

Chapter One

Young Writers Conference



“Unwrapping Your Characters” by Riley Redgate (Workshop)

The heart of a book is the characters who populate it. In this seminar you’ll learn one pathway to creating a cohesive, fully developed character: someone whose characteristics explain each other, while allowing that character to remain unpredictable in the way real people are.

“Plotting from the Dreaded Middle” by Joan He (Workshop)

Want to judge the strength of a plot? Look no further than the middle. In “Plotting from the Dreaded Middle”, Joan will unpack the common pitfalls that lead to “saggy” or “murky” middles, which are often symptoms of other story problems—namely character. Character and plot are frequently pitted against each other, with stories being categorized as “character-driven” or “plot-driven,” but this dichotomy is dangerous. Through case studies of popular YA books, Joan will explain why character must be developed with plot in mind, and how the premise is more than just a set-up. Understanding how characters and premises serve the plot allows a writer to successfully subvert reader expectations and create the most mind-blowing of twists that still feel true to the story’s heart.

“Creating Anticipation: How to Keep Pages Turning” by Katy Rose Pool (Workshop)

What makes a reader keep reading? What makes a book “unputdownable”? You don’t have to write a fast-paced action-packed story to keep readers engaged, and in this workshop we’ll discuss the different tools that writers use to make their readers desperate to find out what happens next.

“Why Am I Doing This?” by Francesca Zappia (Keynote Address)

In the past few years, Francesca realized that she grew up doing a lot of things on autopilot—including writing. After college, she no longer had the structure to her life that school provided, and her writing suffered for it. She had to reteach herself *why* she did the things she did, and in doing this she remembered that she writes because she loves it. This keynote will address how to keep sight of our reasons for creating stories, and how to harness those reasons.

“The Future Is Now: Readings by the Authors of Tomorrow” (Readings)

One of the hardest parts of being a young writer is the struggle to get your work in front of an audience. This year, Ch1Con wants to make that a little easier by hosting an hour-long open mic reading toward the end of the conference. Attendees will have the opportunity to take center stage and read aloud excerpts from their latest works and works-in-progress.

“Ask Us Anything” by Francesca Zappia, Joan He, Katy Rose Pool, & Riley Redgate; moderated by Emma Rose Ryan & Julia Byers (Panel)

Ask the conference speakers all your burning questions. Want to know their tips for querying? How to find time to juggle writing and adulting? Who their OTPs are? Nothing’s too out there.