105.	Lullaby	5100	Horror
106.	Mad Science	9700	(A Joe Ledger adventure)
107.	Mantis	20,000	(A Joe Ledger adventure)
108.	Material Witness	12000	(A Joe Ledger adventure)
109.	Meditations of a Drunk Skip-Tracer on Boundary Street	6000	(A Monk Addison story)
110.	Memories of Honor	1000	(World of Warcraft)
111.	Men (almost always) in Black	6600	(A Joe Ledger adventure)
112.	Midnight Call	1200	(A Joe Ledger adventure)
113.	Mister Pockets	8300	(A Pine Deep story)
114.	My Reach is Forever	5000	(Miss Mina tie-in)
115.	Mystic	7100	(A Monk Addison story)
116.	Needles	14900	(A Monk Addison story)
117.	Not my War, Not my World	5300	(A Sam Imura/Dead of Night Story)
118.	On Moonlit Roads	6800	(A Joe Ledger Adventure)
119.	On Nightmare Wings: Adreona	1500	(A Diablo IV story)
120.	On Nightmare Wings: Lorath	1500	(A Diablo IV story)
121.	On Nightmare Wings: Neyrelle	1500	(A Diablo IV story)
122.	Overdue Books	1100	(A Tale of the Rot& Ruin)
123.	Pegleg and Paddy Save the World	6565	Horror/comedy
124.	Phantoms	1500	(A NecroTek story)
125.	Plan 7 from Sin City	8200	(Plan 9 from Outer Space)
126.	Prince of Dust and Shadows	7800	(A Kagen the Damned adventure)
127.	Property Condemned	8900	(A Pine Deep story)
128.	Rags and Bones	15500	(A Tale of the Rot& Ruin)
129.	Red Dreams	7500	Weird western
130.	Red Empire	6200	(a V-WARS story)
131.	Reflected Image	6200	(A Monk Addison case)
132.	Response Appropriate to the Situation	7100	(Horror-thriller)
133.	Road Beers with Norm and Tank at Twitchy's Hatchet House	9200	Comedy horror
134.	Rust	5000	Horror
135.	Rust (alternative version/S.D._	5000	
136.	Saint John	10000	(A Dead of Night story)
137.	Shadows Beneath the Stone	12000	Swords and Sorcery
138.	She's Got a Ticket to Ride	6600	Science fiction
139.	Sisters	7400	(A Tale of the Rot& Ruin)
140.	Son of the Devil	8300	Horror
141.	Species Genocide	700	(a V-WARS story)
142.	Spellcaster 2.0	11000	Fantasy
143.	Strip Search	23400	(A Sam Hunter case)
144.	Suicide Games	2600	(a V-WARS story)

145. Sunset Hollow	5100 (A Tale of the Rot& Ruin)
146. T. Rhymer (with Gregory Frost)	18000 Fantasy
147. Terror/Forming	6000 Science fiction
148. The Adventure of the Confounded Writer	6000 (Science fiction)
149. The Adventure of the Ghastly Revenant	11800 (Sherlock Holmes)
150. The Adventure of the Greenbrier Ghost	7300 (Sherlock Holmes)
151. The Best Day	4700 Horror
152. The Cobbler of Oz	10500 (Wizard of Oz)
153. The Crow that Spoke in a Voice like Autumn	4100 (Horror)
154. The Damned One Hundred	6600 Epic Fantasy/World of Kagen
155. The Devil's Sigh	8700 (A Joe Ledger adventure)
156. The Door Between Us	4300 Horror
157. The Duelist	6982 (Hellboy)
158. The Empty Grave	9150 (A Sherlock Holmes Adventure)
159. The Fix is In	10100 (A Predator short story)
160. The Four Blades of the Apocalypse	5700 (A Kagen the Damned adventure)
161. The Good Neighbor	1100 Thriller
162. The Gray People No One Sees	4600 Fantasy
163. The Hammer of God	12400 Epic Fantasy/World of Kagen
164. The Handyman Gets Out	9400 (A Joe Ledger adventure)
165. The Hound of God	7500 (A Solomon Kane story)
166. The Little House on the Kansas Prairie	6600 Wizard of Oz/horror
167. The Million Dollar Hunt	9000 (True Blood/Sookie Stackhouse)
168. The Night Flyers	6100 Historical fantasy / Marie Curie
169. The Ocean Doesn't Want Me Today	6000 Fantasy
170. The Orpheus Gate	8200 Science Fiction
171. The Quick and the Dead	4000 (A Tale of the Rot& Ruin)
172. The Rain is Full of Ghosts Tonight	4700 (A Kagen the Damned adventure)
173. The Red Library	18600 (A Lizzie Corbett adventure)
174. The Scarlet Engines of Regret	5800 Horror
175. The Scream	4600 Horror
176. The Skin We Wear	5400 (A Sam Hunter case)
177. The Skinny Old Man on Frenchman Street	2600 Crime
178. The Things That Live in Cages	7100 Horror
179. The Toll of Darkness and Light	6200 (Epic Fantasy/Diablo 3)
180. The Trouble	11500 (A Pine Deep story)
181. The Vanishing Assassin	7700 (A C. Auguste Dupin story)
182. The Viking Funeral of Hillbilly Tom Skaggert	10000 (Horror comedy)
183. The Werewolf's Fifteen Minutes	16600 (Social satire horror)
184. The Wind through the Fence	4600 (A Dead of Night story)
185. Three Guys Walk into a Bar	33,300 (Sam Hunter / Joe Ledger)
186. Toby's Closet	8500 (A Sam Hunter case)
187. Tomb of the Wiedergänger	5000 A Van Helsing story
188. Tooth & Nail	26000 (A Tale of the Rot& Ruin)
189. Trials	8200 (World of Warcraft)
190. Trouble's Braids	10700 (A Sam Hunter case)
191. Twilight Falls	9400 (A Joe Ledger adventure)
192. Undermind	4200 Supervillains
193. Valley of Shadows	4500 (A Tale of the Rot& Ruin)
194. We All Go Through Changes	5000 (A Sam Hunter Case)
195. We All Make Sacrifices	7300 (A Sam Hunter case)

196. We Wear the Masks	9800	(A Joe Ledger/Monk Addison story)
197. Weaponized Hell (with Larry Correia)	11800	(Joe Ledger/ MHI)
198. Welcome to the War	3000	(A Joe Ledger/Tom Imura story)
199. Wet Works	8900	(featuring Joe Ledger & Violin)
200. What I Did on My Summer Vacation	6400	Young adult mystery
201. When I Waked I Cried to Dream Again	7200	(Shakespearean horror)
202. When You See Millions of the Mouthless Dead	5700	(Ghost Story)
203. Whistlin' Past the Graveyard	10000	(A Pine Deep story)
204. Wild Words on a Winter's Night	1000	(World of Warcraft)
205. With all the Boards Nailed Just Right	6000	Horror
206. Words are for Those with Promises to Keep	2100	(Fantasy)
207. You Will Never Leave Harlan Alive	11600	(C.H.U.D.)
208. You're the Devil in Disguise	7200	(A Monk Addison case)
209. Yuletide Games with the Suicide Kings	3300	(Horror)
210. Zero Tolerance	7100	(A Joe Ledger adventure)

POETRY

1. The Dark Eater
2. **Born to It**
3. The Queen of Thorns
4. Doctor Nine
5. The Wind was a Knife
6. Derelict
7. The House by the Creek
8. **There is No Name for What I Am**
9. They Pass by the Horse
10. **Sniper's Lullaby**
11. As I Lay Dying
12. Job Description
13. Monk
14. On Lonely Roads
15. Vathnya

Essays / Articles:

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 1. You Know Something's Happening Here | 4200 |
| 2. Books with Bite | 5470 |
| 3. Confessions of a Professional Daydreamer | 3100 |
| 4. The Genre of You | 2000 |
| 5. He Was Legend | 5200 |

APPENDIX 4

Jonathan Maberry IPs

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YouTube: @jonathanmaberry

LITERARY AGENT: SARA CROWE of Sara Crowe Literary

Sara Crowe XXX_XXX_XXXX

FILM/TV AGENT: DANA SPECTOR of CAA

Dana Spector XXX_XXX_XXXX

Index:

- Novels
- Audio Originals
- Graphic Novels
- Anthologies
- Story Cycles (Recurring characters)
- Short Stories
- Poetry

NOVELS:

NECROTEK

(Weird Tales Presents, a Blackstone Publishing imprint; ongoing series)

RIGHTS STATUS: Available

NOTE: Discussions ongoing for possible anime/manga development
(Genre: Deep space cosmic horror)

NECROTEK Book 1 (2024)

From *New York Times* bestselling author Jonathan Maberry, *NecroTek* is a gripping sci-fi thriller full of ghosts, gods, and a battle for the soul of humanity.

Neither cosmic philosopher Lars Soren, hotshot pilot Bianca Petrescu, nor the high priestess Jessica McHugh—Lady Death herself—can say quite where in the galaxy they are. But after an experiment gone horribly wrong, one thing is clear: Asphodel Station isn't in orbit around Jupiter any longer. Worse, the monsters that live out here—ancient eldritch beings thought only to exist in stories and nightmares—have now been alerted to Earth's existence.

Their army of Shoggoths is coming for us next.

Humanity's only hope for survival lies on the surface of the alien world of Shadderal, where a ghost named Lost, the last of an ancient race, still haunts the vast plains of the Field of Dead Birds. But hope has a cost. Lost tells Soren about ancient derelict spacecraft awaiting on Shadderal, shapeshifting machines that blend ultra-advanced technology with the dark powers of necromancy. These ships might just be nimble enough to defend mankind against the coming invasion.

But there's a catch: they can only be piloted by the dead.

As human starfighters fall in battle, their spirits can be called back from death to pilot these ghost ships of a fallen race. But will this new necromantic technology—NecroTek—allow humanity to stand against the vast armies of the Shoggoths? And even if it can, is the war to save the human race worth the cost of its pilots' immortal souls?

COLD WAR Book 2 (2025) On Earth, Professor Evie Cronin and her team make a startling discovery beneath Antarctica that will answer the ages-old question about whether humans are alone in the universe. But will this lead to First Contact... or spark an interstellar war of conquest and destruction?

Across the galaxy, the survivors of the WarpLine disaster are locked in a losing battle against the Outer Gods and their numberless shoggoth fleets. And the Night-Gaunts are coming to invade the dreaming minds of the defenders, driving many to madness and suicide. Even with the NecroTek—giant shapeshifting battle mechs piloted by the ghosts of fallen human pilots—the war may be hopeless. They are all alone out there and no help is coming.

Or is it?

GHOSTS OF THE VOID Book 3 (2026) The science teams believe they have a pathway to returning everyone safely back to Earth. However the device to do this requires a special kind of crystal not easily found. At the same time, the Mi-Gos, an insect race of scientists working for the Outer Gods, are sending an invasion fleet to destroy the humans and take their new device. The story unfolds on several fronts as the NecroTek, the fighter pilots of the Lost Souls Squadron, and the Jokers Special Ops team are determined to stop them cold. There are sprawling battles, with the fate of the entire universe at stake.

THE JOE LEDGER THRILLERS

(St. Martins Griffin; ongoing series)

RIGHTS STATUS: Under option to Chad Stahelski at 87Eleven Entertainment

(Genre: Weird science action thrillers)

*** Joe Ledger is a psychologically compromised former Baltimore cop who gets scouted to become a field agent for a secret government organization that goes up against terrorists with cutting-edge science weapons. Each book features a different kind of weird science –mostly based on real-world science.

*** The unique features of the Joe Ledger series are many:

- Because of terrible trauma Joe suffered as a teen he has a fractured psyche. There are three distinct aspects to his personality at work in him: the Modern Man (idealistic, optimistic, peaceful), the Cop (clinical, precise, orderly), and the Killer (feral, ultra-violent, will do anything to protect the tribe –i.e. the innocent).
- Joe is not a typical shooter. He's a million miles away from the 'kill 'em all, let God sort 'em out' mentality. And he loathes the concept of 'my country right or wrong'. He's an idealist and humanist, and he fights the bad guys because someone needs to stand between them and the users, takers, killers, and despoilers.
- Joe is funny. (He's actually funnier than me, which is kind of weird, since I write the books).
- Joe is a superb martial artist, but his greatest combat skill is a total lack of hesitation. It's a rare and precious quality in a fighter.

*** This series is my most popular with adults around the world.

First series: **JOE LEDGER / THE DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY SCIENCES**

- **PATIENT ZERO** (2009)
 - A prion disease retasked to create a zombie-like bioweapon
- **THE DRAGON FACTORY** (2010)
 - Transgenic science used to restart the Nazi master race program
- **THE KING OF PLAGUES** (2011)
 - Weaponized Ebola
- **ASSASSIN'S CODE** (2012)
 - Genetically-engineered vampire assassins
- **EXTINCTION MACHINE** (2013)
 - Global arms race based on reverse-engineered tech from crashed UFOs
- **CODE ZERO** (2014)
 - Video gamer and anarchists hacking stockpiles of bioweapons
- **PREDATOR ONE** (2015)
 - Drone technology (military and commercial; GPS hacking; autonomous drive hacking)
- **KILL SWITCH** (2016)

- Directed energy weapons
- **DOGS OF WAR** (2017)
 - Combat robotics
- **DEEP SILENCE** (2018)
 - Induced earthquakes
- **RAGE** (2019)
 - Politics of the reunification of Korea; denuclearization; bioweapons based on organic neurotoxins
- **RELENTLESS** (2021)
 - Global tech black market; combat cybernetics; combat enhanced private military contractors
- **CAVE 13** (2023)
 - Ergot/psilocybin bioweapon
- **BURN TO SHINE** (2025)
 - Rogue militia and domestic terrorism.
- **RED EMPIRE** (2026)
 - Weaponized plague (*yersinia pestis*)
- **AVALON STATION** (2027)
 - Bionics and military enhancements
- **SPECIES UNKNOWN** (2028)
 - Forced evolution and deep-sea research

JOE LEDGER: SPECIAL OPS –A collection of short stories published by JournalStone

JOE LEDGER: SECRET MISSIONS –A 2-volume collection of short stories published by JournalStone -2021

JOE LEDGER: UNSTOPPABLE (anthology co-edited with Bryan Thomas Schmidt for Griffing; 2017). Features original short stories by Christopher Golden & Tim Lebbon, Dana Fredsti, Weston Ochse, Steve Alten, Sherrilyn Kenyon, Seanan McGuire, Scott Sigler, Ray Garton, Larry Correia, Jon McGoran, Joe McKinney, Jeremy Robinson, Jennifer Campbell-Hicks, Javier Grillo-Marxuach, James A. Moore, David Farland, and Claire Ashgrove.

THE JOE LEDGER COMPANION by Dana Fredsti, Mari Adkins, Preston Halcomb, with Jonathan Maberry for JournalStone; 2017. A nonfiction look at the world of Joe Ledger and the Department of Military Sciences.

THE PINE DEEP TRILOGY

(Pinnacle Books)

Adult supernatural thrillers/horror

RIGHTS STATUS: Available

(Genre: Small town horror/supernatural thriller)

****Pine Deep, Pennsylvania is known as the ‘most haunted town in America’. They’ve built their entire tourism industry around that reputation. The problem is, Pine Deep is more thoroughly haunted than even the residents know. Evils both ancient and recent live there or are drawn there, including different kinds of ghosts, vampires, werewolves and more; and it calls to the dark minds of serial killers as well. Most of the townsfolk convince themselves that the things in the dark are not supernatural. One man, Malcolm Crow, knows the truth. And he fears that soon an army of the dead will go to war against the world of the living.

- **The Pine Deep Trilogy**
 - **Ghost Road Blues** (2006; Winner of the Bram Stoker Award)
 - **Dead Man’s Song** (2007)
 - **Bad Moon Rising** (2008)
 - Original mass market paperbacks and 10th anniversary trades from Pinnacle; signed/numbered hardcover editions from JournalStone.
 - Audio by Blackstone, read by Tom Weiner.
- **Darkness on the Edge of Town** (2015; audio collection of Pine Deep stories; produced by Blackstone Audio, read by Ray Porter)
- **Long Past Midnight** (2022; collection of Pine Deep short stories & poems)
- **INK St. Martin’s Griffin** 2020 (see entry for MONK ADDISON)

MONK ADDISON

RIGHTS STATUS: Available

(GENRE: Horror noir mystery)

**** Supernatural noir mystery-thrillers

**** Gerald ‘Monk’ Addison is a former soldier who saw too much, did too much and burned out. He went looking for some answers to make sense of the world and found answers he didn’t expect. Now he lives in the wrong part of a big city as a bounty hunter and skip tracer. But every once in a while he’s hired for special investigations. His clients are the ghosts of murder victims who want him to find their killers. To do this, Monk recovers some of their blood from the crime scenes and has it mixed with ink so that the faces of the dead are tattooed onto his skin. This allows him to experience the last few minutes of the victims’ lives and get clues about who killed them so the murderers can be stopped before they destroy more lives. Solving these murders comes with a terrible price, both for Monk and his ‘clients’. Once the tattoo is complete, the ghosts will forever after haunt Monk. They can’t pass on and only he can see them. Monk Addison is a man haunted by more than his memories of war.

MYSTIC: The Monk Addison Case Files: (2024; WordFire Press; collection of Monk Addison short stories and poems)

MONK Novels:

GLIMPSE

(St. Martin’s Griffin; 2018)

Adult mainstream horror/suspense.

**** A young woman, **RAIN**, newly clean from years of drug addiction is trying to make a life for herself. On the way to a job interview she borrows a pair of cracked reading glasses and out of the corner of the lens she catches a glimpse of a little boy who she believes is the child she gave up for adoption when she was sixteen. Now that little boy is in serious trouble and he’s calling for his mother to find him and save him. Rain and a disabled veteran cab driver begin a surreal journey to find that little boy. Saving him may be the most important thing she—or anyone—has ever done, and time is running out.

INK

(St. Martin’s Griffin 2020)

Horror Suspense

*** Tattoo-artist Patty Cakes has her daughter’s face tattooed on the back of her hand. The images keeps fading, though, as if her daughter is going away. Or being stolen. Patty re-inks it every time. Twenty-two times now. Tattoos are supposed to last forever, just like memories of the ones we’ve loved and lost. But her daughter’s face keeps fading. As if someone is stealing it. Stealing her memory. Stealing *her*. And each day Patty forgets more and more about her little girl. The awareness of that loss is tearing her apart.

Monk Addison is a private investigator whose skin is covered with the tattooed faces of murder victims. He is a predator who hunts for killers, and the ghosts of all of those dead people haunt his life. Some of those faces have begun to fade, too, destroying the very souls of the dead.

Other people are experiencing the same thing, having their most precious memories stolen. Something is out there. Something cruel and evil is feeding on the memories, erasing them from the hearts and minds of people like Patty and Monk and others.

INK is the story of a few lonely, damaged people hunting for a memory thief that feeds on the most precious of dreams. When all you have are memories, there is no greater horror than forgetting.

BURN TO SHINE (Monk appears as a guest star in the 2025 Joe Ledger thriller)

MONK ADDISON SHORT STORIES & POEMS:

- Collector
- Dead to Me
- Faces
- Grit
- Ink
- Job description -a Poem
- Meditations of a Drunk Skip Tracer on Boundary Street
- Mystic
- Needles
- On Lonely Roads -a Poem
- Reflected Image
- We Wear the Masks

KAGEN THE DAMNED

AN EPIC FANTASY TRILOGY

(St. Martin's Griffin)

RIGHTS STATUS: Available

(GENRE: Epic/Dark Fantasy)

*** *Game of Thrones* meets *John Wick*

Logline: A man with nothing to lose has nothing to fear.

KAGEN THE DAMNED (2022) is the first of a series of dark epic fantasy novels featuring a brand-new kickass character –Kagen Vale, Captain of the Palace Guard.

PITCH:

Kagen the Damned marks the first installment of an exciting new series of dark epic fantasy novels from bestselling author Jonathan Maberry.

Sworn by Oath

Kagen Vale is the trusted and feared captain of the palace guard, charged with protection of the royal children of the Silver Empire. But one night, Kagen is drugged and the entire imperial family is killed, leaving the empire in ruins.

Abandoned by the Gods

Haunted and broken, Kagen is abandoned by his gods and damned forever. He becomes a wanderer, trying to take down as many of his enemies as possible while plotting to assassinate the usurper, the deadly Witch-king of Hakkia. While all around him magic—long banished from the world—returns in strange and terrifying ways. (This marks the first time PTSD has played a key role in epic fantasy.)

Fueled by Rage

To exact his vengeance, Kagen must venture into strange lands, battle bizarre and terrifying creatures, and gather allies for a suicide mission into the heart of the Witch-king's empire.

Kings and gods will fear him.

Kagen the Damned

SON OF THE POISON ROSE (2023)

The Silver Empire is in ruins. War is in the wind. Kagen and his allies are on the run from the Witch-king. Wild magic is running rampant everywhere. Spies and secret cabals plot from the shadows of golden thrones.

Kagen Vale is the most wanted man in the world, with a death sentence on his head and a reward for him—dead or alive—that would tempt a saint.

The Witch-king has new allies who bring a terrible weapon—a cursed disease that drives people into a murderous rage. If the disease is allowed to spread, the whole of the West will tear itself apart.

In order to build an army of resistance fighters and unearth magical weapons of his own, Kagen and his friends have to survive attacks and storms at sea, brave the haunted wastelands of the snowy north, fight their way across the deadly Cathedral Mountains, and rediscover a lost city filled with cannibal warriors, old ghosts, and monsters from other worlds. Along with his reckless adventurer brothers, Kagen races against time to save more than the old empire... if he fails the world will be drenched in a tsunami of bloodshed and horror.

Son of the Poison Rose weaves politics and espionage, sorcery and swordplay, treachery and heroism as the damned outcast Kagen fights against the forces of ultimate darkness.

THE DRAGON IN WINTER (2024)

War is coming! War is *here*! The Witch-king of Hakkia, aided by terrifying dark forces, sits uneasy on his stolen throne. His enemies, led by Kagen the Damned and the Bloody Bastards have found the secrets of ancient magic they hope will defeat him. Strange forces gather on both sides—vast armies of both the living and the dead, devious trickster spirits, strange gods, warrior ghosts, undying vampires, blood plagues that drive people to murderous rage, immortal faeries, and Earth's last dragon.

Kagen knows that he faces the impossible task of toppling a usurper whose dark magic conquered an empire in a single night. But the Damned fear nothing and there are no limits to what Kagen will do to destroy the Witch-king. With his allies he will tear apart the veils that separate our world from the infinite realms of supernatural magic. The Witch-king will not go down with a fight, and he is willing to drown the western lands in innocent blood to retain his stolen crown. Even if he rules over an empire of dust and blood. His power is growing and soon he will be unstoppable.

But they are not the only forces at work in the world. Magic of all kinds is awakening and who can tell which side they will pick...or if they will pose a new and terrible threat to all! In the frozen North, the last dragon—tortured, captive, dying—cries out in despair. In the inky vastness of the outer dark that cry is heard! And something of incalculable power is coming in answer.

Short stories:

- I HEAR YOUR NAME IN THE DARK NIGHTS
- THE RAIN IS FULL OF GHOSTS
- IN SUMMER LANDS
- THE FOURS SWORDS OF THE APOCALYPSE
- THE PRINCE OF DUST AND SHADOWS
- THE DAMNED ONE HUNDRED
- THE HAMMER OF GOD

THE NIGHTSIDERS

(Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers)

Middle Grade sci-fi fantasy adventures

RIGHTS STATUS: Available

(GENRE: Middle-grade post-apocalyptic/alien invasion)

**** Louisiana bayou is overrun with alien bug invaders and magical creatures in this start to a breathtaking series that's "the perfect mix of science fiction and magic" (Kirkus Reviews, starred review) from bestselling author Jonathan Maberry.

