

Good evening all,

Wow, what a bumpy start :) I finally made it into my own classroom, all is right on Friday night as a college pal of mine used to say. We are still waiting on Yahoo to deign to allow at least one additional student onto the loop, so tonight I am going to start with a little intro and what to expect. I will kick us off in earnest with Lesson One on Monday. I had planned to start today so we would have more time for questions, but flexibility is the key to sanity or some such thing, so Monday for the official start will do just fine. Maybe the last of the gremlins will have moved on by then.

I wanted to welcome you all and introduce myself a bit more than the standard bio since we are going to be spending the next month together. I also wanted to share a bit about how my schedule goes so you all know what to expect. I will be posting lectures on Mondays and Thursdays for the next four weeks.

I am a night owl through and through. I work from about eight in the evening Pacific time to two or three in the morning. Most of my posts will be uber early am or very late at night, as will my responses to questions. I check the loop daily when I am teaching to make sure no one needs anything. You will get an answer to any questions within 24 hours of posting (sometimes much less depending on time of day) assuming Yahoo stays with us. I will be posting the regular text lectures here on the loop as well as actual PDF messages of the lessons in the files section. I teach on Yahoo fairly often and with the deterioration since Yahoo stopped supporting it I have observed the messages tend to post in the files section immediately regardless if the actual post gets lost in the either for a while. If you are looking for a post and don't see it yet, check the files, chances are it will be there and the actual post is floating through cyber spaces somewhere to arrive when it sees fit.

You are welcome to email me questions directly (meriengrey@yahoo.com) if you are not comfortable posting a question and I will repost it with an answer without referencing you personally. I am not a judgmental instructor and ANY question is worth answering and posting (unless you specifically ask me not to). I am a big believer that if one person is wondering something others are too. I also don't mind lurkers. We all have deadlines, families and commitments. If you are taking this class in particular my goal is not to give you one more thing to do or to set on your shelf to do later. If you can't follow along every day I completely understand. There will not be homework for this class. I will ask you to consider things, make some lists, etc. but these will all be for your personal assessment of your situation and in no way any business of the rest of the class. I will share some of my own plans, goals, and lists for the classes benefit as examples, and you may share things you discover if you like, but are under no requirement or obligation to do so.

For other ways to contact me, I am on Twitter and Facebook under Merien Grey. If you want to follow or friend me now, or in the future, I don't mind answering questions on the content of this course or any other I teach on those platforms. I'll be honest though, I don't check Twitter very

often...sorry, not sorry.

So...let me introduce myself properly. I am unpublished in Regency and Contemporary Military Romance with debut novels in each genre coming out as soon as my media company slows down enough to allow it. I have been published extensively in in-house (meaning within the US Government) military intelligence publications (non-fiction, weapons and threat analyst material), to include a bi-weekly column, but I can't very well offer that up for review due to classification of the material, apologies on that score. Also, while very interesting to me, for someone not in that field many of those articles are what I refer to as coffee reads, as in you need copious amounts of coffee to get through them.

I began learning project management during the ten years I spent in the United States Air Force. I use it in my company and my own home every day. And since I married a twenty three year US Army Ranger he understands how things "should" work and we can come to even terms pretty quickly on getting things done. We both understand the process and are able to get a tremendous amount of work complete without duplicating effort. We are extremely busy with work and our daughter and we still find time to homeschool, do things, and play with the dog.

I run my own media company and homeschool my daughter. That sounds like a lot you might say, or you might say I am a lunatic. I hear both in equal measure. It is a lot. But my family has very specific goals which made it possible for us to organize and plan in such a way that we could get the jobs and school done. Here is the kicker...we do it without going crazy, feeling guilty or just simply putting it off until we lost hope of doing it at all. We reorganized after I had a very serious accident a few years back and reprioritized everything around our family and how we really wanted to allocate our time. We also realized the importance of the concept of "the one thing". We will talk more about that later.

Back to my credentials, after my time dragging myself from one end of the world to the other for ten years, I became a 911 operator for several years. What does that have to do with writing? Nothing. However, it did teach me to be extremely decisive and put me in the habit of addressing problems, devising a plan, setting a course of action in motion and completing the task or solving the problem and moving on to the next issue as expediently as I could manage. Having lives on the line if I didn't do a good job meant the learning curve was VERY steep. It was a trial by fire, but I learned some amazing techniques for concentration, focus, a good measure of self-awareness on how I work and function, how to control environmental distractions, maximize incremental achievement, handle a ton of details at once (without multitasking because that is a myth, it is scientifically proven that it doesn't work), and making sense of those details without getting overwhelmed. Those parts did translate to being an author and a CEO.

This class isn't just about finishing a book. It is about learning how to keep your dreams alive and stay sane doing so. It is about how to not give up, or not end up in tears occasionally because you can't seem to make any progress. It's about how to go to sleep each night knowing you are a little bit closer to your heart's desire than you were when you woke up that morning. It is about finding a way to stay on top of the sea of chores, obligations, and expectations to meet the goals you set. Will we get there in four weeks? No, not completely, but we will get you a good start

and give you the tools to get on track to get there eventually, which is what matters, that you DO get there. In this race, it only matters that you run it with vigor and effort, not how long it takes or if you get there before everyone else. It is also about not killing yourself along the way.

I only have two class rules. One, be nice or be gone. Two, please keep sidebars off loop.

I am at your disposal for the next month and am happy to answer anything I can on any of the above or anything else.

If you want to put a few lines out there about who you are please feel free, no pressure either way. We are currently have a handful of students and I usually get a few more the first few days. I love teaching this class with a smaller number of students since we can sometimes get into quite detailed and interesting discussions. At the end of the class I will give you all a password to a student access page on my website that has all the material I post for the class so if Yahoo abandons us in a major way you will have ample opportunity to gather all the materials before we are done.

I want to welcome each and every one of you and hope you get what you are looking for out of the class. So post your intros if you like otherwise I will see you back here Monday for Lesson One. :D

Once again, thanks for coming!

Warm Regards,

Merien Grey