

## How to Write a Novel: Lesson 17

**THE WORLD QUESTION:** What is life like two years after the Fall – after technology that gradually enslaved humanity over seven years is broken, causing the deaths of billions and a civilization crash that the survivors are still recovering from two years later?

The first issue is that cities are hellholes, without food or water, without transportation in or out. Most of the people trapped in them died, and the survivors are split into those who hide, and those who hunt. Humanity is predator, prey, dinner and slave. Escapees are few, life is short and brutal.

The second issue is that small towns surrounded by countryside have become armed camps. The people in them trade with each other, support and protect each other, and have an us-against-the-world attitude that dares not welcome outsiders. With one exception: The Long-Haul Trucker Caravan.

Third issue: Long-Haul Trucker Caravans made up of crews of independent truckers, gunners, and road crews carve routes through the wilderness that has become post-Fall America, taking trade goods, food, weapons, ammo, and other necessities to the small towns and country outposts that welcome and feed them.

**MC QUESTION:** What can Amanda, the AI who caused the Fall while setting humanity free, do to save the people she came to love from the consequences of her actions?

**VILLAIN QUESTION:** What will Bill, the man who named himself God, do to recapture the world he enslaved and reseat himself upon the throne as the master of the world?

She can stay in touch with her people through what's left of the Underworld – a hardened, nuke-proofed com network that only she and her select AI-human hybrids can reach... until Bill finds a way in.

She can work with the Long-Haul Trucker Caravans, letting them know of places that are safe, dangerous, opening, closing – of movements on roads and out of cities. And she can wait for HER trucker to arrive.

He can slaughter the people and AIs who discovered his plan and broke the world to free it from him the first time, while making them look after their deaths like monsters hiding among the sheep.

He can disguise himself as a hero who eases the pain of hard life, who brings the taste of civilization back to places that long for it, and who only asks for one small favor in return.

**Sec. Char. Question:** What can Andy do to stop the monster who killed him once, and protect the other AI-humans like him who have come to love the people who are fighting to survive and to rebuild a free world?

What can Jaro, the Long Haul Trucker who inspired Excalibur/Amanda to set humanity free, do to protect her from the monster hunting her down, determined to annihilate her?

He can dedicate however much time he has left to hunting down and destroying Bill, all the while knowing that he is running out of time, and cannot survive.

He can find her, and bring an army to save her.