In a world filled with Bugs—monsters that ceaselessly ravage the Earth—MILO SILK has a hard time keeping his dreams separate from reality. So he keeps them locked up in his dream journal and hopes they'll never come to pass. But too often, they do—like when his father disappeared three years ago. Lately, the Witch of the World has been haunting his dreams, saying he is destined to be the hero who saves everyone. But all Milo can think about is how he fears the Bugs will attack his own camp, and bring something even more terrible than ever before.

What Milo doesn't know is that the Earth is already fighting back with its own natural power in the form of Nightsiders, magical creatures who prefer shadows to sunlight and who reside in trees, caves, and rivers. And the Nightsiders are ready to find an ally in Milo....

- **The Orphan Army** (2015)
 - *** Bank Street Best Children's Book of the Year Selection Title
 - *** Dorothy Canfield Fisher Book Award Master List (VT)

- **Vault of Shadows** (2016)

THE ROT & RUIN SERIES

(Novels by Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers; graphic novel by IDW)
Young adult post-apocalyptic adventures.

RIGHTS STATUS: Under option by Alcon Entertainment for film development

**** Script Completed ****

(GENRE: Post-apocalyptic zombie adventure for teens)

*** In the zombie-infested world Benny has grown up in, teens must work once they turn fifteen. Benny isn't interested in the family business, but he reluctantly agrees to train as a zombie killer with his big brother Tom. He expects a dull job, whacking zoms for cash. What he discovers is a vocation that will teach him what it really means to be human.

- **Rot & Ruin (2010)**
 - Awards:
 - ALA Best Books For Young Adults
 - ALA Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults (Top Ten)
 - ALA Quick Picks Nominee
 - Abraham Lincoln Book Award Master List (IL)
 - Arkansas Teen Book Award Master list
 - Bram Stoker Award Finalist
 - Cybils Award
 - Garden State Teen Book Award Nominee (NJ)
 - Gateway Readers Award (Missouri Association of School Librarians)
 - Keystone to Reading Book Award (PA)
 - Nutmeg Children's Book Award (CT)
 - Pennsylvania Young Reader's Choice Award Nominee
 - South Dakota Young Adult Reading Program
 - Texas Lone Star Reading List
- **Dust & Decay (2011)**
 - Awards:
 - Winner of the Bram Stoker Award
 - ALA "The Reading List" Selection
 - ALA Quick Picks Nominee
 - Bram Stoker Award Finalist
 - CA Westchester Fiction Award Winner
- **Flesh & Bone (2012)**
 - Awards
 - Winner of the Bram Stoker Award
 - ALA/YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults - Nominee
- **Fire & Ash (2013)**
 - ALA Quick Picks Nominee
- **Bits & Pieces (2015; a short story collection)**
- **Warrior Smart (original graphic novel set between books 2 and 3)**
- **Broken Lands (2018)**

- **Lost Roads** (2020)

Adaptation:

- **ROT & RUIN** –(WebToons) -Adapted by Taylor Grant
- **ROT & RUIN** –(Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers; 2026)

MARS ONE

(Novels by Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers; debuts 4/2/2017)

** Standalone young adult novel

RIGHTS STATUS: Available

(GENRE: Family-oriented near future science fiction)

*** Go on the adventure of a lifetime with a teen and his family after they are selected to colonize Mars in this thrilling new novel from multiple Bram Stoker Award–winning author Jonathan Maberry.

Tristan has known that he and his family were going to be on the first mission to colonize Mars since he was twelve years old, and he has been training ever since. However, knowing that he would be leaving for Mars with no plan to return didn't stop him from falling in love with Izzy.

But now, at sixteen, it's time to leave Earth, and he's forced to face what he must leave behind in exchange for an uncertain future. When the news hits that another ship is already headed to colonize Mars, and the NeoLuddite terrorist group begins threatening the Mars One project, the mission's purpose is called into question. Is this all worth it?

THE SLEEPERS WAR

(Aethon in partnership with Blackstone)

RIGHTS STATUS: Available

(GENRE: Futuristic science fiction, space opera, action thriller)

***** Created to defeat the invaders. Forgotten in victory. They will rise again ...**

We were outnumbered, outfought. Mankind was about to fall to the alien Flock. Our only chance was a desperate gamble, transforming Tier One SpecOps agents into deadly super soldiers.

In the end, we won the war, but we lost the peace. The Flock surrendered and spent the next two hundred years making reparations, indentured to humanity, doing everything humans did not want to do. And the evolved super soldiers were consigned to an endless sleep. Ready if ever needed, but in time they became myths. Abandoned and forgotten.

And then, when we were content in our dominance, the Flock revolted against all of humanity across the whole of the galaxy. We fell in a single day.

Which is when the dreams began. People across the settled worlds began dreaming of the Sleepers. The evolved saviors. Acts of rebellion and terrorism swept the galaxy, and in response the Flock ground us under heel.

Lexi Chow, descendant of a hero of the Flock War, believes the Sleepers are real, and are humanity's only chance against the alien conquerors. With a crew of misfits, criminals, and believers, she sets out to wake the Sleepers. Hoping they will once more save us.

If the betrayed Sleepers are willing. If the Sleepers are even human.

If the Sleepers are on our side at all ...

Alpha Wave by *New York Times* bestselling author Jonathan Maberry and master storyteller Weston Ochse launches a new sprawling military science fiction adventure that will span the whole of a galaxy at war!

ALPHA WAVE (2023):

SAVAGE DREAMS (2026):

THE DREAMING GODS (2027)

NOTE: My co-author, Weston Ochse, passed away shortly after the book's release. The rest of the series will be written by me alone.

DEAD OF NIGHT

(St. Martin's Griffin for the duology; JournalStone for the novella; duology)

RIGHTS STATUS: Available

(GENRE: Zombie apocalypse thrillers)

*** A prison doctor injects a condemned serial killer with a formula designed to keep his consciousness awake while his body rots in the grave. But all drugs have unforeseen side-effects. Before he could be buried, the killer wakes up. Hungry. Infected. Contagious. This is the way the world ends. Not with a bang...but a bite.

- **Dead of Night** (2011): A prison doctor injects a condemned serial killer with a formula designed to keep his consciousness awake while his body rots in the grave. But all drugs have unforeseen side-effects. Before he could be buried, the killer wakes up. Hungry. Infected. Contagious.

Unlike all other zombie thrillers, *Dead of Night* digs deep into the science of how the zombies come back from the dead. It digs into real-world politics, revenge, courage, friendship, heartbreak, and action.

This is the way the world ends. Not with a bang...but a bite.

- **Fall of Night** (2014): Stebbins Little School is full of bodies. It's unthinkable to Desdemona Fox. Children are sobbing as panicked teachers and neighbors beat down their family members outside of the school...or the *things* that used to be their family members. Parents don't eat their children do they?

Officers Fox and Hammond, along with journalist Billy Trout, are calling it the beginning of the end. This is the zombie apocalypse. An insane escaped serial killer is infecting Stebbins County with a deadly virus, and now the whole world is watching while Fox, Trout, and the remaining inhabitants of Stebbins fight for their life against...what? The undead? The President and the National Guard are ready to nuke Stebbins, PA off the map and cut their losses. But the infection is spreading and fast. Worse, the scientist who created the virus is missing. It's a numbers game as the body count rises; Fox has to contain the infected and evacuate the living before it's too late, and the clock is ticking...

- **Dark of Night** (2016): The dead rose. We fell.

The survivors are trapped in a world of monsters who prey on the helpless. Some of them are zombies...but they are not the only predators who feed on pain and suffering.

Dark of Night is a story of worlds in collision. Three heroes who have survived the apocalypse are in a deadly race to save a busload of children from ravenous zombies and ruthless human scavengers.

This brand new novella brings together three of *New York Times* best-selling author Jonathan Maberry's award-winning series. Captain Joe Ledger (*Patient Zero* and *Code Zero*), Officer Desdemona Fox (*Dead of Night* and *Fall of Night*), and Rachael Elle (*Bits & Pieces*) are caught between an endless wave of the living dead and an army of corrupt men who want to enslave the last human survivors.

- **Fall of Night** (2018) The dead rose. We fell. But not everyone thinks the war for survival is over. Heroes rise in times of crisis, and STILL OF NIGHT tells their stories...

DAHLIA, a bullied high school girl with a love for edged weapons, goes from victim to powerful leader as the zombie apocalypse sweeps through her world.

RACHAEL ELLE continues her journey from Comic-Con cosplayer to actual hero as she encounter a community with a dark and terrible secret.

CAPTAIN JOE LEDGER and his best shooters, TOP and BUNNY, head to an overrun San Diego to try and save a possible cure for the virus that is bringing the dead back to unnatural life.

And in the wilderness, Joe, Dahlia, and Rachael Elle will come face-to-face with savage gangs, an army of the living dead, and the mysterious and deadly OLD MAN CHURCH.

RUIN/NATION

(Alcon Entertainment & Titan Books)

RIGHTS STATUS: With Alcon Entertainment

(GENRE: Post-apocalyptic science fiction)

The world is gone. Burned, bombed, bugged, and bashed.

Who was to blame? Everyone with a button and a test tube of bugs. When an unwinnable war is fought, everyone loses.

In the ashes, two powerful groups have risen up. One is the **Church of the Quiet Mind**, an extreme anti-learning cult whose members believe that the apocalypse was God's punishment for straying from the simple teachings in Genesis. Once Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of Knowledge, mankind was on a downward spiral. The Church's mission is destroy all traces of learning. All books of every kind are kindling for their bonfires. This is *Fahrenheit 451* in its infancy. This is book banning and burning taken to a dreadful extreme. Even after the fall of civilization their armies are on a constant search for books, and they are fiercely determined to cleanse the earth of unclean knowledge, and to kill anyone –heretics and blasphemers—who get in their way.

The other group is the **SCHOOL OF THOUGHT**, a massive library surrounded by an armed camp, where books of all kinds are rescued from the Cult and preserved so that mankind can rebuild. The School is run by two charismatic individuals –**Colonel John Henry Gallo**, a former tier-one Special Operator who was teaching at the War College in D.C. when the bombs fell; and **Elodie Beale**, the former Librarian of Congress. Beale has a journal of experts who were alive at the time of the collapse, and Gallo hunts for them, so these people, deeply knowledgeable in agronomy, medicine, engineering, and more can guide the survivors forward.

The School is also a training center to create warrior-scholars who will respect, treasure, and protect knowledge. Their missions take them to remote parts of the wasteland that was once America.

The deepest heartbreak for Gallo is that a rising power within the Church is his own daughter, Jenny –now a heartless killer. Or...is she?

Ruin/Nation is the first in a new series of thought-provoking existential thrillers set against a world destroyed by madness and greed. In times like we are currently experiencing, the fight to protect the truth has never mattered more.

Ruin/Nation is being prepared for a 2026 release.

THE DYLAN QUINN MYSTERIES

RIGHTS STATUS: Available

(GENRE: Mystery-thrillers for teens)

*** Seventeen-year-old Dylan Quinn wants to be a bodyguard when he grows up, just like his parents. His best friend, Flea, a trans teen wants to be accepted as a boy despite his parents religious opposition. Their friendship opens up new worlds to each of them, and together they confront a series of bizarre mysteries unfolding at their high school. Each book in the series will be a standalone mystery-thriller.

- **Watch Over Me**

- While Dylan is with his family on a protection job in the Caribbean, his best friend, Will, commits suicide. No one can understand why the most popular kid in school would take his own life. A heartbroken Dylan comes back and begins to peel back the layers of Will's life to uncover complexities he never suspected existed...and clues to a conspiracy involving white supremacists and designer party drugs.

- **Cold Cold Heart**

- Someone is murdering students at Edsel High. The police ascribe it to gang violence, but Dylan and Flea begin to suspect that one of their friends may be an emerging serial patternless serial killer.

GHOSTWALKERS: A DEADLANDS NOVEL

(Tor Books; based on the Deadlands tabletop role-playing game).

RIGHTS STATUS: The film/TV rights are owned by Visionary and Pinnacle Entertainment.

(**GENRE:** weird west, alt-history, supernatural action thriller)

From New York Times bestselling author Jonathan Maberry, the first in a thrilling series of novels based on Deadlands, a hugely successful role-playing game (RPG) set in the Weird, Weird West.

Welcome to the Deadlands, where steely-eyed gunfighters rub shoulders with mad scientists and dark, unnatural forces. Where the Great Quake of 1868 has shattered California into a labyrinth of sea-flooded caverns . . . and a mysterious substance called "ghost rock" fuels exotic steampunk inventions as well as plenty of bloodshed and flying bullets.

In Ghostwalkers, a gun-for-hire, literally haunted by his bloody past, comes to the struggling town of Paradise Falls, where he becomes embroiled in a deadly conflict between the besieged community and a diabolically brilliant alchemist who is building terrible new weapons of mass destruction . . . and an army of the living dead!

Deadlands is one of the most popular RPGs in history, with over a million Deadlands gaming books sold.

BEWILDERNESS

(Audible Original; three 30k-word novellas --published 2021 as an audio original)

Print & eBook to be published by WordFire Press in 2026

RIGHTS STATUS: Available

(GENRE: Contemporary science fiction)

The Gateway Project is going to save the world.

Maybe.

Dr. Abby Corman has a bold idea: open a stable doorway between our world and an uninhabited parallel Earth. A new world we can use to mine resources to end poverty, grow enough food to end all hunger, and allow for population growth to end overcrowding. What could be a more noble aspiration for a brilliant young scientist?

But the path to hell is paved with good intentions...

The Gateway is in a secure lab in a huge office building in New York. Ultra-modern, impenetrable by industrial spies or foreign agents, totally secure. Once it goes into lockdown for the Gateway test firing, it becomes the world's largest and most unbreakable vault. Locked doors, though, can do more than keep bad things out. They can keep bad things *in*.

- **BEWILDERNESS: THRESHOLD**
- **BEWILDERNESS: WHAT ROUGH BEAST**
- **BEWILDERNESS: THE MIRROR CRACK'D FROM SIDE TO SIDE**
- **BEWILDERNESS** -complete novel

These three novellas comprise one sprawling speculative fiction epic packed with weird science, corporate greed, betrayal, and horror. WordFire Press will publish a volume that includes all three serialized parts.

JERSEY DEVIL

(St. Martin's Griffin)

Not yet on publication schedule

RIGHTS STATUS: Available

(GENRE: Horror)

Set in 1976 at a campground deep in the Pine Barrens of New Jersey, seasonal campers, camp staff, and forest rangers deal with missing children, appalling murders, and the growing possibility that the centuries-old legend of a monster haunting those woods may be a terrifying reality.

This book is expected to be published in 2027.

BOB SURFS THE APOCALYPSE

(St. Martin's Griffin)

Not yet on publication schedule

RIGHTS STATUS: Available

(GENRE: LitRPG Horror)

LOGLINE: *Ender's Game* meets *The Walking Dead*

BOB FRIEND is a designer of RPGs and set-ups for quest-based video games and is also a top LARP player who teaches combat and problem solving for all kinds of sci-fi and fantasy scenarios. He's best known for creating the LitRPG *Surfing the Apocalypse*, in which a character heavily based on himself is about a San Diego surfer fighting zombies.

He's hired by a government organization (DARPA) to help them prepare a set of response protocols based on several possible apocalyptic scenarios. The science team has created an AI that runs an infinite number of potential futures based on different theories of how the world might end, and all of them predict a new pandemic or bioweapon or natural mutation that creates a zombie apocalypse. Several of those scenarios are likely to happen very soon –months or even weeks. They want Bob to do an immersive VR experience to be their 'player' to go into each scenario, learn what happened, discover how to stop the zombies (this will vary greatly) and gather clues that might help the scientists prevent the end of the world.

Bob thinks the whole thing is just virtual reality gameplaying until he is wired in for his first wave, and then he finds that his consciousness is being sent to versions of himself in a series of parallel Earths, each of which has been, or is about to be, overrun by the hungry dead. His job is to understand the threat and somehow respond to it. He can access different kinds of weapons and acquire resources, but also needs to rely on his own common sense, skills, and quirky world-view in order to find a way to solve the apocalypse.

He also finds himself in scenarios that are based on the most common and beloved tropes/cliches of zombie pop culture. In one scenario he's in a small farm house with boards nailed crookedly across the windows and a group of people who seem only able to argue about everything instead of making sensible decisions (the plot of *Night of the Living Dead*), etc.

Bob's quests usually result in gaining "bits" of information rather than definitive answers, but those clues accumulate and if Bob keeps trying he just might save the whole damn world.

There's a lot of snarky humor, wild action, zombie horror, desperate and deceitful government scientists, and weird fun.

This book is expected to be published in 2027.

GRAPHIC NOVELS/COMICS

Comics/Graphic Novels

1. **Age of Heroes** (Marvel Entertainment, 2011)
2. **Bad Blood** (Dark Horse, 2014)
3. **Black Panther: DoomWar** (Marvel Entertainment, 2017; reprints)
4. **Black Panther: Power** (Marvel Entertainment, 2009)
5. **Captain America: Hail Hydra** (Marvel Entertainment, 2011)
6. **Death Poem of Sensei Otoro** (IPI Comics, 2027)'
7. **DoomWar** (Marvel Entertainment, 2010)
8. **Evil Jester Presents** (edited by Taylor Grant, 2014)
9. **Godzilla vs Cthulhu: Death May Die**
10. **Grave Conditions** (edited by Scott Nicholson, 2010)
11. **Joe Ledger & Violin: Hearts and Minds (Crystal Lake)**
12. **SPECIAL 12-issue PROJECT UNDER NDA**
13. **Klaws of the Panther** (Marvel Entertainment, 2011)
14. **Kolchak: The Night Stalker** (edited by James Aquilone)
15. **Marvel Universe vs. The Avengers** (Marvel Entertainment, 2011)
16. **Marvel Universe vs. The Punisher** (Marvel Entertainment, 2011)
17. **Marvel Universe vs. Wolverine** (Marvel Entertainment, 2011)
18. **Marvel Zombies Return** (Marvel Entertainment, 2009)
19. **Pandemica** (2019-20; IDW Publishing)
20. **Punisher Kills the Marvel Universe** (Marvel Entertainment; 2025; reprints)
21. **Punisher vs the Marvel Universe** (Marvel Entertainment, 2016; reprints)
22. **Punisher: Naked Kills** (Marvel Entertainment, 2008)
23. **Punisher: The Complete Collection Vol 6** (Marvel Entertainment, 2017; reprints)
24. **Road of the Dead** (IDW Publishing, October 2018)
25. **Rot & Ruin: Warrior Smart** (IDW Publishing, 2015)
26. **The Death Poem of Sensei Otoro** (pub date TBD; IPI)
27. **The Darwin Codex: Mutant Year Zero** (pub date TBD)
28. **V-Wars: All of Us Monsters** (IDW Publishing, 2015)
29. **V-Wars: Crimson Queen** (IDW Publishing, 2014)
30. **V-Wars: God of War** (IDW Publishing, 2018)
31. **Wolverine vs the Marvel Universe** (Marvel Entertainment, 2017; reprints)
32. **Wolverine: Flies to a Spider** (Marvel Entertainment, 2009)

DEATH POEM OF SENSEI OTORO

(IRI Comics, Australia; script by Jonathan Maberry)

RIGHTS STATUS: Available

*** Otoro is one of the last of the great samurai, now working as a ronin as he enters middle age. He is hired by a local and very powerful daimyo to go to a small island and rescue the daimyo's family, particularly his infant grandson and heir. An epidemic has swept through Japan, turning the infected into flesh-eating ghouls. Otoro has to fight his way through a legion of the living dead to rescue the child, even if the mission results in his own death. After all, a samurai prays for an honorable death.

*** 4-issue story adapted from my own short story of the same name.

**** In production

*** Art by Boris Kay; Colors by Mariam Yassar

BAD BLOOD

(Dark Horse Publishing; script by Jonathan Maberry; art by Tyler Crook)

RIGHTS STATUS: Available

*** Trick is a college freshman who isn't sure which will happen first: graduation or dying from leukemia. One night he is attacked by a vampire –the first of that ancient race to emerge from hiding in more than a century—and one sip of Trick's blood nearly kills him.

*** The chemo drugs in his system make him toxic to vampires, and the poison is killing the king of the undead. In retaliation the vampires begin killing Trick's friends.

*** Trick and Lolly, a junkie girl who's polluted blood is equally toxic, go hunting for the vampires to save a world they'll never live long enough to enjoy.

Award: WINNER of the Bram Stoker Award for best graphic novel of 2014.

PANDEMICA

(IDW -2019-20)

RIGHTS STATUS: available

License is co-owned with IDW Publishing

*** A group of high-tech white supremacists develop a series of ethnic-specific bioweapons intended to cull the 'mud people' and allow the pure Aryans to reassert control.

*** Pandemica is a resistance group trying to stop them before the bioweapons do untold damage.

*** Things go wrong right from page one.

*** 5-issue comic book miniseries; collected in trade paperback

ANTHOLOGIES (as EDITOR)

ANTHOLOGIES (as editor)

1. **Aliens vs Predator: Ultimate Prey** -with Bryan Thomas Schmidt (2022; Titan Books)
2. **Aliens: Bug Hunt** (2017; Titan Books)
3. **Baker Street Irregulars Vol 1** -with Michael Ventrella (2017; Diversion Press)
4. **Baker Street Irregulars Vol 2** -with Michael Ventrella (2018; Diversion Press)
5. **Big Bad Book of Kaiju (with Henry Herz; Titan Books, October 2026)**
6. **Don't Turn Out the Lights** (2020; HarperCollins)
7. **Double Trouble: A Media Tie-in Mashup** (with Keith R.A. DeCandido; IAMTW)
8. **Hardboiled Horror** (2017; JournalStone)
9. **Joe Ledger: Unbreakable** -with Bryan Thomas Schmidt (**JournalStone, 2023**)
10. **Joe Ledger: Unstoppable** -with Bryan Thomas Schmidt (2017; St Martin's Griffin)
11. **Nights of the Living Dead** -with George A. Romero (2017; Griffin)
12. **Out of Tune vol 1** (2014; JournalStone Publishing)
13. **Out of Tune vol 2** (2016; JournalStone Publishing)
14. **Scary Out There** (2016; Simon & Schuster)
15. **Shadows & Verse** (2024; WordFire Press)
16. **The Good, the Bad and the Uncanny: Tales of a Very Weird West** (Outland, 2023)
17. **V-Wars** (2012; IDW Publishing)
18. **V-Wars: Blood and Fire** (Fall 2014; IDW Publishing)
19. **V-Wars: Night Terrors** (2016; IDW Publishing)
20. **V-Wars: Shockwaves** (2016; IDW Publishing)
21. **Weird Tales Magazine: 100 Years of Weird** (2023, Blackstone/Weird Tales)
22. **Weird Tales: Best of the Early Years 1923-25** -with Justin Criado (**2022; WordFire Press**)
23. **Weird Tales: Best of the Early Years 1926-27** -with Kaye Lynne Booth (**2022; WordFire Press**)
24. **X-Files vol 1: Trust No One** (2015; IDW)
25. **X-Files vol 2: The Truth is Out There** (2016; IDW)
26. **X-Files vol 3: Secret Agendas** (2016; IDW)

SCARY OUT THERE

(Novels by Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers; debuts 8/20/2016)

YA Anthology in support of the Horror Writers Association

RIGHTS STATUS: Available

*** Multiple Bram Stoker Award–winning author Jonathan Maberry compiles more than twenty stories and poems—written by members of the Horror Writers Association—in this terrifying collection about worst fears.

