

Kathryn Craft is the award-winning author of two works of psychological women's fiction (*The Art of Falling* and *The Far End of Happy*, Sourcebooks), some 200 essays on story craft and the writing life, and a guide for writers, *Crafting Story Movement*. She has bachelor's and master's degrees in education. Since starting her developmental editing business in 2006, she has delivered well-received presentations, sat on panels, and led workshops on topics related to story craft. Venues include:

Women's Fiction Writers Association (keynote) • Pennwriters Conference (keynote) • Black Diamond Writers Conference (keynote) • Philadelphia Writers' Conference • Writer Unboxed UnConference • American Society of Journalists and Authors • The Write Stuff Conference • Chicago Writers Conference • Just Write Conference • Lewes Writers Conference • Bucks County Book Festival • Easton Book Festival • Drexel University MFA • DeSales University MFA • Greater Lehigh Valley Writers Group • Brandywine Valley Writers • Main Line Writers • Valley Forge Romance Writers • Bucks County Romance Writers • South Jersey Writers • Long Beach Island Writers • Wilmington Writers • Good Day PA (ABC) • WDIY (NPR) as well as bookstores, libraries, schools, community groups, rehab centers, and book clubs in PA, DE, MD, NJ, NY, MA, OH

Sample Craft Talks

RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARCS

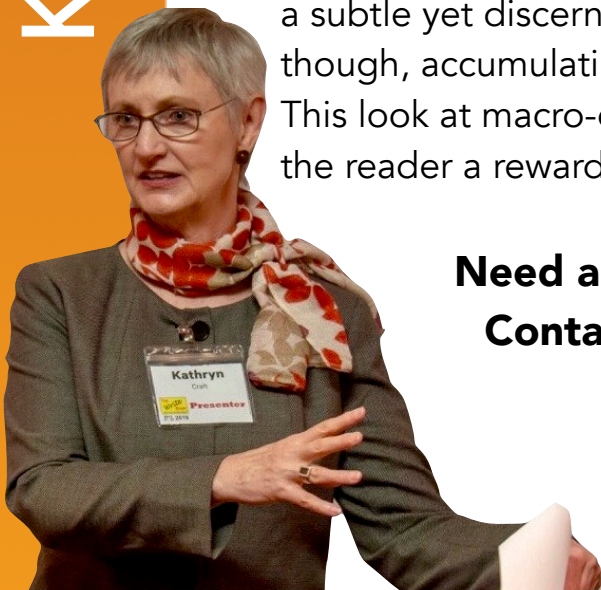
A story isn't powerful because of what happens, but because of what changes in your characters *because* of what happens. Those changes allow the reader a sense of discovery as small shifts accrue meaning in a subtle yet discernible way. While writing a book-length project, though, accumulating detail can obscure clear character development. This look at macro-editing will help you build character arcs that offer the reader a rewarding experience.

Need a speaker for an upcoming writing event?

Contact me and let's bring story craft to life!

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RIVETING THE ARC: EMOTIONAL TURNING POINTS

None of us wants to go through life limited by our inadequacies, yet we all fear change. That's why we're drawn to those moments in story where the heightened senses of protagonist and reader converge to render believable transformation. Exquisitely wrought emotional turning points from bestselling authors will provide inspiration and craft to enliven your work-in-progress.

GET THAT STORY MOVING!

At the first indication you can't keep your story moving, your busy reader will move it for you—right off her nightstand. Even go-to scenes chock full of movement, like explosive action, combat, and sex, may not be able to salvage a stalled story. With examples from popular novels, this session will show why attention to story movement should be central to your storytelling efforts.

FINDING THE STORY IN TRUE EVENTS: CREATIVE NONFICTION

This session offers a fresh look at the story elements that can make your nonfiction read like a novel. Popular works of creative nonfiction will show how to hook the reader with the same kind of entertaining, important-seeming, and heart-warming material that makes true stories linger in the mind long after the book is closed.

TIPS FOR NOVELIZING TRUE EVENTS

Fiction allows us the freedom to delve deeper into issues we've experienced in our everyday lives without constraining us to true events, and gives us the tools to make our stories engaging. But predictable pitfalls abound. Here's how to steer clear of them.

HOW TO OVERCOME STORY IMPLAUSIBILITY

Circuses that arrive by night, meteors hollowed out for low-tech space travel, characters that narrate their own births—how can we make our readers *believe*? We'll analyze concrete techniques that best-selling authors use to navigate the implausible.

INVITE THE READER TO CO-CREATE

We've all heard the advice: "Show, don't tell." It's a great place to start. But indiscriminate "showing" can create walls of words that build a barrier between the author and reader. Examples from some of today's best-selling literary artists show us how to write in a way that will allow the reader's thoughts and memories to come to bear on the experience of reading.

THOSE CRITICAL FIRST PAGES

An agent's request for a full manuscript is so exciting for an aspiring author—but how much of your novel will an agent really read? Perhaps only a few paragraphs—about all you would give a book when browsing in the bookstore. We'll analyze opening pages that refused to let publishing industry pros go.

SELF-EDITING TIPS & TRICKS

Most of us learned to write in school. But did you ever learn to self-edit? These techniques will apply a spit shine to your work. You will leave with a checklist you can use for all of your projects.

DEVELOPING A CONFIDENT VOICE

Readers respond to confidence in an author's tone. It elevates prose beyond the ordinary. Inspires trust. Writers despair that author confidence is an intangible, bestowed by sensibility or absorbed by osmosis. Both may be true, but we can also rely on craft. Learn how to infuse your prose with confidence.

