

Title of Session: Battles

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Curriculum: NOVICE and ADVANCED

Definition: Battles are not always epic. Often times we write about character battles that have to do with inner self. There can be battles between 2 characters (duals), and some may entail raiding small towns with only a few in a posse wreaking havoc.

Goals: To effectively write a believable small battle scene or dual.

Tools:

Flip chart or wipe off board and appropriate markers

3 x 5 cards

Ice Breaker:

On the 3 x 5 cards write a scenario that has to do with either an inner battle, a dual, or a small battle.

Examples (you can use these, or make up your own):

- ✓ While grieving, you're still deciding whether to get the new pet you just confirmed since the one you had just passed away. You know the pet won't be like the last one, but you want another pet really bad. Your decision has to be made in a couple of days as the people are coming to deliver your new pet. You are driving yourself crazy trying to make a decision.
- ✓ You saw a ghost, you're sure of it, but you don't know whether to tell anyone or not. You have become riddled with self doubt.
- ✓ You are one of three elves now fighting off an ogre you came upon very early in the journey to save your land. The ogre is starting to get weak, but you hear another one coming.
- ✓ You have studied sword fighting all your life but never had the chance to put it to use. An enemy has been hunting you down, and you have been able to escape thus far. Now you've decided to turn the tables and hunt down your enemy to fight one on one.
- ✓ You and your small band of thieves have gotten word that a certain town's inhabitants have become wealthy because they all possess a highly sought after commodity, one that you and your thieves need to survive. There's 100 inhabitants in the town, but you only have 5 in your band of thieves.
- ✓ You're behind the controls of a single space craft in the midst of a heated battle with the enemy. You're fighting as a team, but you still feel all alone in your space craft flying through the vastness of space.

- ✓ You and your crew have just landed on a planet you all thought was undiscovered. You see no inhabitants, but there is a force causing you to fight one on one with each other.
 - ✓ It's only you and your dragon headed for an entire village filled with evil dwellers. As you enter the town you are met face to face you're your worst enemy, however time is running out and there is one good soul you must save.
 - ✓ You had an experience that you believe led to a special power being instilled, though you don't know what it is. You confide in your friends, but they're just not getting it. You and your friends end up entering an abandoned warehouse and zombies attack.
 - ✓ You're in love, but the one you're in love with doesn't even know you exist...because you are a ghost from the past who has now fallen in love with a mortal, a relationship that will never happen. You are battling the feelings of love and hate deep inside your vaporous soul.
- Separate enthusiasts into teams of 2-4
 - Have groups draw one "battle" from the hat
 - Go around the room asking each group of enthusiasts how their particular drawn inner battle, dual, or small battle would play out. Ask what kind of weapons would you use, would you strategize with a team or take it upon yourself to fight, would you call for a team if you were alone, is your "back up" hidden in the surrounding caves or under the water, etc.

Activity:

- When it comes to battles, not all have to be epic, and not all have to be in fantasy or science fiction settings.
- Both small and epic battles are fought in numerous genres: historical fiction, war stories, romance novels, paranormal suspense, and cozy mysteries to name a few.
- Battle sizes and styles can vary
 - Inner self battles (emotional, mental, health issues, etc.)
 - Duals (between 2 characters or a character and a "monster")
 - Small battles (a posse raiding a town, or a group or team encountering smaller battles all throughout the story)
- Battles don't always include tangible weapons. If a character is battling emotionally that character's feelings, attitude, words, and/or actions can be considered the weapons used to defeat their internal mind game.
- Small battles do not have to be characters battling characters. Single characters or groups of characters can battle a monster, a zombie, a ghost, or a colony of bats.

Battling obstacles is something a character or characters can do as they travel to their destination.

- Small battles can be enhanced by taking place in rough weather, wicked terrain, or confined quarters (a saloon, a cabin, a space craft, a cave, etc.).
 - Another thing to use to enhance smaller battles includes weaponry malfunctions: guns that run out of ammunition - swords that break - knives that get knocked out of hands, all causing the battles to become hand to hand combat for a good twist of events.

Keys to writing an effective small battle scene:

- Use short sentences
- Pacing should be fast
- Dialogue can be used, but keep it short and to the point. Avoid over use of descriptive beats in smaller battle dialogue.

Example of a dual using the above keys:

Even though Brut had ferocious wings and was over twice his size, Kevin threw the first punch.

It didn't phase Brut, he drew his ray gun.