What scares you? Things that go bump in the night? Being irreversibly different? A brutal early death? The unknown?

This collection contains stories and poetry by renowned writers such as R. L. Stine, Neal and Brendan Shusterman, Kendare Blake, and Ellen Hopkins—all members of the Horror Writers Association—about what they fear most. The stories include mermaids, ghosts, and personal demons, and are edited by Jonathan Maberry, multiple Bram Stoker award winner and author of the Rot & Ruin series.

Lineup:

- **BRENNA YAVANOFF** is the author of FIENDISH, PAPER VALENTINE, THE SPACE BE-TWEEN, and the New York times bestseller THE REPLACEMENT.
- **CARRIE RYAN** is the New York Times bestselling author of THE FOREST OF HANDS AND TEETH.
- **CHERIE PRIEST** is the author of more than a dozen novels, including the award-winning CLOCKWORK CENTURY series from Tor, the CHESHIRE RED books from Bantam Spectra, and MAPLECROFT – book one of the BORDEN DISPATCHES – from Roc.
- **CHRISTOPHER GOLDEN** is a #1 New York Times bestselling author, Bram Stoker Award® winner, comic book writer, screenwriter and anthology editor.
- **ELLEN HOPKINS** is the New York Times bestselling author of several verse novels exposing teen-age struggles such as drug addiction, mental illness and prostitution, including CRANK, BURNED, IM-PULSE, GLASS and others.
- **HEATHER BREWER** is the New York Times bestselling author of THE SLAYER CHRONICLES, THE CHRONICLES OF VLADIMIR TOD and SOULBORN.
- **ILSA BICK** is a child psychiatrist, film scholar, unrepentant Trekker, former Air Force major and now a multiple award winning, critically acclaimed bestselling YA author.
- **JADE SHAMES** is an acclaimed writer, composer, and the grand prize winner of the 2013 Fresh Voices screenplay competition.
- **JOSH MALERMAN**
- **KENDARE BLAKE** is the bestselling author of ANNA DRESSED IN BLOOD and THE GOD-DESS WAR.
- **LINDA ADDISON** is an award-winning author of four collections of poetry and prose and the first African-American recipient of the HWA Bram Stoker Award®.
- **LUCY SNYDER** is a Bram Stoker Award® winning poet and Black Quill Award winning short story writer.
- **MADELEINE ROUX** is the New York Times bestselling author of ASYLUM.

- **MARGE SIMON** is a Bram Stoker Award® winning poet and artist.
- **NANCY HOLDER** is a New York Times bestseller, multiple award winning author (including five Bram Stoker Awards®) , Young Adult Pioneer Award from RT Booklovers, appearances on NYPL Stuff for the Teen Age, ALA, and ARA lists; author and editor for comic book, pulp fiction and anthologies.
- **NEAL SHUSTERMAN** is the New York Times bestselling author of more than thirty award-winning books for children, teens, and adults, including The Unwind Dystology, The Skinjacker trilogy, Downsiders and The Schwa Was Here, which won the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award for fiction.
- **R.L. STINE** is the #1 international bestselling author of hundreds of children's books including the GOOSEBUMPS, FEAR STREET and THE NIGHTMARE ROOM series.
- **RACHEL CAINE** is a New York Times and USA Today bestselling author, producer and screen-writer.
- **RACHEL TAFOYA** is the author of the debut YA novel THE NIGHT HOUSE and teaches the Experimental Writing for Teens class.
- **STEVE RASNIC TEM** is a Bram Stoker Award and World Fantasy Award-winning author, poet and short story writer.
- **TIM WAGGONER** is a Shirley Jackson Award finalist, a creative writing teacher as well as a prolific author of horror and dark fantasy.

NIGHTS OF THE LIVING DEAD

(Griffin; 2017)

Edited by Jonathan Maberry & George A. Romero

RIGHTS STATUS: Available

In 1968 the world experienced a brand new kind of terror with the debut of George A. Romero's landmark movie *Night of the Living Dead*. The newly dead rose to attack the living. Not as vampires or werewolves. This was something new, something terrifying. They were called ghouls in the movie but the world soon came to know them as zombies! Since then zombies have invaded every aspect of our culture. Movies, hit TV shows, bestselling novels, comics, games...they're everywhere!

But it all started on that dreadful night in a remote farmhouse...

NIGHTS OF THE LIVING DEAD returns to that night, to the outbreak, to where it all began. New York Times bestselling author Jonathan Maberry (Patient Zero) teams with the godfather of the living dead himself, George A. Romero to present a collection of all new tales set during the 48 hours of that legendary outbreak.

NIGHTS OF THE LIVING DEAD includes stories by some of today's most important writers, plus original stories by Romero and Maberry!

Lineup:

1. **Brian Keene** –an American author, primarily of horror, crime fiction, and comic books. He has won two Bram Stoker Awards. His 2003 novel *The Rising* is often credited with inspiring pop culture's current interest in zombies
2. **Carrie Ryan**
3. **Chuck Wendig**, New York Times best-selling author of *Star Wars: Aftermath*.
4. **Craig Engler**, co-creator and writer of the hit TV series *Z Nation*.
5. **David J. Schow**, author, screenwriter and editor, and winner of the International Horror Guild Award.
6. **David Wellington**, best-selling author of the landmark *Monster Island* and its sequels as well as the critically acclaimed new zombie novel, *Positive*
7. **George Romero**, the Godfather of the dead; writer-director of *Night of the Living Dead* and its four sequels.
8. **Isaac Marion**, author of the #5 New York Times best-selling zombie novel, *Warm Bodies*, which was made into a successful movie
9. **Jay Bonansinga**, New York Times best-selling author of the *Walking Dead* novels.
10. **Joe Lansdale** –best-selling & Bram Stoker Award-winning author of 45 novels as well as comics and short stories. His mystery series, *Hap & Leonard* is in production for TV. His Bram Stoker Award-winning short story, *On the Far Side of the Cadillac Desert* with

Dead Folks, was included in the first-ever zombie anthology, Book of the Dead (ed by **John Skipp** and Craig Spector)

11. **Joe McKinney** –multiple Bram Stoker Award winning author of zombie fiction Dead City, The Savage Dead and others; and others.
12. **John Russo**, co-screenwriter of Night of the Living Dead, and author of the first-ever zombie novels Night of the Living Dead and Return of the Living Dead
13. **John Skipp**: best-selling author (The Light at the End), filmmaker (Tales of Halloween), editor-in-chief of Fungasm Press, and co-editor of the original post-Romero zombie anthology, Book of the Dead.
14. **Jonathan Maberry**, New York Times best-selling author of Patient Zero, Rot & Ruin, Dead of Night, Zombie CSU and co-author of Marvel Zombies Return
15. **Keith R.A. DeCandido**, best-selling author of the Resident Evil novels, as well as popular novels in the worlds of Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Star Trek, Sleepy Hollow, V-Wars
16. **Max Brallier**: is the author of more than twenty books and games, including the middle-grade series The Last Kids on Earth, the pick-your-own-path adventure Can YOU Survive the Zombie Apocalypse? He is the creator and writer of Galactic Hot Dogs, a sci-fi middle-grade series from Aladdin. He writes for licensed properties including Adventure Time, Regular Show, Steven Universe, and Uncle Grandpa. Under the pen name Jack Chabert, he is the creator and author of the Eerie Elementary series for Scholastic Books.
17. **Mike Carey**: Award-winning comic book writer (Lucifer –basis of the TV series, Hellblazer, X-Men: Legacy) and novelist (the Felix Castor series, The Girl with All the Gifts –in post-production for film).
18. **Mira Grant**, NY Times best-selling author (pen name of Seanan McGuire) whose Newsflesh series hits every zombie best-of list and was ranked #74 in an National Public Radio listener poll of the top 100 thriller novels of all time. Mira/Seanan has won the John W. Campbell Award, Darrell Awards Hall of Fame, six Pegasus Awards, and a Hugo Award
19. **Neal Shusterman & Brandon Shusterman**: Neal Shusterman is a winner of the National Book Award and a best-selling author. His son, filmmaker Brandon, is a frequent collaborator for Neal's short fiction.
20. **Sandra Brown & Ryan Brown**: Sandra is an international best-selling author of over 70 novels; Ryan is the celebrated author of the zombie sports novel Play Dead)

HARDBOILED HORROR

(JournalStone; 2017)

Edited by Jonathan Maberry

RIGHTS STATUS: Available

*** Hardboiled Horror collects fifteen original tales of noir mystery shot through with elements of horror and the supernatural. Occult detectives, paranormal investigators, seedy P.I.s, amateur sleuths and ghost hunters tackle the cases no one else can handle.

*** The killer lineup includes Heather Graham, Kevin J. Anderson, Rachel Caine, Scott Sigler, Seanan McGuire Alethea Kontis, Jonathan Maberry, Chris Ryall, Dana Fredsti, Jim Beard, Jacopo della Quercia, John Gilstrap, Jon McGoran, Josh Malerman, Max Allan Collins & Matthew V. Clemens, Lois H. Gresh and Nancy Holder.

OUT OF TUNE vols I and II

(JournalStone; 2014 and 2016)

Edited by Jonathan Maberry

RIGHTS STATUS: Available

Listen! Hear that? The music playing in the night whispering from the shadows. Haunting melodies and old songs sung by ghostly voices. New York Times bestselling author Jonathan Maberry presents a brand new collection of original stories by some of today's top authors of horror, dark fantasy, and science fiction. Each tale draws strange inspiration from classic folks songs and murder ballads from around the world.

Volume I lineup:

1. #1 NY Times bestseller Christopher Golden
2. Edgar Award winner David Liss
3. Bram Stoker Award winner Del Howison (owner of Dark Delicacies Bookstore)
4. 7-time Bram Stoker Award winner Gary Braunbeck
5. Hugo, Nebula and Stoker finalist Gregory Frost
6. The legendary Jack Ketchum
7. Multiple Bram Stoker Award finalist Jeff Strand
8. Hugo, Nebula and Scribe finalist Keith R. A. DeCandido
9. #1 NY Times bestseller Kelley Armstrong
10. Multiple Bram Stoker Award winner Lisa Morton
11. NY Times bestseller and 5-time Bram Stoker Award winner Nancy Holder
12. NY Times bestseller Seanan McGuire (aka 'Mira Grant')
13. International #1 bestseller Simon R. Green
14. Multi-award winner Jeff Mariotte (co-owner of Mysterious Galaxy Bookstore) and co-author Marsheila Rockwell.
15. Folklore commentary (following each story) by Nancy Keim-Comley

Volume II lineup:

1. ALLISON PANG is the author of the Abby Sinclair urban fantasy series and the writer for the ongoing webcomic *Fox & Willow*.
2. CHERIE PRIEST is the author of seventeen books and novellas, including the acclaimed gothic horror novel *Maplecroft* from Roc and the award-winning Clockwork Century series from Tor.
3. DAN ABNETT is a multiple New York Times best-selling author and comic book writer who's work includes the *Gaunt's Ghosts* series, *The Horus Heresy*, *Doctor Who*, and the *Guardians of the Galaxy* comic that inspired the motion picture.
4. DAVID MACK, the New York Times bestselling author of over thirty novels and novellas, as well as two episodes of Star Trek: Deep Space Nine.
5. DAVID J. SCHOW is a novelist (GUN WORK, THE SHAFT), scenarist (THE CROW, ABATTOIR, MASTERS OF HORROR) and World Fantasy Award-winning short story writer.

6. DELILAH DAWSON Is the author of the Blud series, Servants of the Storm, Hit, and Wake of Vultures, written as Lila Bowen.
7. ERIC J. GUIGNARD, winner of the Bram Stoker Award and finalist for the International Thriller Writers Award GINI KOCH
8. JAMES A MOORE is the award-winning author of over twenty-five novels ranging from horror to fantasy, crime and science fiction.
9. JOSH MALERMAN
10. LAURA ANNE GILMAN is the Nebula-nominated author of historical fantasy, most recently SILVER ON THE ROAD (10/2015, Simon & Schuster)
11. MADAUG KENYON is an award-winning author of several short stories, journalist, and game developer.
12. NANCY KEIM-COMLEY, folklorist and writer.
13. NIK VINCENT-ABNET was runner-up for the inaugural Mslexia novel-writing competition in 2012. She regularly collaborates with her partner, Dan Abnett, and her first solo novel, “Savant” will be published by Solaris in 2016.
14. RACHEL AUKES
15. RACHEL CAINE, #1 NY Times bestselling author

BAKER STREET IRREGULARS

(Cohesion, 2017)

Co-edited with Michael Ventrella

THE GAME'S AFOOT

Cohesion, 2019)

RIGHTS STATUS: Available

***Stories that twist the Holmes/Watson model with protagonists that are anything OTHER than white males. Stories include women, robots, ghosts, animals, aliens, etc. as the Great Detective.

SHORT STORY CYCLES

SAM HUNTER

(Short stories published in various magazines & anthologies).

RIGHTS STATUS: Available

*** Sam Hunter is a 'benandanti', one of an ancient race of werewolves who fought evil on the side of heaven.

*** When Sam takes on a new client in his seedy private investigation practice, they become part of his 'pack'...and wolves will do anything to protect their pack.

*** The Sam Hunter stories are noir dark fantasy, filled with smartass humor, weird monsters, and lots of action.

Stories Include:

1. A House in Need of Children
2. Crazy Town
3. Dream a Little Dream of Me
4. Going to the Bronx for a Quick Bite
5. Goth Chicks
6. Like Part of the Family
7. Strip Search
8. The Unlearnable Truths
9. Three Guys Walk into a Bar
10. Toby's Closet
11. Troubles Braids
12. We All Go Through Changes
13. We All Make Sacrifices

Collection: **BENEATH THE SKIN: THE SAM HUNTER CASE FILES**

*** #1 Bestseller on Audible

LIZZIE CORBETT

(Short stories published in various anthologies)

RIGHTS STATUS: Available

*** Dr. Elizabeth Corbett is an expert in rare languages, codes, and ancient texts, particularly those dealing with secret societies and the supernatural.

*** She is recruited into a group a secret society of warrior-scholar Sikhs called *The Library of the Ten Gurus*. Their mission is to twofold: to protect and preserve ancient sacred texts from destruction by groups like ISIS; and to keep the most dangerous books of magic out of the wrong hands.

Stories:

1. The Red Library
2. All the Devils are Here

This character also appears in the Joe Ledger thriller **CAVE 13

RED MacGILL

(Short stories published in various anthologies)

RIGHTS STATUS: Available

*** Red MacGill is a mixed-raced ‘sorter of problems’ in the old West –think Fox Mulder with a six-gun covered in sacred runes. Red is half Cherokee and half Highland Scot

*** Red tangles with supernatural and science fiction mysteries.

Stories:

3. **The Ghost Men of Sunrise Mesa** (Red teams with the daughter of H.G. Wells’ Time Traveler against a group of Morloks from the far future).
4. **Hell Dogs of Eldorado Canyon** (a werewolf hunting miners)

V-WARS

(Published by IDW Publishing; film/TV rights co-owned by IDW Media and me)

Netflix Original Series

RIGHTS STATUS: Reverted to me and are available

*** V-Wars is a shared-world anthology series in which melting polar ice has released a virus that triggers a dormant gene, which codes for vampirism. A small percentage of the population begin emerging as vampires, but not of the supernatural kind. These vampires come in hundreds of different species, each tied to the ethnic and region heritage of the infected. The resulting clash between Beats (humans) and Blood (vampires) begin tearing society apart. Not everyone with fangs is evil; not every human is good. Both sides want to draw blood.

V-WARS Shared Novel (framing story by Jonathan Maberry; other stories by various:

- **V-WARS** (2012)
- **V-WARS: BLOOD AND FIRE** (2014)
- **V-WARS: NIGHT TERRORS** (2016)
- **V-WARS: SHOCKWAVES** (2016)

V-Wars Graphic Novels (by Jonathan Maberry)

- **V-WARS: COURT OF THE CRIMSON QUEEN**
- **V-WARS: ALL OF US MONSTERS**
- **V-WARS: THE GRAPHIC NOVEL COLLECTION**
- **V-Wars: God of Death** (2019)

V-WARS: A Game of Blood and Betrayal

- Game rules by Rob Daviau
- Released by IDW Games

APPENDIX 5

NONFICTION BOOK PROPOSAL

ELEMENTS OF A NONFICTION BOOK PROPOSAL

Overview:

- **Introduction:** Briefly introduce the book's topic, main argument, and significance.
- **Target Audience:** Clearly define who will buy the book and why.
- **Author's Qualifications:** Highlight your expertise, platform, and why you're the best person to write this book.
- **Unique Selling Proposition:** Explain what makes your book different from and better than existing books on the same topic.

Marketing and Promotion:

- **Platform:**
Describe your existing platform (social media, email list, speaking engagements, etc.) and how it can be leveraged to promote the book.
- **Marketing Strategy:**
Outline your plan for reaching the target audience through various channels (publicity, media, events, etc.).
- **Comparable Titles:**
Analyze existing books in the market, highlighting how your book differs and offers something unique.

Detailed Table of Contents:

- **Chapter Summaries:** Provide a concise overview of each chapter, including its key themes and arguments.
- **Narrative Arc:** Demonstrate how the book will unfold, including its major points and plot.

Sample Chapters:

- **First Chapters:**
Include the first one or two chapters to showcase your writing style and the book's overall tone.

- **Voice and Style:**

Demonstrate your unique voice and writing style, ensuring the sample chapters accurately represent the book's content.

Additional Elements:

- Author Bio: Provide a concise summary of your relevant experience and expertise.
- Appendix (Optional): Include any supporting materials, such as research data, interviews, or endorsements.

APPENDIX 6

GLOSSARY OF COPY EDITING TERMS

(Note, this is by no means a complete list)

- Angle brackets: This is the name for the "<" and ">" characters.
- Apos: This is the shorthand name for "apostrophe."
- Back matter: This refers to the material at the end of a document, like an appendix or bibliography.
- Bibliography: This is a collection of cited sources in a document, often placed in alphabetical order at the end of the document.
- Callout: This refers to a note that designates placement of art or cross-reference on a hard copy.
- Copy editing: This refers to removing inconsistencies and errors, like spelling errors, in a document.
- Cross-reference: This is a mention of another part of the same document.
- Dead copy: This refers to a typeset and proofread document.
- Developmental editing: This happens when an editor gives an author guidance on the content, structure or concept of a document during the initial creation stage.
- Final proof: This is the final version of a document that's ready for publishing.
- Graf: This is a shorthand word for "paragraph" often used by journalists.
- Hard-copy editing: An editor makes edits on a paper copy of the document.
- Justify: This term refers to setting text to align with a margin, usually left or right.
- Kerning: This refers to the space between characters.
- Lead: This is a journalism term for the first few sentences or first paragraph of a story, also spelled head.
- Line editing: This refers to editing the style or phrasing in a document.
- Mark up: An editor creates a markup by annotating a document with suggested changes or corrections.

- Mechanical editing: This refers to correcting various issues in the text of a document without changing the content.
- Orphan: This happens when the first line of a paragraph appears by itself at the bottom of a page.
- Page proof: This is the printed initial draft of a document.
- Proofreading: This refers to editing a document one final time to catch errors missed in previous steps.
- Proofs: These are the versions of a document printed before publishing, used during editing.
- Ragged right: This occurs when text in a document aligns with the left margin only, leaving the right edge uneven.
- Redline: This is a version of a document that shows edited, added or deleted text from a previous version.
- Revised proofs: These are the series of proofs of a document that include changes made during editing.
- Serial comma: Also called the Oxford comma, this comma precedes "and" or "or" in a list of items.
- Sink: This refers to the distance from the top of a printed page to an element on the page.
- Style guide: This is the published set of standards for a style of writing.
- Style sheet: This is an author's or institution's set of stylistic preferences.
- Substantiative editing: This process focuses on fixing the content and structure of a document.
- T of C: This term is shorthand for "Table of Contents," also spelled "TOC."
- Trade books: These are books, often small paperbacks, meant for general readers instead of scholars or professionals.
- Trim: This refers to shortening a document's length.
- Typesetting: This is the process of preparing images and text from a document for printing.
- Typo: This refers to a misprint in a document, short for "typographical error."
- Widow: This occurs when the last line of a paragraph sits by itself at the top of a page.

APPENDIX 7

ELEMENTS OF THE WRITERS CRAFT

The more a writer knows and understands the various elements of the fiction craft, the more range they have in telling their stories.

Action: This is what keeps a story from being just ‘words on a page’, or a ‘white room conversation’. In the latter, people talk, but even if the dialogue is scintillating, eventually it becomes a transcript rather than a scene. Good writers give their character something to do while they are talking –such as walking down a street, getting coffee, having an argument, fighting, etc. Action also includes driving, fighting, going to war, saving the planet, rescuing a cat in a tree, playing cards, making love, and anything else that is not static. There should be some kind of action on every page.

Allegory: As a literary device or artistic form an allegory is a narrative or visual representation in which a character place or event can be interpreted to represent a meaning with moral or political significance. Unlike a metaphor, the allegory usually underpins the entire novel.

Antagonist: This is a person or thing that creates or exacerbates the central crisis. The antagonists can be a human person, ranging from arrival in a love triangle, an enemy in war, the villain in a thriller, or any other person who is not the central protagonist but who keeps the crisis boiling. The antagonist does not have to be evil. Nor does the antagonist need to be human... A tornado can be the antagonist in a story, or disease or an asteroid, none of which are inherently evil but are in fact the driving element of the central crisis

Character Creation: A story without good characters is a waste of time. Characters make the story come alive. They give the reader proxies so that they can feel a part of the story, and good characters draw the reader in. One of the great tricks of developing useful characters is to base them in whole or part on people the writer knows. Not to write that person specifically into the book as themselves, but to borrow physical descriptions, verbal stylings, idiosyncrasies, style of dress, and the way a given person reacts in a variety of different kinds of situations. This allows the characters to become people to both the writer and the reader.

Coherence: Does the story, as told, make sense? Is there a logical underpinning to it that allows for a progression of cause and effect leading to an inevitable conclusion?

Conflict: Novelists are not in the business of giving a bunch of happy characters a pleasant day. Stories are about conflict in all its many aspects. We disrupt the standard flow of events in the lives of our characters in order to explore problem-solving. This can take a lot of forms, including passion, misunderstandings, frustrations, violence, betrayal, loss, grief, and so on. The core of fiction is to allow characters to explore how they resolve this conflict. It’s important to note that conflict does not always have to be dire –a children’s picture book about a puppy losing

a ball under the couch is conflict; as is a lover's misunderstanding that has a happy reconciliation, an alien invasion, a crime, something lost, a quest...and so on. The variations are infinite.

Descriptive Language: A literary device used to help the reader feel as if they are part of the scene. Often these descriptions bring in sensory awareness and elements, such as the floor was as cold as ice, or he was as big as a house. It's a type of non literal description that enriches of readers experience and helps them relate to elements in the story.

Figurative Language: Figurative language is a form of expression that uses nonliteral meanings to convey a more abstract meaning or message. There are many types, including: similes, metaphors, idioms, hyperboles, and personification. An example of literal language would be "his headache was very bad"; but a nonliteral version might be "his head was splitting apart".

Market Placement: This is a term used by agents, editors, trade salespeople, and booksellers to understand what kind of book it is, what genre it belongs to, sometimes the comparables within that genre, and who the target demographic likely is. A target demographic is the anticipated readership (gender, age, political persuasion, etc.) It also places the book, in certain circumstances, according to age. Such as middle grade, young adult, new adult, adult, etcetera.

Metaphor: A figure of speech that makes a non-literal comparison between two unlike things (typically by saying that something is something else). For example, the metaphor "you are a clown" is not literal but rather used to emphasize a specific, implied quality (in this case absurd behavior or a lack of seriousness, etc.)

Motif: A recurring symbolic element that appears frequently throughout a story in order to trigger an emotional or cognitive reaction. For example, thing falling and breaking in a story could hint at the collapse of a relationship.

Narration: The voice of the story itself. This is also a shorthand for the part of the story that does not include dialogue.

Outline: Writers seem to be split between PLOTTERS and PANTSERS, with the former being those who map out their stories and the latter being those who make it up as they go (writing by the seat of their pants). I advocate heavily for the former, though there are variations of this, such as a rolling outline, section-by-section outlining, in-progress plot reworking, and so on. A basic class on how to write a novel delves deeper into this. However, the most useful tool for all writers is the Three Act Structure, even for pantsers who like to vary from it. See Appendix A for a short essay on the Three Act Structure.

Pace: This is the speed with which the story unfolds. Pace can vary within a single work because some scenes, such as a romance or love scene, are naturally slowed down while an action scene speeds up. The key in both writing and revision is to match the pace to the scene, and then to use that faster or slower pace to make choices in how to restructure the story for best effect. The skill comes in where the writer adjusts the style so that it is not too fast or not too slow, but just right for any individual scene or chapter.

Plot: Plot refers to the events that happen within the story. It includes every major turning point that the characters experience. Plots typically follow the Three Act Structure (see Appendix B for a short essay on this).

Protagonist: The central character whose actions and reactions drive the overall narrative. In many cases the protagonist is the 'hero' of the tale, but this is not at all mandatory. There are many stories where the protagonist is a villain (*Hannibal* by Thomas Harris, for example).

Repetition

Setting: The location(s) where the story takes place. This might also include *when* it takes place (an historical era, the future, or alt-history). In good writing, the setting itself is given enough attention so that it becomes, in effect, a character. Research and world-building are both key elements in building the right setting.

Style: refers to the writer's choice of diction, sentence structure, and use of rhythm. Style is also created by the choice of literary devices that are used to create the story, such as imagery, symbolism, allegory, personification, and other figurative language.

Symbolism: This is when one thing is meant to represent something else. Symbolism helps create meaning and emotion in a story. Metaphors and allegory are literary elements that help writers create symbolism in their literary pieces. Some easy examples of symbolism are a marriage that suggests commitment; or a shadowy street suggesting possible danger, etc.

Tense: There are three tenses in fiction. Most stories are written in past tense come on a very few are written in future tense, and it has become popular for a lot of novels, particularly in the young adult space, to be told in present tense. Shorthand for that is, past tenses he did, present tense is he does, and future tense is he will.

Theme: The theme of a story is an idea or insight about life, human nature, or the world in general. Themes are usually not stated explicitly in the text; they must be inferred from the details and clues included in the story, and they can usually be expressed in a short statement. Read more about theme [here](#).

Tone: on the other hand, refers to the writer's attitude toward their story and the reader. The writer's tone assists in creating a mood or atmosphere for the story. Read more about style and tone [here](#).

Voice: This is the personality of the book. A voice can be authoritative, passive, mysterious, enigmatic, frank, confessional, etcetera. The idea is to give the book a unique identity and that each chapter reinforces that identity. In stories with a shifting point of view there is a kind of blended voice that is the voice of that particular character's point of view in any given scene, overlaid with the voice of the book itself.

Word Echoes/Phrase Echoes: An over-reliance (deliberate or accidental) where the same word is used too often in, say a sentence, paragraph, or page. Phrase echoes are, by extension, larger

sections of writing that is repeated. Editors flag these, but often in our own drafts we look right through them.

APPENDIX 8

SAMPLE COMIC BOOK SCRIPT

DEATH POEM OF SENSEI ŌTORO

By Jonathan Maberry

ISSUE #1:

“Bushidōwashiniaru”

(The Way of the Samurai is Death)

PANEL 1: Full page

Ōtoro, a samurai in his late fifties - elegant, thin, gray-haired, wearing a beautiful kimono with a pattern of crows flying across a full moon (his personal crest), kneels by the open doors of a small inn. He faces away from us, looking out into a courtyard surrounded by cherry trees. Blossoms fall like snow. The ground is covered. Late afternoon sunlight slants down through the trees to create a magical moment. The blossoms are the movement, and everything else is in calm stillness.

CAPTION Spring 1688 in Japan.

CAPTION When you understand death...and yearn for a glorious release...

CAPTION New life is so much more beautiful.



PAGE 2.

PANEL 1:

Wide panel. Side-view of Ōtoro as he looks out at the falling blossoms. At the farthest edges of the panel, those falling blossoms turn to drops of blood.

CAPTION That is the dichotomy of warriors. Of samurai. Of killers.

CAPTION To be capable of destruction and yet treasure life over all things.

PANEL 2:

A full-face view of Ōtoro. We see his age (60 is old for someone of the 17th century), and his weariness. Pale red shadows (LOVE THIS!) of falling cherry blossoms fall across him.

CAPTION To value honor over our own lives.

CAPTION To accept that death is but a doorway.

PANEL 3:

FLASHBACK: Same angle on Ōtoro, but younger with a war helmet and brandishing a bloody sword. Around him other samurai are battling. Ōtoro wears the crest of the Minamoto clan; his enemies wear the Taira clan symbol.

CAPTION One I have ever sought to enter during the purification of battle.



MINAMOTO CLAN



TAIRA CLAN

Page 2 continues...

PANEL 4:

FLASHBACK CONTINUES.: Ōtōro in a heated battle with another samurai. Blades are bloody, blood flies in much the same way as the falling blossoms in the first page

CAPTION

That is the way of the samurai. That is ***Bushido.***



pixistock.com - 151340580

PAGE 3.

PANEL 1:

FLASHBACK CONTINUES. Big panel. A wounded, bloody, exhausted Ōtoro stands with sword in one hand while all around him are corpses. He looks like the last survivor of a great battle. His hair is blowing in the wind, his armor and clothing are torn, his face is grim.

CAPTION The paradox of the samurai path is that we train ten thousand hours for a moment of glory.

CAPTION For a noble and honorable death.

CAPTION While spending our lives becoming too skilled to die.

PANEL 2:

FLASHBACK ENDS. We see Ōtoro's face again at the pagoda, looking older and sadder. A young woman pours tea into a delicate cup that sits on a mat beside him.

CAPTION: I was younger than her when I fought in my first war.

CAPTION: Younger than her when I learned to kill.

CAPTION: But my youth is barely a memory now.

PANEL 3:

On Ōtoro's eyes. Cold, killer's eyes, and yet sad.

CAPTION: Now I'm old.

CAPTION: And death is all I understand.

PAGE 4.

PANEL 1:

View past Ōtoro as he sees two figures walking down the garden path toward him. From a distance all we see is one heavyset samurai and one young, slim one.

PANEL 2:

Big panel. Closer image of the two. ITO ASANO, a powerful daimyo about the same age as Ōtoro, and his teenage nephew, KANGYU, who is earnest but not very bright.

CAPTION Another old warrior comes to visit me.

CAPTION How many battles have we survived together, pleased with victory but personally grieving for that beautiful death?



Asano Clan crest

PANEL 3:

The two visitors bow to Ōtoro.

ITO ŌTORO-san, it has been too many years.

ITO Thank you for receiving me and my nephew, Kangyu.

PAGE 5.

PANEL 1:

Ōtoro gestures for them to sit across from him on the deck of the pagoda. The serving girl returns with a tray bearing two new cups and another pot of steaming tea.

ŌTORO: Ito-san, please. Be at ease.

ŌTORO And, yes, it has been too many years.

PANEL 2:

Ito and Ōtoro toast each other with cups of tea. Kangyu is a little late lifting his cup, clearly following his uncle's lead.

ITO I never expected to find you living in retirement, my friend.

ŌTORO And I never expected you to live long enough to become a grandfather.

PANEL 3:

Focus on Ito, who looks sad.

ITO It was my dream to live to see my son's sons grow up and follow in the Asano traditions.

ITO Alas, I have only lived to see my grandchild born.
I will not live to see him become a samurai.

PANEL 4:

Small panel. On a mildly troubled ŌTORO.

ŌTORO Surely you have years ahead of you.

PANEL 5:

On Ito's face. Kangyu, looking concerned looks at his as he speaks to Ōtoro .

ITO My doctors say otherwise.

ITO The question is not whether I will die soon...but *how* soon.

ITO No blade forged can defend against cancer.

PAGE 6 and 7

This **two-page spread** has two small wide panels at the top of each page, comprising about a third of those pages' height. A big image covers the lower two-thirds of each page and encompasses both pages.

PANEL 1 (top left):

The two men look at one another. Kangyu, clueless, tries to understand.

ŌTORO It wounds me to hear this, my old friend.

ITO Perhaps it's punishment for hubris.

ITO For craving that noble death in combat.

ITO To spend so much of my life pursuing that death,
and have even the *chance* of it yanked away.

PANEL 2 (top right):

On Ito's face, who looks shrewd and knowing.

ITO You know that same frustration, ŌTORO-san.

ITO It is the cosmic joke that defines men such as we.

PANEL 3 covering both pages):

FLASHBACK: The younger, fitter versions of each of them stand back-to-back on a battlefield, their swords held ready as enemy samurai close in from all sides. Ito looks joyful, ŌTORO looks menacing. It's clear they have already been fighting, and although each has some cuts, they look immensely powerful. Corpses lay at their feet and the odds seem impossible. The trees in the background are filled with autumn leaves of many colors.

PAGE 8.

PANEL 1:

FLASHBACK CONTINUES: Large panel of ŌTORO and Ito standing triumphant over many corpses as banners with their clan symbols wave in the wind. A bloody sun sets behind torn streamers of clouds.

ITO (voice) We would have been happy to die in any of those battles, ŌTORO-san.

ITO (voice) Yet we remained, while so many thousands of others died.

ITO (voice) And we ***gave*** glorious deaths to legions of our enemies.

PANEL 2:

FLASHBACK ENDS: Speaking over the rim of his teacup as he drinks.

ŌTORO Oh, the irony is not lost on me, Ito-san.

ŌTORO I, too, have grown old.

PANEL 3:

On Ito's shocked reaction as ŌTORO speaks.

ŌTORO And I, too, am **dying** from the **inside out**.

ŌTORO There are no noble deaths left for sick old men.

PAGE 9

PANEL 1

Ito touches his fingers to his chest, over his heart.

ITO Then perhaps the timing of this meeting is propitious.

ITO I want to hire you for a special mission. Very *timely* and very *dangerous*.

ITO Perhaps it will offer you a chance for death that is truly worth dying.

PANEL 2

ŌTORO frowns.

ŌTORO But you have sons, Ito-san. And you have this fine nephew.

ŌTORO How can a dying man be of any service to Clan Asano?

PANEL 3

Kangyu jumps into the conversation.

ITO Kangyu is but a boy and--

KANGYU Uncle, he speaks the truth. I *am* ready.

KANGYU I'm no boy. I'm *fourteen*. I completed *genpuku* and I am now *of age*!

KANGYU I wear two swords as you do. As this great samurai does.

KANGYU Let me do this for Clan Asano!

PANEL 4:

Ito smiles kindly as he pats his nephew on the shoulder.

ITO You are young and strong and I love you, nephew.

ITO But you have never been in battle. You have never drawn blood when arrows are flying and fires burning.

ITO I want you to *live* before you seek to know death.

Page 9 continues...

PANEL 5

Ito appeals to ŌTORO. Minimal art to allow for a lot of dialogue.

ITO My eldest son is away in China on a diplomatic mission.

ITO And...my two younger may already be lost to me.

ITO Lost to this...this...*catastrophe*.

PANEL 6

Small panel showing ŌTORO's steely eyes.

ŌTORO Tell me.

PAGE 10

PANEL 1:

As Ito speaks, we see a Spanish galleon.



ITO (voice): This horror came to Japan on a ship from Europe.

ITO (voice): The *Spanish Plague* they call it.

PANEL 2

FLASHBACK CONTINUES: We see closed doors to the hold of the ship. Gray hands with torn nails and signs of rot are trying to claw the door open from inside, reaching through the narrow gap between. Sailors use hands and staves to try and keep the door shut. The fingers and the door are spattered with dark reddish-black blood.

ITO (voice): The disease drives anyone exposed to it out of their minds.

ITO (voice): They become savage. Feral. *Mindless*.

Page 10 continues...

PANEL 3:

FLASHBACK CONTINUES: As that door opens, the figures inside are still in shadow. But one face is visible, with gray-green skin, wild eyes, and bared teeth dripping with spit and blood. A bloodier version of the same below:



ITO (voice): There are wild rumors, but few who have seen them lived to tell the story.

PAGE 11

PANEL 1:

Small panel as Ōtoro leans forward to argue with Ito.

ŌTORO

But what *kind* of plague?

PANEL 2:

FLASHBACK In one sequence a knot of infected Spaniards close on a samurai guard. One of the Spaniards is an officer.



ITO (voice):

No one knows. It's nothing anyone has seen before.

PANEL 3:

FLASHBACK Small but potent panel as a Spanish zombie lunges forward (toward us, as we are now the POV of the samurai guard). This is a horror shot, so go wild on the creepiness in both composition and color.

Page 11 continues...

PANEL 4:

FLASHBACK They are unarmed and the samurai guard has a sword. He cuts one across the body, which is visually bloody...



PANEL 5:

FLASHBACK CONTINUES: ...but although this is a mortal blow, the attackers are undaunted. The samurai stands shocked at the ineffectiveness of his killing blow.

ITO (voice): It was as if death itself had died.

PAGE 12

PANEL 1

FLASHBACK CONTINUES: We see several people reeling and collapsing on a village street, their faces mottled with disease. In the background are vague silhouettes of shambling zombies.

ITO (voice) As soon as those sailors set foot on land the disease spread like wildfire.

PANEL 2

FLASHBACK CONTINUES: The Shogun (this is an actual portrait, use as basis for art) makes his decree.



ITO (voice): Rumors spread as fast as the disease, but the Shogun, fearing a panic, clamped down on all reports.

PANEL 3:

FLASHBACK CONTINUES: A group of samurai soldiers stands on a hill, silhouetted against the raging fire as an entire town burns.

ITO (voice): *Extreme* measures were taken.

ITO (voice): In secret. In haste.

ITO (voice): Terrible measures....

PAGE 13

PANEL 1:

Ōtoro looks confused and impatient.

ŌTORO

I agree that this is appalling, but Ito-san, what does this have to do with either of *us*?

PANEL 2:

We see a small map of Japan. Keito is a fictitious island, so create an island, circle it in red, and put KEITO next to it far offshore of the mainland.

ITO (voice)

Like many daimyo I keep an estate on Keito Island where family members are sent in time of war and strife.



PANEL 3:

Show a view of a heavily forested, mountainous island with pagodas and big houses scattered among the trees. One pagoda with a high white stone wall and sentries is in the forefront. A flag flies the ASANO crest.

ITO (voice)

I sent my entire household, except for Kangyu and a few servants, to that island.

ITO (voice)

My wife, my children and my firstborn's infant son –the direct **heir** to my clan—are all there.

PANEL 4:

We see a group of people in expensive clothes in a cluster. Shadows of looming zombies fall across them.

ITO (voice)

Little *Yukio* is the future of my house.

ITO (voice)

Or its **doom**

Page 12 continues....

PANEL 5:

Small panel overlapping Panel 4, with a close-up of the baby as the shadow of a reaching hand half covers his face.

ITO (voice)

And word has come....that *they* have come to Keito Island.

PAGE 14.

PANEL 1:

On the three men as they talk. Ōtoro gestures as he speaks. Ito looks disturbed. Kangyu is clutching his swords and looking at his elders.

ŌTORO: But...surely troops were sent to address this plague?

PANEL 2:

FLASHBACK: A group of Asano samurai climb out of a boat on the beach. **NOTE:** They should wear the same armor as the first zombie Ōtoro meets (in the sample pages). The beach faces a wall of dense forest –shadowy and ominous.

ITO (voice): Aye. They were sent.

PANEL 3:

FLASHBACK CONTINUES: As the troops approach the forest wall on the island, many arms with grasping hands reach for them. It is a moment of panic and surprise. We see very little of the zombies –mostly their arms and hands. If we see their heads, they should be obscured by shadows.

ITO (voice): And never heard from again.

PANEL 4:

FLASHBACK CONTINUES: At the end of the forest we see bloody swords, spears, a helmet...but no people. The sand is disturbed by footprints that are both from shoes and from bare feet, and there is blood spatter on the sand and leaves.

PAGE 15

PANEL 1:

FLASHBACK ENDS. Kangyu looks pale and frightened. Ōtoro looks very unsettled.

ŌTORO There have been plagues before, Ito-san, but nothing like what you describe.

ŌTORO What *are* these...these...*things*?

PANEL 2:

Big panel. We see the same Pagoda from Page 13/Panel 3 but with an image of a *jikininki* -the hungry ghosts of Buddhist legends (aka zombies) looming over it. This is an exaggerated view, with the *jikininki* as big as Godzilla. (Here are examples from Edo-period paintings)

ITO No one knows what they are.

ITO But there are rumors.

ITO Many believe that the infected are possessed by the *jikininki* - hungry ghosts out of legend.



PANEL 3:

Ito holds up a hand as he speaks. He looks serious, being the experienced general he was.

ITO I do not know if this is true...but what else makes sense of this madness?

PAGE 16.

PANEL 1:

Ōtoro looks appalled.

ŌTORO *Masaka.*

ŌTORO <It cannot be!>

PANEL 2:

On Ito, who is clearly heartbroken.

ITO My friend, I do not even know if my family *can* be rescued.

ITO Or if Yukio still lives.

ITO But honor demands I do something, and I have come to the only samurai
in whose skill I trust.

ITO I cannot let my family wander as monsters or ghosts.

PANEL 3:

Big panel. We see Ōtoro's face as Ito speaks, and that overlays an image foreshadowing of the Asano women and children as zombies silhouetted against a burning house.

ITO In three days the Shogun will send ships with an army.

ITO They do not come to rescue but to exterminate.

ITO They will burn Keito Island and everything on it to ash.

PAGE 17:

PANEL 1:

A wordless panel as Ito works to compose himself. Kangyu looks on in concern. ŌTORO waits and says nothing. The last traces of the fiery image from Page 16/panel 3 are almost completely burned away, but still visible. This will carry over from the previous page to echo what was just said.

PANEL 2:

Ito looks at Ōtoro with a cynical shrewdness.

ITO My family is rich and successful. That success breeds jealousy.

ITO And hate.

ITO Rival clans would benefit from the complete extermination of the Asano line.

PANEL 3:

On Ōtoro, who studies his friend with a raised eyebrow.

ŌTORO Are you saying they may want to prevent a rescue?

PANEL 4:

Ito looks mildly concerned. As does Kangyu. We see cherry blossoms falling gracefully behind them.

ITO It is *possible* they may send assassins. Some may already be on the island.

ITO Does this give you *pause*, Ōtoro-san?

PANEL 5:

ŌTORO's reply is a cold little smile. A few cherry blossoms are in the foreground, and their shadows fall on Ōtoro's face and body.

PAGE 18

PANEL 1:

Ito and Kangyu look expectantly at Ōtoro

ITO What is your answer, my old friend?

PANEL 2:

On Ōtoro, who looks down into the rising steam from a teacup he holds. Big panel, but mostly blank to leave room for Ōtoro's words.

ŌTORO I have sought for an honorable death in a thousand battles but always won.
(A great line! Regret at surviving in battle!)

ŌTORO Although I am dying and will likely not live out the year.

ŌTORO So, perhaps it is fitting that the dying rescue the living from the dead.

ŌTORO There is a certain poetry to that.

PANEL 3:

He rests his hand on the hilt of his sword.

ŌTORO I can think of nothing nobler than saving the *grandson* of my *friend*.

ŌTORO The *heir* of a great and ancient house.

ŌTORO You honor me in the asking.

ŌTORO I will honor you in undertaking this sacred mission.

PAGE 19.

PANEL 1:

Ito and Ōtoro stand and bow to one another. Kangyu also bows, but he is off to one side. We can see that the ground between the house and the grove of cherry trees is covered with a carpet of fallen blossoms.

PANEL 2:

Ōtoro stands on his deck, watching as Ito and Kangyu walk across the paved ground. They leave a narrow bare spot behind, marking their passage through the blossoms. More blossoms fall all around them.

PANEL 3:

The blossoms gradually fill in their path, as if erasing it.

PAGE 20.

Full page panel. Ōtoro stands alone now. We look past him to see the courtyard is once more covered with blossoms, showing no trace of the two having been there. Crows fly through the trees. Ōtoro's shadow on the fallen blossoms looks strange, almost as if he is a zombie. (This should be subtle rather than wildly explicit. It foreshadows the end of issue #4).

CREDITS

DEATH POEM OF SENSEI ŌTORO

ISSUE #1: “*Bushidōwashiniaru*” (The Way of the Samurai is Death)

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APPENDIX 7

FICTION SUB-GENRES

Mystery Subgenres

(Courtesy <http://www.cuebon.com/ewriters/Msubgenres.html>)

Mystery Subgenres

(Courtesy <http://www.cuebon.com/ewriters/Msubgenres.html>)

(Definitions and Examples - All) This genre enjoys widespread popularity. Mystery writers, especially the earliest female authors, have often used a pseudonym. Almost all of its characters hail from an urban (and/or upper-class) background, and many of its heroes and villains return to complete an entire series. Mysteries thrive on complexity and misdirection, hence these descriptions are long. Stories in which the crime is not solved, or the criminals never apprehended (or at least identified) by the end of a novel (or series), are rare.

Amateur Investigator tales feature a protagonist who is not a law enforcement officer or licensed private investigator. Harry Kemelman's "Rabbi" series is a great example. Marcia Muller's novel *The Tree of Death* stars a female museum curator in Mexico, and the hero of Edna Buchanan's *Miami, It's Murder* is a male newspaper reporter. One series, Donna Andrews's "Turing Hopper" novels, overlap with 'science fiction' and star an AI-computer detective.

Bumbling Detective tales are sometimes humorous and often endearing. The "Peaches Dann" series, by Elizabeth Daniels Squire, features an absent-minded female investigator; while David M. Pierce's "Victor Daniel" series stars a quirky Los Angeles crew. [L] [SEP] Blake Edwards' 1963 film *The Pink Panther* introduced the hilarious cultural icon Inspector Clouseau.

Caper (heist) This subgenre places a crook (or band of crooks) in the role of anti-hero. He (or they) plan a major crime, with intricate detail, though it never goes right. (Often the word "Caper" appears in the title itself.) Donald Westlake was the reigning master of this story type, with his "Dortmunder" novels and others. In Elmore Leonard's oddball novel *The Switch*, a wealthy kidnap victim ultimately takes the side of her abductors. Both versions of the movie *Oceans Eleven* fit this category. Heist novels focus on spectacular thefts, often of heavily-guarded precious objects. Eric Ambler's 1962 novel *The Light of Day*, filmed by Jules Dassin as *Topkapi*, helped launch the modern "evade all those high-tech alarms" format.

Child in Peril (woman in peril) This descriptive category incorporates elements central to countless 'mystery' tales, though it may no longer be politically correct to invoke them as such. The real-life Lindbergh Baby kidnapping provided the grist for numerous fictionalized versions, beginning with Agatha Christie's 1934 novel *Murder on the Orient Express*, later filmed by Sidney Lumet. ^[1]_{SEP}A related subgenre places a beloved woman in the role of victim, and often the husband will go after her, against the wishes of the (so far ineffective) authorities. (Harrison Ford has starred in several movies with this basic theme.)