Kevin ducked and rolled beneath the control panel.

Brut was quick to take aim. "You're trapped!"

"No I'm not..." Kevin pushed a secret button. "...You are!"

Brut looked up at the noise and saw a ring of knives falling out of the ceiling. He stumbled backwards and lost his grip on the gun.

Kevin crawled for the sliding ray gun. "AAAAAHHHH!" A racing knife pinned his hand inches from the weapon. He reached with his other hand, but not in time.

Brut got to his feet. In three strides he had his three-toed foot on Kevin's neck. Kevin heard the death-device on Brut's shoulder activate.

In an adrenaline rush Kevin clawed his free fingers along the floor. He felt the ray gun as Brut curled his toes harder. Kevin choked.

Brut laughed and shined the death-device's red laser in Kevin's eye. Brut growled, "I have you now, human space trash!"

Blinded, Kevin clutched the ray gun and pulled the trigger. Brut screeched and dropped. "I don't think so," Kevin gurgled.

On your flip chart or wipe off board write the following scenarios and have the enthusiasts choose one from each category and write their own battle in a few short sentences.

Inner self:

- She felt the knot form again in her stomach when she heard the words...
- He had always known right from wrong, but for some reason, this time, he could not figure out which was which.
- She could feel her head spinning inside, the decision had become a nightmare.
- He believed he had defeated the zombie.

Dual:

- David pulled his sword from its sheath and swung. But William, quick to see it coming, threw up his shield.
- Lacey thought her ability to outsmart her opponent would be enough.
- Ben could not stop staring at her fangs.
- Millie had escaped the clutches of her killer, but the thick forest made it hard to run. She knew she had to turn and fight.

Small Battle:

- Billy led the posse into town with their torches lit, their pistols by their sides, and ready for action.
- When Joshua heard the ruckus of the intruders pilfering the village, he nodded to his family, grabbed the magic sword, and they buried themselves beneath the floor boards of the cottage.
- Valerie stopped and her friends quieted. She gave the silent signal and she and the others dashed behind the rocks to hide from the...
- The elderly ladies had made up their minds that the group of robbers would get out alive.

Have enthusiasts choose one from each group and write a few short sentences to construct a portion of a battle scene.

Discussion:

- How many and what kinds battles have you encountered in life?
- What do you think is the best all time battle that has been written?
- Which kind of battle do you prefer to read? Epic, small, historical, fantasy, science fiction, etc.?

Session: Battle Scenes - Small

Creator: Janet Beasley

Handout: NOVICE and ADVANCED

Definition: Battles are not always epic. Often times we write about character battles that have to do with inner self. There can be battles between 2 characters (duals), and some may entail raiding a small town with only a few in a posse wreaking havoc.

Are battles only found in fantasy and science fiction?

No. Battles can be fought in a multitude of genres including historical fiction, war stories, romance, paranormal suspense, and cozy mysteries to name a few.

Keys to writing effective small battle scenes:

- Use short sentences
- Pacing should be fast
- Dialogue can be used, but keep it short and to the point. Avoid overuse of descriptive beats

What are some other weapons besides tangible weapons I can use to make my battle interesting?

- Character's feelings
- Character's emotions
- Character's attitude
- Character's words
- Character's actions

How do the above mentioned serve as effective weapons?

- The above mentioned all represent "invisible" weapons we use to battle our inner selves.
 - Words and actions are good "invisible" weapons to use in dual settings
 - Feelings and emotions do the job when it comes to inner self battles regarding love, rejection, abandonment, etc.
 - Actions work as "invisible" weaponry in any of the smaller battle styles.

Do battles always have to involve character to character, or inner self?

No.

- Single characters or groups can battle a monster, a zombie, a ghost, or a colony of bats.
- Battling obstacles is something a character or characters can do as they travel to their destination.

Can I mix both archaic and futuristic weaponry?

Absolutely...that is if you have both types of groups in your story. If your story is all archaic, or all futuristic, unless the two meet at some point, you need to stick with the kind of weaponry that best suits your era.

Can I have both immortal and mortal characters fighting in the same battle?

Yes. But beware that immortals **do not** die. If this is going to cause a problem you may want to rethink your strategy, create a way they become mortal so they can die, or even consider eliminating them from the battle.

What ideas could help me create an effective small battle?

Watch movies

Read battle scenes in other books

Listen to conversations around you when you're out and about

Pay attention to your daily lives and discover the small battles you face each day