Cozy mysteries have a specific format. They're usually set in a small town, with an amateur (though highly educated) woman as sleuth. The murder is over quickly, if it's depicted at all, and there is little follow-up violence. The protagonist's official and gossip connections allow her to gather evidence. Monica Ferris's novel *Knitting Bones*, and Deb Baker's "Dolls to Die For" series are great examples, while the "Jessica Fletcher" franchise is perhaps best-known. (Fans of this subgenre have made detailed lists of every subcategory.)

Culinary mysteries feature a professional chef as hero, victim, and/or villain, and are numerous enough to set them apart from other 'amateur investigator' tales. Rex Stout kicked off this subgenre with his 1938 novel *Too Many Cooks*. Nan and Ivan Lyons' novel *Someone Is Killing the Great Chefs of Europe* is an obvious example, as is Diane Mott Davidson's *Dying for Chocolate*. Real-life chefs Takis and Judy Iakovou wrote *So Dear to Wicked Men*.

Doctor Detective stories feature physicians who encounter (and then solve) an amazing number of murders. Josephine Bell launched this subgenre with her 1937 novel *Death on the Borough Council*. Tess Gerritsen's novel *Life Support* is a modern example. (Bell and Gerritsen are real-life doctors.) Several TV shows fit this category, such as Dick Van Dyke's *Diagnosis Murder*.

Furry Sleuth tales feature a cat, and sometimes a dog, as the principle investigator. Shirley Rousseau Murphy's novel *Cat on the Edge* and its sequels put an extraordinary cat in the lead role. In Lillian Jackson Braun's long-running "Cat Who" novels, the human investigator (a newspaperman) is given subtle clues by his psychic house cat. Rita Mae Brown's mysteries depict many animals as intelligent and fully communicative -- but only with each other, not the humans. (Ms. Brown's cat Sneaky Pie is formally credited as co-author!) Most, if not all, of this subgenre's tales overlap with 'cozy' mysteries in their tone and setting. If any feature a bird, reptile, or other nonmammalian animal as the detective, this is rare.

Handicapped subgenre mysteries feature an investigator who must overcome physical challenges to pursue crooks and solve cases. Ernest Bramah's 1914 novel *Max Carrados* and its sequels feature a blind detective of that name. (The novel inspired some obscure film and TV adaptations.) Dick Francis's recurring character Sid Halley is a more recent example. J. Kathleen Cheney's short story "Touching the Dead" (which overlaps with the 'fantasy' genre) stars a 15-year-old blind girl who solves a murder. Raymond Burr broke

onscreen barriers with his depiction of wheelchair-bound detective Robert Ironside. (Late in life, during the filming of a "Perry Mason" reunion movie, Burr really was so confined.)

Hard-boiled (noir, tart noir) These stories occupy the heart of the genre, and feature a gritty, cynical, male private investigator, in a violent and corrupt urban setting that suits his demeanor. This subgenre was launched in 1920 by "Black Mask" magazine, which in turn launched the career of Dashiell Hammett. In 1929 Hammett published his iconic *The Maltese Falcon*, later filmed by John Huston. Raymond Chandler and Mickey Spillane were followed by Robert Parker and a host of others. Swedish author Stieg Larsson's novel *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* and its sequels (also translated into English, and now made into movies) bring a literary element to the field. ^[L SEP] The noir subgenre focuses on the plight of down-and-out urban denizens. With his novel *The Postman Always Rings Twice* and others, James M. Cain dominated this category. Dave Zeltserman's novel *Small Crimes* is another example. Tart noir tales always feature a female protagonist who fits the style. *Freeze My Margarita*, by Lauren Henderson, is one example.

Historical (Chinese, Elizabethan, etc.) This subgenre places clever detectives in many historical settings. *Silver Pigs: A Detective Novel in Ancient Rome*, by Lindsey Davis, has a self-explanatory title. *The Name of the Rose*, by Umberto Eco, is set in a medieval monastery. Josephine Tey's 1951 novel *The Daughter of Time* has a different twist, in that a modern Scotland Yard detective sets out to (posthumously) prove the innocence of King Richard III. Chinese detective stories are a tiny subgenre, at least as seen in English. The novel *Di Gong An* was translated by Robert van Gulik, who then followed up with a series of "Judge Dee" mysteries set in ancient China. Another flourishing mystery subgenre is set in Elizabethan England. Kathy Lynn Emerson's "Face Down" series is one example. The hero of Edward Marston's "Nicholas Bracewell" series is a theater company manager. A few 'historical whodunits' cast famous individuals as the investigator.

Inverted or Howdunit novels begin with the reader witnessing the murder, thus the plot revolves around how the perpetrator will be caught. R. Austin Freeman's 1912 novella "The Singing Bone" launched this subgenre. Anthony B. Cox (as Francis Iles) wrote *Malice Aforethought*, another early example. Cox/Iles's novel *Before the Fact* was filmed by Alfred Hitchcock as *Suspicion*. Several TV shows, such as *Criminal Minds* and *Law and Order, Criminal Intent* have a similar approach.

Legal (courtroom) Usually the protagonist in these stories is a lawyer or court official who solves a case him-or-herself, while the stubborn (or corrupt) police are on the wrong track. An early example is Ephraim Tutt's "Arthur Train" short stories. Courtroom mysteries are often set in England, and much of the drama takes place within the walls of that ultra-formal environment. P.D. James's "Commander Dalgliesh" tales fit this bill. Erle Stanley Gardner's "Perry Mason" franchise is the dominant American example, and Mary E. Martin's "Osgoode Trilogy" another.

Locked Room or Puzzle mysteries are a narrow subgenre, in which careful observation and extraordinary logic reveal the means of a seemingly impossible crime (or escape). Edgar Allen Poe launched it with his 1841 short story "The Murders in the Rue Morgue."

Another early example is Gaston Leroux's 1907 novel *The Mystery of the Yellow Room*, first published in French. (The Greek historian Herodotus is credited with the very oldest known example, however the Catholic Bible's Daniel chapter 14 has another.) Edward D. Hoch's numerous stories in "Ellery Queen" magazine have long dominated this category. Steven Saville's short story "Bury My Heart at the Garrick" depicts Harry Houdini both exposing and performing similar (nonlethal) feats.

Police Procedural (forensic, futuristic, serial killer, stalker, etc.) This is a vast descriptive category. The protagonist is a police detective (or team of officers and technicians) who is tasked with catching fiendishly clever killer(s). Usually the story switches back and forth between the viewpoint of the investigator(s) and the criminal(s) as the crime spree continues. Lawrence Sanders's 1945 novel *Was in Victim*, and Hillary Waugh's 1952 *Last Seen Wearing*, are early examples. Real-life policeman Joseph Wambaugh used his experience to write *The New Centurions* and several other novels. Jack Webb's 1951 series *Dragnet* pioneered the way for genre TV shows such as *Columbo*. Barry Longyear's "Jaggers and Shad" stories feature two British detectives who, in a high-tech future, have their minds transferred into a variety of animal bodies, most notably a gorilla and mallard duck. The TV empires *Law and Order* and *CSI* dominate the forensic investigation subgenre. Thomas Harris's "Hannibal Lecter" franchise rules the serial killer category. Faye Kellerman's novel *Stalker*, and James Swain's *The Night Stalker*, are clear examples of this subgenre.

Private Detectives (female PI) This subgenre features a wide variety of memorable private investigators, working in many different situations, though most are set in the urban United States. Rex Stout's "Nero Wolfe" franchise's detective is so obese he seldom leaves his residence, leaving the footwork to a younger Archie Goodwin. George Chesbro's detective Mongo, in his novel *Shadow of a Broken Man*, is a former circus dwarf with a black belt in karate. Gary Stewart's novel *The Tenth Virgin* is infused with the protagonist's Mormon upbringing. Marcia Muller helped break the gender divide with her 1977 novel *Edwin of the Iron Shoes*, which launched a whole "Sharon McCone" series -- and many other genre heroines.

Romantic is a relatively new 'mystery' subgenre, primarily from romance publisher Harlequin's Intrigue division. (Their offerings are known in the business as a 'continuity series.') Instead of a 'romance' style plot-line, these novels/series follow 'police procedural' and other genre patterns, with long story arcs and numerous crossover characters. What sets them apart is an emphasis on strong and compassionate heroines, who enjoy successful and fulfilling personal relationships with men. Julie Miller's "The Precinct" novels are a good example.

Serials or Series is a descriptive category, in which a strong protagonist drives many novels. Beginning in 1878, Anna Katherine Green developed this subgenre in the USA, with her "Ebenezer Gryce and Amelia Butterworth" novels (and others). Ever since 1887, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "Sherlock Holmes" franchise has towered over 'mystery' fiction. Sue Grafton's "Alphabet" series, starring female detective Kinsey Millhone, began in 1983 with *A is for Alibi* and now up to *V is for Vengeance*, with the express intent of reaching Z.

Janet Evanovich's "Stephanie Plum" series has strong 'slapstick humor' elements, and began with numbered titles, which are now up to 22, plus others.

Supernatural mysteries comprise a small yet venerable subgenre, overlapping with 'fantasy.' These stories follow the standard 'mystery' format, with a strange crime or murder, where the villain turns out to be an actual ghost (or other fantastic being). Mother-and-son authors Kate and Hesketh Prichard's 1899 novel *Ghosts* depicts the brilliant scientist Flaxman Low discovering same.

Third World mysteries are a fast-growing subgenre, whose setting and characters are drawn entirely from those (often unfamiliar) cultures. Among the first was Alexander McCall Smith's *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* (and its sequels), featuring Precious Ramotswe and set in Botswana. (Recently made into a TV series from HBO -- actually filmed in Botswana.) Another example is H. R. F. Keating's novel *Inspector Ghote*, featuring a Bombay/Mumbai policeman. The novel *Wife of the Gods* and its sequels were written by Kwei J. Quartey, himself a native of Ghana.

Whodunit tales are quintessential mysteries, and star a clever investigator who either travels to, or was already present at, the scene of a murder. Often there are obvious suspect(s), but the real killer turns out to be the least likely character, as ultimately revealed during a confrontational (yet rational, and oddly calm) gathering. Agatha Christie's gripping 1939 novel *And Then There Were None* was filmed by George Pollock as *Ten Little Indians*. (The novel's original British title is unprintable, due to the notorious n-word.)

Western Subgenres

(Courtesy <http://www.cuebon.com/ewriters/Wsubgenres.html>)

Australian westerns are a rare exception to the 'time and place' bounds of the genre. Usually, the American protagonist isn't satisfied with the rapidly-filling western United States, and instead settles in Australia's vast outback. George T. Miller's 1982 film *The Man from Snowy River*, based upon a Banjo Patterson poem written in 1890, is a good example.

Black Cowboy (buffalo soldier)

These westerns feature a protagonist of color. Gerald Haslam's story *Rider* is a fine example. (Historians say the actual frontier was relatively colorblind, and Wild Bill Hickok hired several Blacks for his traveling extravaganza.) The US Army's 9th and 10th Cavalry 'buffalo soldiers' gained fame for their actions in the west. Z.Z. Packer's novel *The Thousands* is a good example of this subgenre. (This aspect of history sets up a clash of political correctnesses -- if that's a word -- because several warlike Indian tribes came to respect their military prowess.)

Bounty Hunter tales center upon these morally ambiguous characters. Peter Brandvold's novel *Bounty Hunter Lou Prophet* and Phyllis de la Garza's novel *Bounty Hunter's Daughter* are two obvious examples. While not the main characters, a group hired by an implacable Wells Fargo company drives the action in George Roy Hill's 1969 film *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*.

Cattle Drive westerns are set amidst this definitive frontier activity. Often the young protagonist makes long strides toward manhood during these grueling journeys. Larry McMurtry's novel *Lonesome Dove* (filmed as a TV miniseries by Simon Wincer), and its sequels, are famous examples. Clay Fisher's novel *The Tall Men* is another.

Civil War westerns are defined by that milieu. (Pitched battles were fought as far west as New Mexico.) Afterward, former soldiers carried Blue/Gray antagonisms throughout the frontier. Johnny D. Boggs' novel *Camp Ford* is a comprehensive example. Howard Hawk's 1970 film *Rio Lobo* places John Wayne in a similar role.

Cowpunk is a subgenre that derives its name (and irreverent tone) from science fiction's 'cyberpunk.' These tales depict all sorts of bizarre happenings on the remote frontier. Elisabeth Scarborough's novel *The Drastic Dragon of Draco Texas* mixes ethnic mythology with comedy and horror, and a love story to boot. The TV show and movie *Wild Wild West* arguably fit this category.

Doctor and Preacher are two types of protagonist in this subgenre. Such lead characters are committed to peace and healing (or know they should be), in an often-violent milieu. An obvious example is Lee H. Katzin's 1969 movie *Heaven with a Gun*, starring Glenn Ford. TV's fictional *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman* was well-known, while Robert B. Parker's novel *Preacher* is a newer example.

Eurowestern tales come, as the term implies, from Europe. Karl May's German-language novels, starting in 1892 with his *Winnetou I*, brought the allure of the rugged frontier across the Atlantic. Sergio Leone's classic 1966 'spaghetti western' film *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* places Clint Eastwood and Lee Van Cleef in the white and black hats. (Often this subgenre is more gritty; in an emotional, violent, and even dusty sense, than its American cousins.)

Gunfighter tales are an iconic western subgenre. In reality, two armed men facing each other on a dirt main street happened only rarely, yet it's central to these plots. Often a 'white hat' protagonist reluctantly agrees to go up against a cruel 'black hat' villain (whether an outright criminal or a corrupt VIP), on behalf of oppressed settlers. Jack Schaefer's 1949 novel *Shane*, as filmed by George Stevens, places Jack Palance in this classic example. Fred Zinnemann's 1952 film *High Noon* does the same with Gary Cooper.

Humorous or Parody is a theme that needs no explanation. Mel Brook's 1974 film *Blazing Saddles* towers over this subgenre. Gene Kelly's 1970 film *The Cheyenne Social Club* is another example. Ellen Recknor's novel *Prophet Annie* is full of wry humor.

Indian wars dominate this subgenre. They are usually accurate, in a historical sense, and will also reflect the worldview of the author. James Fenimore Cooper's 1826 novel *The Last of the Mohicans* remains a classic. Douglas C. Jones's novel *The Court Martial of George Armstrong Custer* vividly depicts a "what if?" cultural clash. (Was General Custer a hero or a villain?)

Many older American films depict the Indians as ruthless savages to be swept aside. In Arthur Penn's 1970 film *Little Big Man* the natives are wise and noble indigenes, and white Americans cruel interlopers. Kevin Costner's 1990 film *Dances With Wolves* portrays a more realistic mixed bag.

Land Rush stories usually focus on Oklahoma, or a few similar events in which vast tracts of land were suddenly opened to homesteading -- whether the resident Indians liked it or not. Al and Joanna Lacy's novel *The Land of Promise* is one example. Ron Howard's 1992 film *Far and Away* has a dramatic portrayal.

Lawmen (Texas Rangers)

This subgenre centers around the honest lawmen who brought order and justice to the wild frontier. Often the protagonist is, or is based upon, an actual person. Jack Cumming's novel *The Last Lawmen* is a realistic example.

The Texas Rangers were founded in 1823, and by 1847 they were already depicted in fiction. In 1856 they appeared in two novels: *Bernard Lile*, by Jere Clemens; and *The Rangers and Regulators*, by A.W. Arrington. Chuck Norris's TV show *Walker, Texas Ranger* is a modern example.

Mexican wars (Texan independence)

Stories in this subgenre include the decisive geopolitical events of 1845 - 48. Marion G. Otto's novel *Hugh Harrington* is a good example.

Many Texan tales feature the siege of the Alamo. Stephen Harrigan's novel *The Gates of the Alamo* is a clear example.

(Mexican stories often depict the secession of Texas, and the US invasion of Veracruz and Mexico City -- but with heroes and villains reversed.)

Modern Indians is an overlapping subgenre, in that its stories are set in the present day, and the protagonist must bridge a venerable heritage with American culture and technology. Tony Hillerman's novel *Coyote Waits*, filmed for TV by Jan Egleson, is perhaps the best known example. (Hillerman's books are often listed with the 'mystery' genre, as they feature the Navajo tribal police. To his credit, they're immensely popular in Navajo country.)

Mormon tales center upon the settlement of Utah in the 1840s and 50s, under the leadership of Brigham Young. There was much heroism and teamwork, and a negotiated harmony with the local Indians. Marilyn Brown's novel *The Wine-Dark Sea of Grass* is an unstinting depiction. *From Everlasting to Everlasting*, by Sophie Freeman, mirrors real-life experiences. (Many of these novels are published by imprints associated with the LDS church.)

Reflecting the controversy that has long dogged that religion, some depictions are rather nasty. Arthur Conan Doyle's 1902 novel *In the Country of the Saints* is a well-known example.

Outlaw westerns focus on the black hats, the colorful villains of that era. The Dalton Brothers, Jesse James, Billy the Kid, and many others became legends in their own time. Eugene Manlove Rhodes' 1927 novel *Paso por Aqui* (later reprinted as *Four Faces West*) depicts an unusual robber hunted by the famous marshal Pat Garrett. (In fiction, this character type is known as an 'anti-hero'.)

Prairie Settlement tales are not quite 'westerns,' but fall within the time-and-place bounds of the genre. They depict the taming of the vast flat plains of the Midwest, during the 1800s. Ole Rolvaag's classic novel *Giants in the Earth* depicts a Norwegian family enduring bitter winters and maddening loneliness, as civilization slowly follows them west. While intended for children, Laura Ingalls Wilder's "Little House" series is enjoyable by all. (It is based upon her actual experiences, and was later filmed several times.)

Prospecting (gold rushes)

This subgenre focuses on the quest for sudden riches, whether as a comfortable silver mine owner or a hardscrabble gold panner. In the 1860s, Bret Harte and Mark Twain immortalized these characters even as the California gold rush was in full swing. (Harte's assignment of a peculiar spoken accent to Sierra gold miners remains controversial.)

Jack London extended the 'western' genre northward, with realistic accounts of the 1896 gold rush into Alaska and the Yukon Territory. His novel *The Call of the Wild* stands out.

Quest westerns involve a protagonist on a mission, set against a harsh untamed frontier. Cameron Judd's novel *The Quest of Brady Kenton* is an oft-cited example of this subgenre. Elmer Kelton's *Cloudy in the West* is another.

Railroad stories center upon a titanic project: the bridging of the east and west coasts by the Central Pacific and Union Pacific lines. Rugged geography, indentured Chinese workers, and international scandals add depth to this milieu. John Ford's 1924 film *The Iron Horse* remains a classic, while Herschel Daugherty's 1963 film *The Raiders* depicts the social and economic effect of those spreading rail lines. (The 'golden spike' meeting in 1869 was seen as a reuniting event for a post-Civil War America.)

Range wars (sheepmen)

These stories center upon a peculiar western rivalry, as the best grazing land was rapidly claimed by ranchers, while homesteading farmers began to fence it in. Owen Wister's classic 1902 novel *The Virginian*, later filmed at least twice, depicts Wyoming's fratricidal Johnson County War.

A few subgenre tales focus on shepherds, many of them Basque immigrants, and the wool merchants who owned the flocks. Zane Grey's 1922 novel *To the Last Man* depicts a cattlemen vs. sheepmen feud (based upon real Arizona history) so vicious its title is a literal description. A controversial modern tale is Annie Proulx's 1997 short story "Brokeback Mountain," later filmed by Ang Lee.

Revenge westerns are a relatively dark subgenre. A determined protagonist, often a young survivor of some cruel massacre, goes after the perpetrators. Witnesses to crimes were few, and law enforcement scarce (and sometimes corrupt), leading to such harsh individual actions. Charles Portis's 1969 novel *True Grit*, soon filmed by Henry Hathaway (also remade by the Coen brothers), follows a determined young Mattie Ross on such a mission.

Romance is an overlapping subgenre, which features such a relationship, but in the format of a 'western' novel. A.H. Holt's *Silver Creek* and Morgan J. Blake's *Redemption* are two such novels.

Town-tamer westerns are well described by their name. A lone gunman, or sometimes a group of friends, take on the corrupt leadership of an isolated town, and risk their lives to bring freedom. Frank Gruber's story "Town Tamer," filmed by Lesley Selander, is a clear example. Lawrence Kasdan's 1985 movie *Silverado* is a great depiction. (John Sturges' 1960 film *The Magnificent Seven* extends this subgenre into rural Mexico.)

Trapper or Mountain Man tales are set earlier than other western subgenres, when Indians dominated and the landscape was entirely roadless. Often the rugged protagonist is the only white man for hundreds of miles around, and he'll find an Indian bride. (Many of these men became scouts when the US Army and westward-bound settlers required guidance.) Louis L'Amour's novel *To the Far Blue Mountains* depicts the earliest English settlement of the Appalachians, in the 1500s. A.B. Guthrie's novel *The Big Sky* crosses the continent, and James Michener's sprawling *Centennial* is another example.

Wagon Train westerns are a quintessential subgenre. The Oregon Trail was the interstate highway of its era, with lumbering Conestoga wagons, and hardships that were often extreme. Zane Grey's 1936 novel *The Lost Wagon Train* is a classic example. George Stewart's episodic novel *Sheep Rock* follows waves of settlers through a remote Nevada desert.

Women protagonists lead this subgenre. Some tales idealize their courage and triumphs, as with the real-life Annie Oakley. Opposite this, Dorothy Scarborough's 1925 novel *The Wind* is a harsh depiction of a young woman's life in frontier west Texas. (So harsh that Texan leaders protested.)

Thriller Subgenres

(Courtesy <http://www.cuebon.com/ewriters/Wsubgenres.html>)

Thriller: Thrillers are usually defined by the mood they elicit (hence the name). "Sensational and suspenseful" stories and stories creating "fearful excitement" are two definitions I found. Because of this, thrillers are crossed with almost every other genre. I've tried to only include mash-ups when their combination falls under my definition of "interesting."

Action Thriller: Take any other thriller subgenre, give it's defining elements a back seat, and focus on the action, and you have an action-thriller. This is more common in movies than novels because of the visual appeal of explosions and violence.

Conspiracy Thriller: In this subgenre the protagonist must confront a large, powerful organization whose threat only he sees. Usually he must do so alone.

Crime Thriller: This subgenre focuses on crime, and is usually from the criminal's point of view. Physical action and eluding the police take the place of gathering evidence and trying to discover the criminal.

Disaster Thriller: In this subgenre a (usually) natural disaster is taking place, and the antagonist is either trying to stop the disaster, the extent of the disaster, or just save themselves before time runs out and the disaster has run its course.

Eco-Thriller: In this subgenre the protagonist must stop a threat to the environment (man-made or natural) that will have consequences for society if left unchecked. The damage could be local, but nation or even world-wide stakes are more dramatic.

Forensic Thriller: In this subgenre the protagonist(s) are forensic scientists whose involvement in an unsolved crime threatens their lives.

Legal Thriller: This subgenre takes place in and around the courtroom. Usually the protagonist is a lawyer who has found their case threatening death for either them or their client.

Medical Thriller: This subgenre involves something usually used for medical purposes becoming a deadly weapon. Often it is a virus that is leaking out to the public. The protagonist or antagonist or both are doctors.

Mystery Thriller: This is a subgenre of both mysteries and thrillers. It differs from a regular mystery by being much more fast-paced, with the protagonist on the run and the threat of another crime serving as the "ticking clock."

Political Thriller: In this subgenre political relations or the whole government is at stake, and the protagonist is employed by the government to stop the decline. The protagonist may have been low-level before having attracted attention.

Psychological Thriller: A personal favorite. In this subgenre a lot of the conflict is mental, rather than physical. The protagonist has become involved in a dangerous situation which literally threatens their sanity. They must use mental prowess to overcome their opponent, whether the battle is inside their own head or it a battle of wits.

Religious Thriller: This subgenre uses the history and myths of religion. Usually a religious artifact or historical secret is discovered, and different people and groups vie for control.

Romantic Thriller: This is a subgenre of both thrillers and romantic novels. The plot line follows a typical thriller's tension, suspense, and excitement, but a main element is the growing relationship between two characters.

Spy Thriller: It's hard to call this a genre mash-up when spy novels almost have to be thrillers. At any rate, this subgenre focuses on the high adventures of field agents. It is usually set against the backdrop of some war.

Supernatural Thriller: In this subgenre otherworldly elements are introduced, usually as an antagonistic force, but just as in the romantic thriller, the plot line and feel are distinctly that of thrillers. Some characters may have psychic abilities and other supernatural novel elements may be present.

Techno-Thriller: This genre is a cross between near-future science fiction and thrillers. Cutting-edge technology plays an important role, either as something to obtain, or working for or against the protagonist.

Romance Subgenres

(Courtesy <http://www.cuebon.com/ewriters/Rsubgenres.html>)

(Definitions and Examples - All) Except where noted, all of the examples are novels. Many of these subgenres have specific 'imprints' from a major publisher such as Harlequin. Almost all modern romances are authored using a feminine *nom de plume*--including those from men.

Accidentally Pregnant is a new subgenre, which has rapidly filled the book shelves. A woman is the secret lover of (or enjoys a one-night stand with) an unlikely but powerful man, and unintentionally becomes pregnant. *The Billionaire's Pregnant Mistress*, by Lucy Monroe, is a quintessential example. (In a related subgenre, the heroine deliberately gets pregnant, in order to snare the man.)

Action romance is an overlapping subgenre, which brings in elements of the 'thriller' genre. The strong female protagonist is an adventurer, or perhaps a modern-day military officer. That's the case in Susan Grant's *The Scarlet Empress*. Many such titles are coming out, from Harlequin Intrigue. A different example is Robin McKinley's *The Hero and the Crown*. (Often the heroine gets her male lover out of trouble, perhaps rescuing him from the clutches of an enemy.)

Americana tales are defined by their Midwestern US setting. This small subgenre features life in small farm towns, about 100 years ago. Stephanie Mittman's *The Marriage Bed* is one example. (This subgenre is not to be confused with the larger 'Americana' genre.)

American West (pre-Columbian) These romances are set in the same milieu as the 'western' genre. This overlapping subgenre depicts the strong women who moved west, and helped tame the frontier. Johanna Lindsey's *Savage Thunder* is one of numerous examples.

Some novels reach back to pre-Columbian times, with Native American characters only. Janelle Thomas's "Ecstasy" series depicts this well.

Baby Love romances embrace a modern social trend, with heroines who are also single mothers. The male love interest accepts both mother and child. One oft-cited example is Susan Elizabeth Phillips' *Nobody's Baby But Mine*.

Bodice Ripper romance is now out of favor, at least by that designation. It refers to the article of women's upper clothing of that name, and how the inflamed male hero gets it out of the way, the sooner to make love to the perhaps-reluctant heroine. One recent (and controversial) example is *Daughter of Fortune* by Isabel Allende.

Christian (Amish, contemporary, historical) ^[SEP]This subgenre is widespread, and has a variety of settings. In adhering to Biblical standards, sex is not a feature until the heroine marries. ^[SEP]Amish-centered novels are quite popular. One example is *The Wishing Pearl*, by Nicole O'Dell. ^[SEP]Contemporary Christian novels are, of course, set in the present day. The behavior is relatively calm, but emotional turmoil is common, while maintaining faith amid secular challenges. *When Sparrows Fall*, by Meg Moseley, is a fine example. ^[SEP]As with the related 'historical' subgenres, these novels are set in a wide variety of past milieus. The protagonist is always Christian, and facing challenges to her (usually 'her') faith. *The Doctor's Lady*, by Jody Hedlund, is one example of many.

Civil War novels are set in the South, on the Confederate side. The lovers might be separated by the Mason-Dixon Line, or struggle due to postwar deprivations. Heather Graham's *One Wore Blue* and its sequels are a fine example. (Margaret Mitchell's epic *Gone With the Wind*, and its movie version, are the deans of this subgenre.)

Colonial America tales are defined by that time and place, and just as much by their social milieu. The lovers in this subgenre might be under harsh Puritanical strictures; or inspired (and perhaps divided) by the brewing American revolution. *Temptation's Trail*, by Dana Ransom, fits this subgenre.

Contemporary romance stories are just that, set emphatically in the present day. Modern cultural and other timely references abound, along with popular worldviews. *Over the Edge*, by Suzanne Brockmann, is a fine example. The "Sex in the City" franchise is a famous Hollywood example. (As the years pass, an abundance of hip-'n-trendy references will often 'date' a work terribly.)

Exotic Locales can be anywhere on Earth, from Antarctica to the Sahara desert. Something brought the protagonists there, whether with reluctance or eagerly, and that's where the relationship takes place. At the conclusion, they often head home together. Mary Jo Putney is well-known in this subgenre, as with her *Veils of Silk*, which is set in India.

Family Saga romances take place over a long time period, often depicting several generations. In many stories the location remains the same throughout, such as a country estate in England. Emily Bronte's classic *Wuthering Heights* is an early example.

Futuristic (other planets) ^[L]_{SEP} This overlapping subgenre brings in elements of 'science fiction' (or science fantasy). The setting is ultra-modern, yet the relationship dynamics remain familiar. The lovers may be separated by great distances, and unusual challenges. ^[L]_{SEP} Some novels, such as *Orchid*, by Jayne Castle, are set on different planets entirely. (In most such novels, the science is not rigorous.)

Glitz or Glamour subgenre tales focus on the lives and loves of the rich and famous. Many Judith Krantz and Danielle Steele novels fit this category.

Gothic romance is a wide category, which overlaps the 'horror' genre. Its stories have a dark 'atmospheric' setting, often mysterious haunted castles. *The Ravencliff Bride*, by Dawn Thompson, is a recent example. (This subgenre is not to be confused with 'Romantic' novels, popular in England since the 1700s.)

Historical (Elizabethan, Georgian, Medieval, Tudor, Viking, etc.) This subgenre's tales feature settings in the known past. Often famous personages are employed in a fictional role. Anne Chamberlin's novels, set in Ottoman Turkey, are a well-known example. *Shattered Rainbows*, by Mary Jo Putney, is another. ^[L]_{SEP} The various sub-subgenres are defined by the European setting and culture named, and with the genre's expected relationships intact. ^[L]_{SEP}

Indigenous or Primitive is a subgenre that reaches deep into the prehistoric past, and features characters in tribal societies. Jean Auel's sprawling tales (starting with *The Clan of the Cave Bear*) are the best, perhaps even the founding, examples. Sandra Saidek's *Daughter of the Goddess Lands* and its sequels envision an ancient matriarchal paradise.

Inspirational or Spiritual romances are written with religious beliefs in mind. With 'Christian' romance as a separate category, most of these novels feature New Age sensibilities. ^[L]_{SEP} (If there are inspirational romance subgenres involving other major religions, such as Jewish or Hindu or Muslim, they're not very well-known. However, various 'Bollywood' films may qualify.)

Lesbian romance centers on the relationship of two women, as opposed to the usual male love interest. One example with a 'historical' setting is *Patience & Sarah*, by Isabel Miller.

Medical romances feature protagonists in the medical profession, and the special concerns that affect their relationships. This subgenre became popular in the 1950s. *The Doctor's Secret Family*, by Alison Roberts, is a recent example. (In this subgenre the romance is almost always between a male doctor and a female nurse, and seldom involves a patient of either gender.)

Men's romance is very rare. These novels are written in the standard 'romance' genre format, but from the viewpoint of the man, in a heterosexual relationship. (These are scarce enough that even a partial inclusion of the man's point-of-view qualifies a book for this subgenre.) One example is *Walking Disaster*, by Jamie McGuire.

Multicultural romances usually feature African-American characters. Anya Bast's anthology *Ellora's Cavemen* is one of many examples. The characters can also be Hispanic, Caribbean, or from the Third World, but Asian women are rare. (Serious fans have catalogued these interracial/interethnic novels.)^[SEP] (The American publishing industry once frowned upon stories about non-American characters in a non-American setting -- saying that stories must have one or both -- but this restriction has opened up a lot.)

Paranormal romance has, in recent years, enjoyed tremendous popularity. Overlapping the 'fantasy' genre, its characters have otherworldly experiences, and/or psychic abilities. In some novels the love interest is a ghost, vampire, werewolf, or even demigod. (Unlike the 'horror' genre, these may not be bad experiences, but rather the opposite.) *Stranger in the Mist*, by Lee Karr, is one of many examples. Sherrilyn Kenyon's novel series often fit the bill.

Regency romances are defined by a specific time and place, that is, Regency England. (To be precise, between 1811 and 1820.) This subgenre also has a specific style, based upon Jane Austin's 'novel of manners' foundation. Many of Barbara Cartland's novels are good examples; also *The Notorious Rake*, by Mary Balogh. (Readers can be ferocious about historical accuracy, for example, what sort of carriage the heroine rides in.)

Romantasy: A new take on what used to be called 'paranormal romance'. The focus here is on romance within the structure of a fantasy novel. These can be epic fantasy, high fantasy, urban fantasy, steampunk fantasy, etc.

Romantic Suspense overlaps the 'thriller/suspense' genre. Often the heroine is in peril, and must be rescued by the male, at much risk to himself. *Carnal Innocence*, by Nora Roberts, is a popular example. (This switches roles from the premise of the 'action romance' subgenre.)

Romantics is a romance subgenre for homosexual men, and features male rather than a female love interests. These novels emphasize the specific concerns of gay lovers. A clear example is *Surf 'N Turf* by Pomfret and Whittier. (Often the covers feature the usual bare-chested hunk -- except there are two of them.)

Ruritanian* romances are a small subgenre. These older tales are set in fictional European countries. Usually they feature the affairs of the nation itself, along with the character's specific love interests. The name derives from Anthony Hope's *The Prisoner of Zenda* and its sequels. (The "Girl Genius" series of graphic novels have a similar setting.)

Sensual or Spicy are the romance genre's terms for 'erotica.' This subgenre often features X-rated stories, written by women with a full plot and setting, and characters who build up to intense physical passion. Patty Salier's *The Love Twin* and Rachel Gibson's *Truly, Madly Yours* are two of numerous examples. (Unlike most 'romance' subgenres, in these tales, sometimes the lovers do not stay together at the end.) By some definitions, 'spicy' romances focus more on married couples.

Sweet or Gentle romance tales feature slow-building relationships, and no bodice ripping, or even fought-down urges to do that -- except perhaps on the woman's part. The character's emotions and soul-searching are explored in great depth. Lisa Mondello's *Her Heart for the Asking* is a well-known example. (These novels are usually short, and marketed with a quick turnover.)

Time Travel tales overlap with the 'fantasy' (or 'science fiction') genres, with such elements adding both opportunity and challenge. The lovers are separated by a normally insurmountable barrier, whether a few years or many centuries. One example is *A Knight in Shining Armor*, by Jude Deveraux. The "Outlander" series, by Diana Gabaldon, is realistic enough that she could've sold them as 'historical science fiction,' but a romance publisher offered far more money. (And then reissued them as 'mainstream' fiction, to better include male readers.) In a few stories, a visitor arrives from the past. (Serious fans have categorized this subgenre by which past-time periods are involved.)

Fantasy Subgenres

(courtesy <http://www.cuebon.com/ewriters/Fsubgenres.html>)

(Definitions and Examples - All)

Whether set on our familiar Earth (past or present), or in a vast parallel world, or some dreamlike realm where *everything* is different, fantasy tales allow our imaginations free reign. Even so its relationships, and use of magic, must be internally consistent.

Alternate World fantasy involves different worlds hidden within or parallel to our own. In past times these could be found in a mysterious country, as in Johnathan Swift's novel *Gulliver's Travels*. With the Earth explored, some were envisioned inside a mirror, as with Lewis Carroll's novel *Through the Looking Glass*. Others 'distill' whole fictional libraries, as with John Myers' novel *Silverlock*. In our scientific era, often these worlds are in a parallel cosmos, as depicted in Roger Zelazny's "Amber" series.

Arthurian subgenre tales are set in the world of King Arthur's legendary Camelot. Merlin, Lancelot, Ygraine and friends are involved in fresh adventures. These novels have been popular for centuries, and one famous modern example is Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*.

Bangsian fantasy takes its name from a 19th century author named John Bangs. This subgenre deals all or mostly with the afterlife. Early legends speak of Hades, and it's been going strong ever since. A modern example is Philip Jose Farmer's "Riverworld" series, which overlaps with 'science fiction.' Though marketed as literary fiction, with its Heaven-dwelling narrator, Alice Sebold's novel and movie *The Lovely Bones* fits this category. Celtic fantasy draws upon the rich lore of the Celtic peoples, mostly but not always from Ireland. C.J. Cherryh's novel *The Dreaming Tree* and Charles De Lint's novel *The Little Country* are fine examples.

Christian fantasy is a rare subgenre, in part because (for complex reasons) many believers shun the whole 'fantasy' milieu, while many 'fantasy' mavens return the favor. A fine example of this subgenre is C. Dale Brittain's lighthearted "Yurt" series, which incorporates Christian elements without naming Jesus directly. Several of C.S. Lewis's novels are classified as 'fantasy,' such as his *The Screwtape Letters*.

Comedic fantasy is a humorous and/or satirical subgenre. The many "Xanth" novels by Piers Anthony are a great example.

Contemporary is a subgenre which posits that magical creatures are hidden amongst us. These tales are set in modern times, and deceptively familiar situations. Neil Gaiman's novel *Neverwhere* depicts a vast (yet hidden) magical underground London. Mercedes Lackey's "Diana Tregarde" novels bring realistic magic to Dallas and small town Oklahoma.

Court Intrigue is a subgenre set in royal castles, whether historical (but with magic), or in some recognizable alternate world. George R.R. Martin's very popular "Game of Thrones" franchise overlaps with 'high fantasy' and has enough palace intrigue to give Machiavelli some lessons.

Dark subgenre tales overlap with 'horror,' and/or feature a gothic atmosphere. Michael Moorcock's "Elric" stories are often cited as examples.

Dying Earth stories take place in just such a dismal setting. Often humanity is beset with ennui, as the world itself fades away. The Martin and Dozois anthology *Songs of the Dying Earth* pays homage to Jack Vance's namesake tome.

Erotic subgenre tales contain a strong sexual element. Examples abound, since medieval times and before. A popular modern example is Jacqueline Carey's novel *Kushiel's Dart*, along with its sequels.

Fantasy of Manners is a subgenre related to the literary 'comedy of manners,' and it depicts the elaborate rituals and relationships of some narrow social class. These stories downplay or omit nonhuman creatures. Author Ellen Kushner is regarded as the dean of this subgenre.

Feghoot describes a tiny yet distinct subgenre, rooted in the 'fan fiction' of serious fantasy enthusiasts. These 'flash fiction' (under 1000 word) tales are laden with inside jokes, and must feature a bad pun for an ending. The protagonist is always a loutish adventurer named Ferdinand Feghoot.

Heroic fantasy centers on a conquering hero, or band of heroes; yet it often turns the genre's heroic trope on its head, with forgivable villains and deeply flawed protagonists. Stephen R. Donaldson's epic "Chronicles of Thomas Covenant" series fits the bill perfectly.

High or Epic fantasy is, for many readers, the heart and essence of the genre. Entire worlds are created, with long histories and vivid lifestyles, and a large cast of characters. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* utterly dominates this subgenre. Elizabeth Moon's five "Paksenarrion/Gird" novels (plus some brand-new sequels) are excellent examples. (Hand-drawn maps, which show the landscape and competing realms, are essential.)

Historical fantasy is the genre's answer to historical fiction. A specific period from Earth's history becomes the setting, but with fantastic elements blended in. Gene Wolfe's dreamlike novel *Soldier of the Mist* and Guy Gavriel Kay's novel *Tigana* are two fine examples.

Historical High Fantasy is a subset of the 'historical fantasy' genre, in which the stories are vast and detailed enough to resemble 'high fantasy.' Stephen Lawhead's trilogies are preeminent. His Pendragon Cycle novels combine an expanded Arthurian legend with the doomed Atlantis.

Juvenile fantasy is a vast descriptive category, overlapping with the 'children's' and 'young adult' genres, which has stories written for a younger audience. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* is a stellar example, as are L. Frank Baum's "Oz" books. Joy Chant's novel *Red Moon and Black Mountain* is another.

Low Fantasy is a descriptive category, and its definition has been shifting. Originally such tales are written, if not in conscious opposition to, then with a serious lack of, the sweeping vistas and serious heroism of the 'high fantasy' subgenre. Some observer link it to the 'sword & sorcery' subgenre, while video games such as *Shadowrun* have been placed in this category. By the ascendant definition, 'low fantasy' has less magic, and a more ordinary setting, mostly in our familiar world. An example of this would be P.L. Travers' novel *Mary Poppins*, the basis of the well-known Disney movie; plus another, *Saving Mister Banks*, about the making of that movie. Another example, which overlaps with the 'young adult' genre, is Candy Gourlay's novel *Tall Story*.

Media tie-in (Buffy novels, etc.) ^[L]_{SEP} These stories involve characters and settings that originate in movies, TV shows, video games, etc. It's a huge subgenre, and its many series get plenty of shelf space. Such stories normally follow the canon of the specific creator/ownership, and cannot depict permanent changes to its principal characters.

Medieval fantasy is defined by its name, as this subgenre's tales are set in that period, in between the ancient or Arthurian worlds and the modern industrial era. They will feature knights and knaves, often together with sorcerers and dragons. (Many fantasy subgenres, set on Earth or elsewhere, have a 'pseudomedieval' setting. That is: ox carts, tavern wenches, and swords; but no automobiles, stock brokers, or firearms.)

Mythic (mythopoeia, mythpunk) This subgenre is a broad category. In general, these stories are set on our familiar Earth, and incorporate existing myths. Robert Holdstock's *Mythago Wood* and Neil Gaiman's *Anansi Boys* do a wonderful job of bringing ancient myths into our modern world. Tolkien used the term 'mythopoeia' to describe his own work, in that it's evocative of humanity's deepest myths. Mythpunk is a small subgenre, its

name a derivative of cyberpunk. Vera Nazarian's edgy novel *Dreams of the Compass Rose* is a clear example.

Quest fantasies involve just that. It's a descriptive category, in which the protagonist is involved in some perilous all-consuming quest. In Peter Beagle's novelette *Two Hearts*, nine-year-old Sooz sets off alone to free her village from a murderous gryphon. Terry Goodkind's novel *Wizard's First Rule* is another example.

Romantic subgenre tales incorporate 'fantasy' and 'romance' genre themes. There are plenty of examples, though often marketed as 'paranormal romance' (which pays better). *Catch The Lightning* by Catherine Asaro is a fine example. (As a physicist, Asaro blends elements of rigorous science into many of her stories.)

Science Fantasy is an overlapping subgenre, with the trappings of high technology, but also pervasive elements of traditional fantasy. The term is well-established in two major genres, and here refers to stories with lean toward 'fantasy' rather than 'science' fiction. Marian Zimmer Bradley's "Darkover" series is one example.

Series (shared world) This is a popular descriptive category. Such tales become part of a long series of novels (and often, short stories) whose publication can span decades, and be picked up by new authors after the originator's passing. For example, Terry Brooks' "Shannara" series joined up with his later "Knight of the Word" novels, for a vast future history. David Eddings' voluminous "Belgariad" series is another. The 'shared' subgenre does just that, by inviting many authors to add stories to an existing 'world,' with new subplots and characters joining the originator's familiar ones. Terry Pratchett's "Discworld" franchise is perhaps the most popular example. (This participation is done via a formal process, otherwise it's regarded as freelance -- amateur and only semi-legal -- 'fanfic' storytelling.)

Superhero fantasy needs no introduction. Whether in films or comic books or novels, characters such as Superman, Thor, and Iron Man are familiar indeed. Some authors will create their own new superheroes, incorporating familiar tropes. Michael Stackpole's novel *In Hero Years, I'm Dead* is a well-thought-out example. (Such protagonists may gain their special abilities from magic or technology or alien birth, or something else, and usually these will far exceed anything deemed plausible by science.)

Sword & Sorcery tales embody the action-packed aspect of fantasy, with powerful barbarians clearing a bloody swath across their pseudomedieval worlds. Robert Howard's "Conan" novels are perhaps the founding tomes. Fritz Leiber's clever "Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser" tales are popular (and much imitated) examples.

Urban Fantasy (nerd outfoxes supernatural) These novels are set in a modern, urban environment. Werewolves live in abandoned subway stations, or pixies hide in the small spaces of a campus dormitory. Jody Lynn Nye's novels often incorporate such characters. (A large percentage of such tales, especially if they involve vampires, are set in-and-around New Orleans.) In some tales, a computer nerd is up against ancient evil. Robert Weinberg's

novel *A Logical Magician* is an example which features adaptable beings such as 'mall nymphs.' Charles Stross's novel *The Atrocity Archives* incorporates 'horror' and 'spy thriller' elements.

Vampire (Dracula, Nosferatu, sexy youth): This subgenre originally belonged to the 'horror' category, and much of it still fits there; however many newer tales overlap with the 'romance' and 'young adult' genres, so these tales now better fit the 'fantasy' section. Based in ancient myth, primarily from Romania, vampire stories have been popular for more than a century. ^[1]^[SEP]Dracula type stories began with Bram Stoker's 1897 novel of that name. It's been filmed countless times, and launched the whole trope of vampires as (at least in their on-screen depictions) debonaire, attractive men with a very dark secret. Nosferatu type stories were popularized by FW Murnau's 1922 film of that name, featuring an ugly and repulsive (if wealthy) Count Orlock. There are numerous spinoffs and imitators. (The movie was itself a direct rip-off of Dracula, but distinct in this major regard.) Sexy Youth vampire tales often, but not always, overlap with the 'young adult' and 'romance' genres, and also with the 'urban fantasy' subgenre. Young, or immortally youthful, vampiric (and other supernatural) characters get into serious relationships with mortals. Such tales have become very popular, beginning with Fran Rubel Kuzui's 1992 film *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and Joss Whedon's namesake TV series. Countless books, movies, and TV series have followed, including Charlaine Harris's "True Blood" franchise. ^[1]^[SEP](In general, each author creates his-or-her own rules, as to a vampire's lifestyle, abilities, and weaknesses.)

Wuxia stories originated in China. They are often set during Imperial times, and feature a hero advanced in the martial arts, who battles human (and sometimes supernatural) foes. A famous example is Wang Dulu's novel *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, filmed by Ang Lee. (That movie was a huge hit in the west, but drew yawns in China, as just one of many such tales.)

Horror Subgenres

(Courtesy: <http://www.cuebon.com/ewriters/Hsubgenres.html>)

(Definitions and Examples - All) As it tends to distort our familiar reality, horror is a slippery genre to define. Disturbing themes such as possible insanity and unsought penetration suffuse these tales. In its harsher forms, these stories and depictions are deliberately shocking and controversial.

Aliens infuse this subgenre with relentless troublemaking. Overlapping with 'science fiction,' the source of terror is another planet, whose inhabitants are encountered there, or travel to our Earth, if not both. The "Alien" franchise (featuring Sigourney Weaver) leads this charge. Scott Sigler's novel *Infected* is a recent example, among many. In M. Night Shyamalan's movie *Signs*, mysterious rural visitors are revealed to be (somewhat improbable) aliens.

Creepy Kids horror is defined by its name. Horror mavens have said that children are mysterious strangers coming into the world--and this subgenre takes that unspoken worry

and runs with it. Stephen King's short story and film *Children of the Corn* are straightforward examples. Many others, such as Richard Donner's film *The Omen*, involve a child who is directly related to Satan.

Cross Genre is a subgenre whose horror tales have almost-overriding elements of another major genre. For example, Joe Lansdale writes 'horror' in 'western' settings, while his novel *The Drive-In* ensnares rural rednecks. Frank Peretti's novel *The Oath* contains strong 'horror' elements, portrayed as 'the wages of sin' in an evangelical Christian context.

Cutting Edge refers to horror that consciously goes against the grain, and is probably without many of the genre's familiar tropes and/or styles. These tales usually feature a modern setting. Often this subgenre is associated with graphic novels, or new venues such as online chapter postings. Author Douglas Clegg has pioneered the latter with his novel *Purity*.

Dark Fantasy is an overlapping subgenre, and its stories generally feature human evil and strife, rather than supernatural monsters. Karl Edward Wagner's "Kane" books are an oft-cited example.

Dark Fiction is a huge descriptive category, almost as broad as 'speculative fiction.' Many genre publications use it in their title and/or self-description. (Sometimes, for practical reasons, it's used to market a horror story without employing the term itself.)

Erotic horror contains a strong sexual element. In this subgenre the sex can be explicit, *but* it's often far from pleasurable. Alfonsi and Scognamiglio's anthology *Dark Seductions* is an example. (As authors of this subgenre will regularly inform you, such tales are not for casual reading.)

Extreme (splatterpunk, grindhouse, transgressive, or visceral) This subgenre is as raw as fiction or film can be. The explicit violence and bloody gore are heaped on, often from start to finish. Splatterpunk is a term coined in imitation of cyberpunk, and favored by certain younger authors. Often these stories incorporate technology. Visceral is in between these two subgenres, and its stories aim for an "in your face" gross-out.

Fabulist horror is a descriptive category. Its stories often emphasize a 'different' tone or setting, such as an old-fashioned style. Often they have a distinctive locale, such as the Caribbean. Sara Stamey's novel *Islands* is one such. (Several publications use the term Fabulist in their name and/or self-description.)

Gothic (English gothic, southern gothic) Gothic' was originally synonymous with 'horror,' and in recent decades has come to indicate a certain tone and setting, in this and other major genres. This subgenre is often written in a 'literary' style. Many of these tales involve an evil from the past, as with haunted mansions and/or encroaching personal insanity. Most of Edgar Allen Poe's work fits this category. English and southern gothic tales are set in those locales, and traditionally have distinct styles. Kurt Singer has several anthologies

with this emphasis. ('Gothic' is not to be confused with the trendy 'goth' lifestyle, although that blackness-loving subculture may eventually generate a subgenre of its own.)

Hauntings subgenre tales feature exactly this. Often the persistent ghost is a specific individual, somehow connected to the building or protagonist. The (supposedly true) novel and film *The Amityville Horror* are famous examples. The TV show *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir* verged on romance, and the "Caspar" franchise on comedy.

Holocaust tales involve mass deaths, whether during the horrific 20th century event of that name; or involving a similar tragedy, past or future. Those deaths might be due to human slaughter, or from a plague or monsters. In a few bizarre versions, everyone has already died, and today's humanity is the replacement--but doesn't know it. Stephen King's novel and movie *The Stand* depict a near-future apocalyptic plague.

Humorous horror is fairly common, and its macabre elements are often understated--or exaggerated into parody. The old comic strip and TV show *The Addams Family* are familiar examples. The anthology *Blood Lite* from Kevin J. Anderson is a recent contribution to this subgenre.

Lovecraftian (Cthulhu mythos, etc.) These subgenres are rooted in the pioneering fiction of H.P. Lovecraft. The originals and newer works have a distinct style, with florid prose and an overwhelming pessimism. (They overlap with 'science fiction,' as his *In the Mountains of Madness* was first serialized in that genre's magazine *Astounding*.) Cthulhu is perhaps Lovecraft's most famous creation, an eldritch demigod from the deep past. Tiny subgenres focus on Lovecraft's other varied creations. A recent example is Elizabeth Bear's short story "Shoggoths in Bloom."

Media tie-in (*Dark Shadows* novels, etc.) These novels feature characters made famous by Hollywood, such as Freddy Krueger. They must follow the canon of the originators, and make no permanent changes in the main characters. ^[1]_[SEP] Many novels follow up on the popular TV show (and recent movie) *Dark Shadows*, including a series by Lara Parker, who played Angelique in the original episodes.

Mind Control horror exploits this particular fear. The method may be sorcerous or technological, but the victims are compelled to act against their will and better natures--often while fully aware of what's happening. *False Memory*, by Dean Koontz, is a popular example. Curt Siodmak's novel *Donovan's Brain* is an early example of invasive medical technology gone awry.

Noir horror is a descriptive subgenre. It invokes a gritty urban setting, much like its counterparts in other major genres. Weary, cynical characters populate these tales. *The Midnight Road*, by Tom Piccirilli, is a great example.

Paranormal is a subgenre with mortal heroes. Such tales emphasize a difficult battle against evil supernatural encroachment, whether by a saintly exorcist or high-tech

ghostbusters. There are many popular examples, such as Tobe Hooper's film *Poltergeist*. (Unlike most 'horror' stories, there's 50-50 chance the good guys will fully prevail.)

Psychological (surreal) This subgenre is usually written from a tight viewpoint. Is the protagonist really seeing terrible things, perhaps battling against human conspiracies and/or demonic possession -- or is he (less often, she) going insane? On the flip side, this subgenre can feature an insane protagonist, such as a tormented serial killer. A subtle example is John Steinbeck's short story "The Snake," which is low key, yet disturbing. A modern example is the novel *Heart Shaped Box*, by Joe Hill. Surreal horror incorporates bizarre imagery, often drawn from vivid, threatening dreams. One popular example is *Aberrations of Reality*, by Aaron J. French.

Quiet or Soft horror is, relatively speaking, a mild subgenre. Strong emotion, rather than external violence, is emphasized. The novels of James Herbert are a good example.

Rampant Animals is a subgenre whose name says it all. Perhaps the dominant examples are Stephen King's novel and film *Cujo*, which feature an unstoppable rabid dog. Aggressive spiders and chthonic monsters and many other nasty critters fill such pages. (Opposite this, William F. Claxton's 1972 film *Night of the Lepus* attempts to scare people with gigantic rabbits!)

Rampant Technology exploits the fear that man has dared too much, and created mechanisms that will turn against us. In Greg Bear's novel *Dead Lines*, a spam-laden Internet infests the afterlife. In Stephen King's short story and film *The Mangle*, a possessed laundry machine starts attacking people. Many other tales depict familiar devices running amok--usually without needing to be plugged in.

Satanic Bargains a.k.a. "deal with the devil" stories are common enough to merit their own subgenre. The protagonist, usually an ambitious man, strikes a Faustian bargain with the prince of darkness (or his representative). In Oscar Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the deal is implicit and the moral lesson explicit. Dana Reed's novel *Margo* features a woman seeking eternal youth.

Supernatural (demons, zombies, etc.) These stories focus on various types of monster from 'beyond,' persistently ruining the lives of a suffering humanity. Often the setting is an isolated village, where the protagonist becomes stranded. There are countless examples. Anne Rice's novels are filled with powerful arcane beings. Zombies are popular enough to warrant special mention. A top example is Richard Matheson's 1954 novel *I Am Legend*, along with its several film versions. Edgar Wright's film *Shaun of the Dead*, contain humorous elements

Suspense or Dark Suspense (thriller) This subgenre is a broad descriptive category. These stories depict few if any supernatural elements, but rather, a continual (usually, unknown and growing) menace. David Morrell's story collection *Black Evening* is one example. Horror thrillers add 'action' elements to the story. The hero may run far and fast, but he can't hide. Many of Richard Matheson's short stories depict this well.

Weird (bizarro) This is a descriptive category--in a genre which is comprised of nothing but weird! The long-running magazine *Weird Tales* is often cited in this regard.

Science Fiction Subgenres

(<http://www.cuebon.com/ewriters/SFsubgenresA-F.html>)

Science fiction is not meant to be predictive, but rather it develops myriad 'what if' scenarios. Virtually every feature of the 21st century world was anticipated by genre stories, often one hundred years or more in advance. (Some major trends, such as miniaturized electronics, were envisioned by only a handful of authors.)

Age Regression tales involve, not necessarily a long life, but a literal reversal of the physical aging of the body. An old man becomes like a teenager again. This might happen via some virus or serum, or by means of an elaborate multi-step process. Numerous SF tales include a 'regen' process, available to at least some of its characters. A recent example is Robert Sawyer's novel *Rollback*. (Hollywood versions sometimes shrink a person clear into infancy, or even a puddle of goo.)

Alien Invasion stories are self-explanatory. The target is usually, but not always, our Earth. The classic of this subgenre is H.G. Wells' pioneering 1898 novel *War of the Worlds*, followed by Orson Welles' 1938 radio version. Niven and Pournelle's novel *Footfall* is a well-thought-out example. The film *Independence Day*, by Roland Emmerich, has become a cultural milestone. (Most--but not all--of this subgenre's tales depict an eventual human triumph.)

Alternate Histories depict might-have-beens, if one or more crucial situations had been resolved differently. Common themes are: what if the Roman Empire never fell, or the South had won the US Civil War, or Germany won World War Two? The grandmaster of this subgenre is Harry Turtledove. Another example is P.K. Dick's novel *The Man in the High Castle*, which has been made into a (barely related) HBO series.

Apocalyptic (asteroid hit, gonzo apocalypse, nuclear war, pandemic) These stories depict a non-religious 'end of the world' scenario. Usually, a band of survivors endure tremendous hardships. An asteroid is the main villain of Niven and Pournelle's novel *Lucifer's Hammer*, and many others, including Mimi Leder's movie *Deep Impact*. Gonzo Apocalypse tales are rare, and feature a surreal, even comic, element. Most, if not all, are set in the southwestern deserts of North America. Susan Torian Olan's novel *The Earth Remembers* is a good example. Neal Barrett, Jr.'s novelette "Ginny Sweethips' Flying Circus" and Charles Coleman Finlay's story "The Texas Bake Sale" follow suit. Nuclear war ends things in Peter George's novel *Red Alert*, filmed by Stanley Kubrick as *Dr. Strangelove*. A sudden pandemic wipes out nearly all humans in George R. Stewart's classic SF novel *Earth*

Abides, and in Rupert Wyatt's movie *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*. Zombie disasters fall under the 'horror' category, while 'nanotech' overlaps with various others.)

Artificial Intelligence tales assume that one, or perhaps many, artificial minds become fully sentient. They might be mainframe computers, or mobile robots, or more recently, the Internet as a whole. One famous example is D.F. Jones's novel *Colossus*, filmed by Joseph Sargent as *Colossus, The Forbin Project*. Another is Jack M. Bickham's novel *Ariel*. (Bickham's story, and many others, make the error of underestimating the human brain, and/or failing to envision how powerful modern computers would become -- yet still be far short of real intelligence, much less of sentience.)

Astrobiology centers upon alien life. Not necessarily intelligent or technological beings, but the very presence of life that has evolved beyond our Earth. Many such tales involve finding mysterious life forms on Mars or Europa, or floating in the atmosphere of Jupiter. An oft-quoted example is Arthur C. Clarke's short story "A Meeting With Medusa."

Astrosociobiology is an overlapping subgenre that's both narrow and broad. It focuses on the form and function of alien (non-human) civilizations. There are countless examples. CJ Cherryh's "Chanur" novels explore the psychology of a spacefaring feline race. (Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake for, in part, airing such speculations.)

Bigger Than Worlds is a subgenre well-described by its name. Vast artificial megastructures are the setting for these stories; almost characters in themselves. Olaf Stapledon's 1937 novel *Star Maker* is probably the first such tale, with a star-englobing construct of a type later known as a Dyson Sphere. Larry Niven's 1970 novel *Ringworld* introduced that carefully thought-out habitable structure. This subgenre's largest imagined construct (at tens of millions of light years across) is perhaps Bolder's Ring, found in Stephen Baxter's "Xeelee" novels.

Biopunk is a spinoff of the 'cyberpunk' subgenre, involving hackers (and oppressive government agencies) who manipulate human DNA -- their own and/or someone else's. One example is Paul Di Filippo's novel *Ribofunk*. Another is Andrew Niccol's film *Gattaca*.

Biorobotics involves the practical intersection of human physiology and mechanical prostheses or enhancements. Robert Sawyer's novel *Wake* depicts a blind girl offered sight by means of an external "eyepod" device that processes her retinal nerve signals.

Christian SF is just that, stories which features an explicitly Christian protagonist. Anthony Boucher's short story "The Quest for St. Aquin," and the novels of Kathy Tyers, are good examples. The protagonist of Timothy Zahn's novel *Deadman Switch* has profound Biblical knowledge and morality. (Such tales are common enough to have their own subgenre, yet they're unusual in the SF genre, especially compared to the English-speaking Christian population. The reasons are open to debate.)

Clerical subgenre tales involve an organized priesthood, such as a religious order, of any human or alien religion. Set on Earth, Walter Miller's novel *A Canticle for Leibowitz*

chronicles one sincere and long-lived (basically Roman Catholic) order. Frank Herbert's *Bene Gesserit* (in his "Dune" franchise) dominates human history, yet without profound expressions of individual faith.

Communalness is a specialized term and subgenre, involving a human future with relationships and communities 'boosted' into enhanced consciousness by cybernetic or other means. The namesake town in Frank Herbert's novel *The Santaroga Barrier* has achieved a kind of drug-induced unity. The disciples of V.M. Smith in Robert Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land* achieve this (along with impressive powers) through learning to speak Martian.

Cozy Catastrophe is a type of postapocalyptic tale, usually set on Earth, in which an isolated group of survivors sets about rebuilding a new civilization according to their own particular ideas. (As with the 'cozy mystery' subgenre, unjust death has occurred, but the characters don't get too rattled about it.) The founding example is probably Mary Shelley's less-well-known novel *The Last Man*. Another is John Wyndham's novel *The Day of the Triffids*, later filmed by Steve Sekely.

Cybernetic Revolt speaks for itself, and is one of SF's oldest and most common themes. Mechanical servants fail, or assert their rights, or go berserk, usually with tragic consequences. E.M. Forster's novella "The Machine Stops," written in 1909, depicts the former.

Cyberpunk is a term that's expanded well beyond the SF community and into popular culture. (It's also spawned a host of other "-punk" subgenres.) These tales are typically set on Earth, and involve a hacker immersed in a cyber-world, interacting (both on line and physically) with similar people. Often they're modified to 'jack' their brain directly into cyberspace. The founding tome is William Gibson's novel *Neuromancer*, and a popular follow-up is Neal Stephenson's novel *Snow Crash*. (It may be an unwritten law that all such tales must involve preening characters gathered in a flashy night club.)

Cyberspace as a subgenre is very similar to 'cyberpunk,' though broader in form and style. The term was coined by SF author William Gibson, and this subgenre involves characters interacting, not just on line, but fully immersed within a vast worldwide 'virtual reality' medium. Other such tales involve hackers who use more ordinary means of networking.

Cyborg fiction features thoroughly-integrated human/mechanical blend(s) as main characters. The classic example is Martin Caidin's novel *Cyborg*, brought to television as *The Six Million Dollar Man*. John Scalzi's novel *Old Man's War* and its sequels feature soldiers with nanotech blood and mixed DNA. (Caidin coined the word 'bionics,' now a legitimate scientific concept and commonly spelled 'bionic'.)

Detective (robotic police, telepathic investigation, etc.)^[SEP] In these stories, often set in the near future, technology aids both criminals and law enforcement.^[SEP] Various short stories introduced robotic police. This was popularized by the eponymous (actually cyborg)

character in Paul Verhoeven's film *Robocop*. [SEP] Alfred Bester's novel *The Demolished Man* depicts a deadly cat-and-mouse game between psychic police and criminals.

Dying Astronaut tales got a boost from the real-life events of the Apollo 13 mission, as depicted in the movie from Ron Howard. With the laws of physics precluding any possible (outside) rescue, these stories can range from tragic to poignant to heroic. In Alfred Bester's novel *The Stars My Destination*, a man abandoned on a derelict spaceship figures out a way to survive. In "Wonders of the Universe," a short story by German author Andreas Eschbach, a marooned woman dies gracefully on frozen Europa. Two excellent new examples, with happier endings, are the Alfonso Cuarón film *Gravity*; and Andrew Weir's novel *The Martian*, filmed by Ridley Scott.

Dying Earth SF tales show the death of the Earth as slower than from an apocalypse, and it can be due to any cause, including natural. A haunting vision of this appears in the far-future chapters of H.G. Wells's novel *The Time Machine*. (Including a 'lost' chapter about a biologically decrepit humanity, originally serialized but not included in the novel and film versions.) Isaac Asimov's novel *Pebble in the Sky* is another example.

Dystopian (crowded world, gilded cage, jaded society, theocracy, etc.) [SEP] The opposite of Utopian, these horrid societies are all too easy to imagine. In most such tales, the protagonist seeks to better his-or-her own life, if not to liberate the entire society. [SEP] Cyril Kornbluth's novel *The Marching Morons* depicts a cityscape jammed with idiotic yet pampered workers. [SEP] Often this subgenre depicts inquisitive heroes breaking free of a bottled utopia, such as the sealed city in Douglas R. Mason's novel *Eight Against Utopia*. Another example is the spaceship *Axiom* in Disney/Pixar's movie *Wall-E*. (In both stories the need for protective confinement had, unknown to the characters, diminished over time.) [SEP] A.E. Van Vogt's novel *The Empire of Isher* portrays a decadent and sybaritic world-ruling class. [SEP] Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* and Robert Heinlein's *Revolt in 2100* are novels that depict a puritanical (and rather hypocritical) religious ruling class.

Edisonade* is a subgenre that was named retroactively, and it dates back to the nineteenth century. As the name Edison suggests, they center upon the adventures of some brilliant young inventor. The numerous "Tom Swift" stories, by Victor Appleton, are the best-known examples.

Environmental subgenre tales focus on the ecosystem, usually but not always our Earth's. Often there is a direct threat, caused by humanity or some outside force. A recent example is Bell and Strieber's partly-fictional book *The Coming Global Superstorm*, filmed by Roland Emmerich as *The Day After Tomorrow*. (While this is a serious enough topic, the science in many of these tales is abysmal.)

Erotica refers, in this context, to a science fiction tale with a strong sexual element. Explicit sex might be at the center of the plot, or it plays a vivid role in the character's lives. Norman Spinrad's novel *The Void Captain's Tale* combines these and other SF elements.

Exotic Ecosystems {unusual life forms} ^[L]_[SEP] Alien worlds offer tremendous possibilities, yet much SF (in print and on screen) populates them with familiar humanoids. Robert Reed's novels, such as his *The Remarkables*, depict truly alien beings and environments; as does Ursula LeGuin's novella "The Word for World is Forest." (Which, along Poul Anderson's 1957 novella "Call Me Joe," inspired James Cameron's hit movie *Avatar*.)

Extraterrestrial Life is a huge subgenre, almost a descriptive category. In many of these tales, the very discovery of life beyond the Earth (or even "just" its signals or ancient artifacts) has a tremendous impact upon current society. Carl Sagan's novel and movie *Contact* are excellent examples. Jack McDevitt's novel *The Hercules Text* is another.

Firm Science is a specific definition, which can be applied to many subgenres. It refers to a midway point between 'hard' and 'soft' SF, and the inclusion of technology and phenomena that are not too fantastic, but may never be invented. (Such as faster-than-light travel, antigravity, and wormholes.)

First Encounters means between humans and intelligent aliens. This could be an alien arriving here, or a human astronaut reaching some inhabited world. There are hundreds of examples in print and film.

First Landings (Mars, other planets; return to Moon) Originally this meant a journey to the Moon, the only 'obvious' world beyond ours. Jules Verne's novel *From the Earth to the Moon* is not the earliest example (that honor goes to Lucian of Samosata, an ancient Roman author), but it's the best known. ^[L]_[SEP] There are numerous 'first to Mars' novels, such as Robert Zubrin's *First Landing*. There are similar stories involving most of the known planets and nearby star systems. After the short-lived Apollo program, this subgenre began to depict a hoped-for return to the moon. (In many cases, by determined private entrepreneurs who outrun a moribund NASA.)

Frontier (asteroid miners, rough colony, theme park) Most of this subgenre's tales transplant the 'western' genre into outer space. A good example is Peter Hyam's film *Outland*, which is an homage to *High Noon*. There are hundreds of examples in print. Similar to hardscrabble miners, crafty independent spacemen ply the asteroid belt in search of resources to send back to civilization. Alfred Bester's novel *The Stars My Destination* is one such novel. (In many of such stories they're threatened by an aggressive government or big corporation from Earth.) New or cut-off colony planets, left to support themselves, are depicted with a frontier aspect. Joss Whedon's popular "Firefly/Serenity" franchise envisions such rough colonies. In a few stories, the 'western' aspect is recreated as entertainment for tourists. Michael Crichton's film *Westworld* is one example.

Gay subgenre stories include male homosexuals. If not the protagonist, then a major character or two. This theme has become more common since the 1970s, but remains unusual. Lois McMaster Bujold's novel *Ethan of Athos* depicts a planet that's entirely male, and reproduces its population via artificial wombs. In recent times, several genre superheroes have 'come out' as gay. Another example is Lt. Cmdr. Ro Nevin, in the fan-produced series *Star Trek: Odyssey*.

Gedanken is German for 'thought' or 'idea,' and this subgenre's stories center around a striking concept, often instead of developing their characters or setting. Andrew Weir's popular novel *The Martian* (filmed by Ridley Scott) plunges directly into creative technological problem solving. Tom Godwin's short story "The Cold Equations" has obsessed readers for decades, with its inevitable sacrifice of an innocent human life. Several themed anthologies include this word in their title. Gordon Dickson's "Dorsai" novels feature distilled aspects of human nature, and thus, explore deep philosophical issues.

Generation Ship stories are set aboard that type of spacecraft. Often those ships are so large, and the voyage so long, that (most or all of) its inhabitants consider other worlds to be the stuff of legend. The subgenre was pioneered by J. D. Bernal, with his 1929 novel *The World, The Flesh, & The Devil*. A popular example is Robert Heinlein's novel *Orphans of the Sky*. Another is the original *Star Trek* episode "For the World is Hollow and I Have Touched the Sky."

Gothic SF is an overlapping subgenre that slants toward the macabre, and deeply atmospheric settings, but not outright horror. ('Atmospheric' in a literary and cultural, not climatological, sense.) Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is often cited as the first such novel. Algis Budrys's novel *Rogue Moon* sets a determined pair against a deadly lunar enigma. Arthur C. Clarke's short story "A Walk in the Dark" is another example

Hard science fiction is a descriptive term. Stories in this broad subgenre depict technology that conforms to actual scientific knowledge and physical laws, or extensions of them that scientists consider plausible. Arguably, certain exceptions include favored 'tropes' such as antigravity and FTL travel. The works of A.C. Clarke and Isaac Asimov stand out among numerous examples. (One SF genre publication that maintains this 'hard' standard is *Analog* magazine.)

Hollow Earth tales are just that, set within a putatively hollow (or at least honeycombed) planet Earth. The flagship of this subgenre is Jules Verne's novel *Journey to the Center of the Earth*. Michael Flynn's novella "Where the Winds Are All Asleep" is a modern homage. A popular variant is the aquatic-cavern-filled planet Naboo in the "Star Wars" franchise.

Horrific SF is closely linked to the 'horror' genre, and while it's often bloody, science is crucial to each premise. In Sharman DiVono's novel *Blood Moon*, an entire lunar base goes slowly insane. Most examples of this subgenre are short stories, such as Michael Shea's "The Autopsy," Simon Ings's "The Wedding Party," and Terry Bisson's "Necronauts."

Hyperspace stories include that extra-dimensional realm as a setting. The pioneering classic of this subgenre is Edward Abbot's 1884 novel *Flatland, a Romance of Many Dimensions*, although our familiar third dimension is the "extra" one. Greg Egan's novel *Diaspora* includes rigorous, mind-stretching depictions of a fourth-spatial-axis realm. In some tales (often less rigorously), hyperspace allows the characters to travel rapidly between star systems (and/or time periods, etc.), or there might be human dwellings and/or

aliens within that arcane realm. A good example is *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, with its mysterious wormhole-dwelling 'prophet' aliens.

Immortality is a subgenre featuring humans or aliens with that vaunted attribute. (Characters who live effectively forever, or at least for millennia.) It might be humans with a rare mutation that's allowed them to survive since ancient times, or a future scientific development. Often these long-lived characters allow for vivid depictions of history. A fine example is Poul Anderson's novel *The Boat of a Million Years*.

Invisibility is the central attribute of these stories' main characters. Plato launched the subgenre with his allegorical tale of *The Ring of Gyges*. H.G. Wells made this scientific with his classic novel *The Invisible Man*. 'Cloaking devices' have now become very common in science fiction.

Kaiju or *Tokusatsu* is a Japanese subgenre, long popular in the rest of the world. These epics always feature one or more *kaiju*, meaning big powerful quirky monsters. A major example is the "Godzilla" franchise, and that creature's American counterpart King Kong.

Lesbian subgenre tales feature women with that orientation as main characters. These stories became popular in the 1970s, and are more common than gay male themes. Sherri S. Tepper's novel *The Gate to Women's Country* depicts a planet divided by gender. Nicola Griffith's novel *Ammonite* takes this two steps further, with a colony planet that's entirely female, and which doesn't refer to males even once.

Light or Humorous tales are exactly that. This laugh-out-loud subgenre includes John Sladek's novel *Mechasm*, Douglas Adams' "Hitchhiker's Guide" novels, Rudy Rucker's novel *Master of Space and Time*, and many others.

Lost Worlds (mysterious islands) This subgenre is one of the oldest SF varieties. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's novel *The Lost World*, based upon South America's then-mysterious 'tepui' plateaus, lent its very name to this subgenre. Later novels 'discover' isolated valleys in central Asia or elsewhere. John Darnton's novel *Neanderthal*, which overlaps with 'adventure,' is one example. Television's popular series *Lost*, from J.J. Abrams, expanded the tradition with its bizarre isolated island. (While not SF, the book and movie *Life of Pi* include a strange unknown island.)

Math is a tiny subgenre, similar to 'gedanken' and 'hyperspace' science fiction. These stories center around actual mathematical concepts. Douglas Hofstadter's scholarly tome *Godel, Escher, Bach* uses short fictional stories as illustrations. Catherine Asaro's novella "The Spacetime Pool" features life-and-death math puzzles. Vandana Singh's short story "Infinites" is based upon math's most profound concepts.

Media tie-in (game-based, Star Trek novels, etc.) This is a self-explanatory subgenre. Whether originally a book, a video game, or a screenplay, the novel versions build upon these tale's on-screen popularity. These stories must conform to strict rules, like not allowing the main characters to change very much, so that they'll continue to match the

series' canon. (Often these books have a huge marketing budget, and they tend to dominate chain bookstore shelves.)

Microbiological SF stories feature tiny life-forms, whether Earthly or alien, as a dominating force. They might cause a disease, or act as a transforming agent, deliberately or not. Greg Bear's novel *Blood Music* is a good example. Janine Ellen Young's novel *The Bridge* is another.

Military is a huge subgenre, with its own specialized publications. Soldiers and warfare are central to these stories. Some are near-future, and depict humans fighting each other. Others span star systems and even whole galaxies, with vast ongoing conflicts with aliens. David Drake and Elizabeth Moon are masters of this field, while Joe Haldman's novel *The Forever War* will soon be filmed. David Feintuch's "Hope" novels essentially translate the 19th century's British Royal Navy into outer space. (Usually the humans and aliens are closely matched, lest it become a rather short Bambi-vs.-Godzilla type story.)

Mind Transfer is what takes place in this subgenre. A conscious mind is downloaded into a computer system, or shifted (or swapped) into another human brain. (Robert Heinlein's novel *Time Enough for Love* ends up with three separate minds within one female body.) Such a transfer might be permanent or temporary, and the process may allow for one or more copies to exist at once. The early *Star Trek* episode "Turnabout Intruder" is a famous example, and Paul Flaherty's film *18 Again!* a lighthearted one. In David Brin's novel *Kiln People*, humans send out temporary/disposable 'golem' copies of themselves, to have specific experiences then return with those memories.

Multiverse stories feature multiple universes, often with differing versions of our familiar Earth. This subgenre assumes that some variant of the Multiverse/Landscape cosmological theory is true. There is always some way (whether secret or common) to travel between the universes, or at least to communicate. Michael Kube-McDowell's novel *Alternates* is a fine example. The TV series *Sliders* was another.

Mundane SF is a descriptive category. It features near-future stories, without any improbable technologies, or interplanetary settings, at least beyond what known spacecraft can reach. (It's regarded as a controversial 'movement' within the SF community, and magazine issues and anthologies have begun to feature it, sometimes as a book title.)

Mythological stories depict aliens and/or humans using high-tech means to recreate mythological settings, and the seemingly magical powers of the ancient gods. For example, Dan Simmons' novel *Ilium* brings an idyllic Mount Olympus and the bloody Trojan War to Mars--sort of. In Roger Zelazney's classic novel *Lord of Light*, the main characters employ technology to cast themselves as deities from the mythology of India. An example from TV is the *Star Trek* original-series episode "Who Mourns for Adonais?" (Plus a recent web-based follow-up show, reprising the same actor as Apollo.)

New Wave SF was a movement and a literary style, beginning in England and spreading to the USA and beyond. Michael Moorcock launched the trend in 1964, and Harlan Ellison's

two "Dangerous Visions" anthologies are now viewed as its high point. This subgenre rose and fell with western society's embrace of 1960s radicalism, and desire to 'shock the bourgeoisie.' (Echoes of the movement have affected SF, and literature in general, ever since.)

Nanopunk is a narrow subgenre, and one of cyberpunk's many offshoots. It explores to effects of advanced nanotechnology on humanity. Linda Nagata's novel *Tech Heaven* is the principal example, while Michael Crichton's novel *Prey* introduced the concept to the mainstream.

Occupational (accountants, drivers, plumbers, sales reps, etc.) This subgenre encompasses a wide reach, and yet remains unusual. It features blue collar protagonists, on Earth or in recognizable circumstances, rather than hifalutin scientists or astronauts. The hero of John DeChancie's novel *Starrigger* is a truck driver. Piers Anthony's novel *Hard Sell* realistically depicts several workaday occupations. Most other examples are short stories.

Parallel Universe SF is quite similar to the 'multiverse' subgenre. What makes this subgenre distinct is that the other universe(s) can be very strange, with differing physical laws, etc. Isaac Asimov's novel *The Gods Themselves* is a classic example, with its utterly strange intelligent aliens. Greg Egan's novel *The Clockwork Rocket* (and its sequels) depict the strange physics of an alternate cosmos, with rigorous charts.

Pastoral or Small Town SF takes place in that sort of setting. (Most SF is urban, at least when taking place on Earth.) Clifford Simak's classic novel *Way Station* is set entirely in rural Wisconsin, while the heroine of Kay Kenyon's novel *Leap Point* is a small-town lass.

Planes of Existence (altered consciousness) This subgenre also resembles the 'multiverse' category. In this case, the other planes are often 'psychic' or 'spiritual' in nature, and are reachable by altering one's state of awareness. The novel *India's Story*, by Kathlyn S. Starbuck, depicts its young heroine India experiencing multiple states of consciousness via meditation, drugs, etc. Another example is Howard Hendrix's novel *Standing Wave*. (In most such tales, this goes beyond passive experience, into 'granting' the characters special powers.)

Planetary Romance is an overlapping subgenre that shades into the vast 'romance' genre. In this case, the love story is embedded in futuristic (or fantastical) technology, and the striving lovers can be separated by more than Earthly distances. Edgar Rice Burroughs' "Barsoom" series features luscious Martian princesses, while Andrew M. Greeley's novel *Final Planet* does a good job of fusing these often disparate literary styles. Lee and Miller's "Liaden" series has a devoted following.

Post-apocalyptic stories are set well after some vast upheaval. Rather than showing the immediate aftermath, these tales depict a new society that has arisen from the ashes, usually here on Earth. Often the survivors remain leery of technology, as in Edgar Pangborn's classic novel *Davy*. (Its Holy Murcan Church maintains a ban on gunpowder, along with "anything else that might reasonably be construed to contain atoms.")

Postcyberpunk describes a narrow and indistinct subgenre. These stories break with the tropes (such as cynical young hackers in garish night clubs) that dominated the cyberpunk trend. Usually set on Earth, these stories make a conscious effort to be more positive. One example is Greg Bear's novel *Queen of Angels*.

Posthumanism is a subgenre tied to a philosophical type movement. (Going beyond the perceived limits of traditional Humanism, as expressed in fiction.) In practice it's very close to the 'transhumanism' subgenre, and is controversial even to define. Charles Stross's novel *Accelerando* is one example.

Progenitive SF is a small subgenre, which features humans and/or aliens who create science fiction of their own. One example is Vernor Vinge's novel *Grimm's World*, in which seagoing humans on another planet operate a respected science fiction magazine. "The Garden: A Hwarhath Science Fiction Romance," by Eleanor Arnason, is a short SF story told by aliens. In the *Star Trek: DS9* TV episode "Far Beyond the Stars," Sisko is shown as a 1940s SF author, imagining his future starfaring self.

Pulp SF is a purely descriptive category. The old SF magazines were one of many varieties of 'pulp fiction' literature, with a distinct style and format. Usually their cover art was garish, featuring brutish monsters, heroic spacemen, and scantily-clad women in distress. "Amazing Stories" was perhaps the subgenre's best-known publication. (This subgenre has been revived again and again over the decades, and in our current politically-correct times it has produced much controversy.)

Recursive SF is comprised of stories that include direct references to the SF genre, and/or SF authors. A mind-bending example is the novel *Venus on the Half Shell*, "written" by Kilgore Trout, a pseudonym of Philip Jose Farmer. Trout is actually a fictional SF writer created by author Kurt Vonnegut. The protagonist makes frequent mention of his own favorite writer, a galactically-famous SF author. (*Venus*'s first edition does not mention Farmer at all!) Another example is HG Stratmann's short story "Wilderness Were Paradise Enow," which mentions plenty of SF-genre trivia.

Religious (alien faiths, Hindu, Islamic, Jewish, etc.) These stories involve characters with a distinct religion, which gives meaning and motivation to their lives, although this isn't always explored in much depth. ('Christian' tales are common enough for a separate category.) Kay Kenyon's well-thought-out novel *The Braided World* describes a strange alien priesthood (and biology), which the human visitors must struggle to understand. Islamic tales center upon characters, and/or entire societies, of that faith. Donald Moffitt's novel *A Gathering of Stars* features an interstellar Muslim civilization, while in Nancy Kress's novel *An Alien Light* the derivation is more subtle. Ahmed Khan's recent anthology *A Mosque Among the Stars* has a fine variety of stories. Jewish SF features characters of that faith. WR Yates's novel *Diasporah* is set in a huge orbital colony which has replaced a destroyed Israel. Hindu tales center on that faith, but remain quite rare. (India itself has a growing native-languages SF market, however very little has been translated into English.)

A few subgenre stories focus on other human faiths, whether current, in the future, or via time travel.

Restored Eden tales are set in the mid-to-far future, here on Earth. In this subgenre most of humanity has gone on to other worlds, and the Earth has healed (all or in part, and naturally or with subtle help) into a renewed paradise. Arthur C. Clarke's novel *Against the Fall of Night* describes the technological redoubt of Diaspar and the natural haven of Lys. Clifford Simak's novel *City* populates the wildlands of a future Earth with speaking dogs and intelligent ants.

Retro-futurism is a subgenre that celebrates the 'pulp' SF stories of the past. Most of these depictions are in comic books, and revive the garish cover art and 'fifties' style of the past.

Robot SF tales are self-explanatory. In a sense, the concept of robots predates SF itself. The ancient Greeks told of the smith Hephaestus and his bronze guardian Talos, and the Chinese of Yan Shi's clever artificial man. Isaac Asimov's many "Robot" stories are a preeminent modern example. One of the earliest novels is *Adam Link*, by Eando Binder.

Science Fantasy is an overlapping subgenre, comprised of stories that meld the SF and Fantasy genres, and tilt toward SF because they feature advanced technology such as spacecraft. Many of the works of Andre Norton, and Anne McCaffrey's "Pern" franchise, fit this subgenre.

Science Tales are intended for children. They depict common futuristic activities such as space travel, but without so much scientific rigor. A famous literary example is the book *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupery. Some of the "TinTin" graphic novels, by Herge, fit this category.

Scientific Romance* is an old description, primarily British, that predates the wide use of the term Science Fiction. It has seen occasional revivals, making it a subgenre.

Shapeshifting tales are a staple of speculative fiction. As an SF subgenre, this ability is explained in scientific terms. It varies from gradual cellular alteration to a near-instantaneous ability to change size and form. John Campbell's 1938 short story "Who Goes There," filmed several times as *The Thing*, is a stellar example. (Many such tales ignore the issue of mass. The creature becomes an elephant, then a mouse, so how much does the mouse weigh?)

Shrinking/Enlarging Humans (endless, episodic, giantess) This subgenre is self-descriptive, and has a long tradition, merging back into mythology. In the short story "He Who Shrank," by Henry Hesse, the protagonist keeps right on shrinking, visiting a succession of 'atom-as-galaxy' worlds. Lewis Carroll's novel *Alice in Wonderland* depicts Alice growing and shrinking in a mysterious fashion. Giantess stories are epitomized by the film *Attack of the 50 Foot Woman*, from Nathan Juran. (They often feature a sexual element, though in that film the woman's clothes grew along with her.)

Social SF is a wide subgenre, which combines anthropology with futuristic themes. Its focus is on the social aspects of a distant society, rather than fancy technology. Isaac Asimov's short story "Nightfall" is a classic example.

Soft SF is cast as the literary opposite of 'hard' SF. More precisely, it focuses on the future development of the 'soft' sciences (the humanities), rather than gadgetry. Ursula LeGuin's "Hainish" novels are good examples. Isaac Asimov's "Foundation" novels feature a predictive social science called Psychohistory.

Space Opera (noir) This is a huge descriptive category. The subgenre features swashbuckling action, set in a vast panorama. There are countless examples, and almost all of the most popular SF novels and films, such as *Star Wars*, are usually included. Often they have elements resembling 'fantasy,' which are assumed to be technological, but there's no explanation provided. ^[L]^[SEP]Noir tales are an homage to darker-toned tales of the past, such as Raymond Chandler's distinctive style. Ron Goulart's SF novels do this well.

Sports SF is a tiny subgenre, represented mostly (if not exclusively) in short stories. In a few stories, an alien visitor shows a love for baseball. Most of the others depict the impact of modern science, and genetic engineering in particular, on professional sports. *Analog* magazine has run several of these in recent years. (Jack Haldeman, brother of the better-known Joe, has written numerous short stories in this subgenre.)

Spunky Heroine tales feature one as their protagonist, to the point they're usually referred to "by" her, more than by their plot or premise. David Palmer's novel *Emergence*, featuring young Candy Smith-Foster, is a great example, as is its long-awaited sequel *Tracking*. Another is Alexei Panshin's novel *Rite of Passage*, with the adventures of young Mia Haverro; plus *Reefsong* by Carol Severance, with its transformed Angie Dinsman.

SpyFi is a descriptive category that brings espionage into the future, with clever high-tech duels. Often the technological gadgets are "way over the top," in a spoofish fashion. The Daniel Mann film *Our Man Flint* is a fine example. (By some definitions the 'fi' means general fiction, and this category is defined more broadly.)

Steampunk (clockpunk, Gaslamp or gaslight, weird west) ^[L]^[SEP]This is a rapidly-growing subgenre. Such tales are usually set in the Victorian era, and presume that its characters have developed a form of high-tech at that time. (Some of these tales include a sort of restrained magic.) The novel *Anti-Ice*, by Stephen Baxter, includes a newly-discovered heat source much more potent than coal. ^[L]^[SEP]Gaslight stories are defined a little more narrowly. Ron Miller's anthology *Astronauts By Gaslight* has five stories which actually date from the Victorian era. ^[L]^[SEP]Weird West tales are set in the frontier USA, and many feature real-life pioneers and inventors. Michael Piller's short-lived TV show *Legend* starred John de Lancie as Nikola Tesla. ^[L]^[SEP](The Steampunk subgenre has spawned an entire artistic and cultural movement, with functional costumes and more.)

Sword and Planet SF brings a medieval aspect to interstellar space. Poul Anderson's "English Empire" novels literally transport English knights into rulership of alien worlds.

Synthetic Biology stories feature artificial life forms. It's a small subgenre, and its protagonists are often biologists who crack the secret of creating life. Linda Nagata's novel *Limit of Vision* depicts a created-then-evolving new lifeform called LOVs.

Terraforming SF centers around vast projects, with the characters busy altering whole planets (such as Mars) to make them more earthlike and habitable. Kim Stanley Robinson's epic "Mars" series is a good example. (The term itself was coined by SF author Jack Williamson, back in the 1940s.)

Time Travel (timepunk) ^[L]_[SEP] This is a vast subgenre, whether or not its protagonist travels in space as well. In these stories, this capability is possible, and is put to use by the characters -- in secret or in public, easily or with great difficulty, and rarely or often. The effects of such temporal ventures vary in each portrayal. (With paradoxes, new timelines, historical immutability, etc.) ^[L]_[SEP] Poul Anderson's novel *The Time Patrol* is a prestigious example. Neal Asher's *Cowl* and Paul Levinson's *The Plot to Save Socrates* are novels which depict the extreme complexities implicit in time travel. ^[L]_[SEP] As a spinoff of cyberpunk, timepunk is more outrageous.

Transhumanism is the philosophy which imbues this subgenre. It depicts the possible transformations that human beings may experience in the future, from helpful improvements to total alterations. Bruce Sterling's "Mechanist and Shaper" novels are a pioneering example.

Undersea SF takes place in such an environment, usually here on Earth. For this subgenre, Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* is a cornerstone. Several of Arthur C. Clarke's early novels fit this category.

Utopian (19th century visions*, ideological, New Age, etc.) ^[L]_[SEP] This thought-provoking subgenre got its name from Thomas More's 1516 novel *Utopia*, though by modern standards that eponymous country has plenty of drawbacks, such as penal slavery. Edward Bellamy's 1888 novel *Looking Backward* is imaginative--and eerily prescient. ^[L]_[SEP] Charlotte Perkins Gilman's 1915 novel *Herland* is a feminist classic, and depicts a remote, ideal society comprised entirely of women. In Ernest Callenbach's novel *Ecotopia*, the west coast has become an independent 'Green' paradise. ^[L]_[SEP] Thea Alexander's novel *2150 AD* is a classic in New Age circles. ^[L]_[SEP] (There are many other utopian novels in print, though for debatable reasons, modern SF is often more cynical and jaded.)

Voyages Extraordinaires* was a descriptive attached to the groundbreaking novels of Jules Verne, and then to several of his imitators (also French).

Wetware Computer SF is a narrow subgenre, featuring 'wetware' (living biological) technology, as opposed to 'hardware computer' devices. These stories depict the invention and/or the actions of an artificial thinking brain.

World-building stories are exhaustively researched, and feature unusual planets as a setting. Usually exotic aliens have evolved there, and humans can visit only with difficulty, if at all. Hal Clement's novel *Mission of Gravity*, and Robert Forward's novels *Rocheworld* and *Dragon's Egg* are extreme examples. Jack Vance's novel *Big Planet* is set on exactly that, though most unusually, without a huge amount of mass-thus-gravity.

World Government SF features a world (usually Earth) ruled by a unified government. In many stories it's a monarchy, and often a corrupt one; however there is plenty of variety. Robert A. Heinlein's novel *Starship Troopers* depicts a federation governed by military veterans. (It bears little resemblance to the movie version!) In the "Star Trek" franchise, contact with aliens prompts humanity to unite at long last.

Xenofiction is a subgenre that features cultures extremely different from our familiar ones. For example, Iain M. Bank's novel *Excession* features huge sentient spaceships. Ian McDonald's novel *The Broken Land* has disembodied human heads (supported by an advanced if undescribed technology) acting as willful characters. *The Star Trek* canon's Borg are another popular example.

Historical Fiction Sub-genres

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What is historical fiction? An accepted definition is that it is fiction set 50 or more years ago and requires a writer's reliance on research. Sir Walter Scott in England began the genre we recognize as historical fiction, but its origins lie in the more distant past. Historical fiction's appeal has not dulled over time, although it has reached new heights from the 1990s to the present.

Over time, this genre has developed more than 10 identifiable subgenres.

Traditional Historical Fiction: The traditional form is what is generally thought of as historical fiction. It typically has a historically accurate plot. Seminal examples among modern writers include Colleen McCullough's "Masters of Rome" series, and Sharon Kay Penman's books set in the Middle Ages of Great Britain and France.

Multi-Period Epics, Series, and Sagas: James Michener's "Chesapeake" covered the history of a location from its Native American past to modern times. Norah Loft's "The Suffolk Trilogy" covered the history of one house from the 14th century to the 1950s. The "North and South" trilogy by John Jakes is a saga of how the Civil War tests the ties of two families, a Northern family from Pennsylvania and a Southern one from South Carolina.

Historical Romantic Fiction: An example of historical romantic fiction is Anya Seton's "Katherine" about a real-life love story between the Plantagenet John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster and Katherine Swynford, Geoffrey Chaucer's sister-in-law.

Historical Western Fiction: These comprise stories about the American West. How they cover the subject matter has evolved since they were first written in the 1800s, shifting from an unsympathetic view of Native Americans to a more sympathetic perspective in recent time.

Mysteries, Thrillers, and Adventure Novels: An example of historical mysteries is Ellis Peters' series about crime-solving Brother Cadfael, a twelfth-century monk and herbalist. Peters' "Cadfael Chronicles" is credited with popularizing this subgenre. Historical thrillers include "Enigma" by Robert Harris, "The Coffee Trader" by David Liss, and "The Alienist" by Caleb Carr. Bernard Cornwell's series about Richard Sharpe is an example of historical adventure.

Time-Travel, Alternate Histories, Fantasy, Literary and Christian Novels: "The Shining Girls" by Lauren Beukes is a historical time-travel thriller, and "Connie Willis'" "Doomsday" is another example of time-travel historical novel. "The Years of Rice and Salt" by Kim Stanley Robinson is an example of an alternate history novel.

Michael Livingston's "Shards of Heaven," Tim Powers' "On Stranger Tides," and Susanna Clarke's "Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell" are examples of historical fantasy. Catherine Marshall's "Christy" is an example of a Christian historical fiction.