A CHARACTER WITH A PAST

Backstory can be an important ally to a storyteller—or an obstacle that tries a reader's patience. We'll talk about what to include, when to use it, ways to handle it, and problems that can arise.

HONING YOUR HOOK

The *hook* invites; the *inciting incident* launches. With examples from bestselling novels, we'll look at different ways this structural power couple can pluck your novel from a reader's growing "to-be-read" pile and turn it into a "must read now."

MAXIMIZING THE IMPACT OF YOUR PROSE

It's so disappointing when your reader forgets a character, fails to see the significance of a plot event, or—heaven help us—misses the point of our story altogether. In this session we'll analyze and discuss the ways master writers highlight important information in their prose—and then try our hand at directing the spotlight.

INCITE YOUR PROTAGONIST TO GO THE DISTANCE

When stories flag halfway through, it's often because the protagonist didn't start his journey with enough fuel in the story tank. That fuel comes from a well-fed inciting incident, which can be tricky to construct. We'll analyze the craft that feeds energy to this all-important story event and impel the protagonist on his way.

25 WAYS TO SCENE YOUR WAY THROUGH THE MIDDLE

We may have started our stories with a bang and be aiming toward a known ending, but ugh!—how do we keep things moving through the vast stretch that the three-act structure suggests is 50% of our novel? You'll leave with 25 ways to keep your story moving through its middle scenes.

TUNE YOUR STORYTELLING ENGINE

Many story problems—among them sagging middles, getting stuck, lack of tension, and meandering plot—can be traced to a problem in the engine you designed to drive the story. In this talk we'll look at modern storytelling structure and the way it can impel your characters and invest us in their dilemmas, all while creating heart-thumping tension, heart-breaking consequence, and heart-warming resolution.

SUMMON THE DARKNESS

Given real-life events in recent years, who would blame you for wanting to tell happy, hopeful stories? But the power of a hopeful story will be determined by how far into the darkness you are first willing to plunge your character. We'll look at how to set up the dark moment in your story to achieve the desired effect. You'll leave with a handy checklist to apply to your own manuscript.

POINT BEYOND THE END

The strength of its opening might get your project in the hands of an agent, but it will be sold word-of-mouth by its ending. We'll identify the structural elements that contribute to a satisfying ending so you can make sure that your project delivers—and continues to do so once the back cover is closed.

SPREAD YOUR STORY'S IMPACT

We want our stories to have a profound impact on the protagonist. But with each additional character affected, the story's impact will increase, making it feel more important. In this hands-on session, we'll look at ways to generate story movement by spreading those personal stakes across more shoulders.

WRITING THAT MATTERS

How do you write compelling material that stands out from the crowd? You write the piece that only you can write. In this talk, we will explore the myriad ways authors infuse their work with their own sensibilities. You'll leave with solid advice on how to create an authorial presence that will distinguish your work.

Sample Craft Workshops

SAY THAT AND MORE: WRITING EFFECTIVE DIALOGUE

After analyzing masterful dialogue passages, in-class exercises will challenge participants to improve their dialogue writing—and gain a whole new respect for this multi-tasking tool. (4 hours)

MAXIMIZING THE EMOTIONAL POTENTIAL OF YOUR NOVEL

What your reader wants most from your novel is an emotional experience. To that end, from story structure to narrative arcs to sentence-level examination, this workshop will explore craft that will help you create—within any genre—the kind of heart-thumping tension, heart-breaking consequence, and heart-warming resolution readers crave. (3 hours)

STORY SHRINK

You've compiled and polished 85k words into a novel only to find that now, to market it, you must remove most of them while still evoking its entirety. From manuscript to synopsis to pitch paragraph to logline, you'll learn how to pull this off without pulling out your hair, and leave with a new appreciation for the way this process will illuminate your writing. (Prerequisite: first draft of 1-page synopsis; 4 hours)

INCITE ME!

Something happened to your protagonist that tipped him out of his everyday existence to forever change his life. For this inciting incident to launch your protagonist's story and raise appropriate reader expectation, you must craft it carefully. In this advance submission workshop, Kathryn will review inciting incidents (2–5 pages), a short set-up for the scene, and a one-page synopsis. (Limit 10, 3-hours)

FIRST PAGE REBOOT

Powering up a story is so challenging that most of our writing mistakes are apparent on a story's first page—the very page the agent or editor or book buyer will peruse to gauge their interest. What needs to be there, and how do you include it all seamlessly? In this advance submission workshop, Kathryn will assess participants' first pages against a brief synopsis of the larger story to see what works and what could use revision. (Limit: 10; 2 hours)

I WROTE IT, NOW WHAT?

Buckle in—we're going to take a good hard look at what it really means to "develop" a work of writing. Hints: It isn't only about dotting your i's and crossing your t's, and it can't possibly be addressed in one additional draft. Attendees will leave with a game plan for how to organize a multiple-drafting process that will bring to fruition the full potential of their work. Prerequisite: a near-to-fully drafted novel. (90 minutes)

CREATING POWERFUL CHARACTERS

In this workshop, we'll explore the way aspects of craft—perspective, deep point of view, backstory, stakes, and more—converge to create a dynamic characterization that will bond the protagonist to the reader. (3 hours).

HEALING THROUGH WRITING

Writing is a great way to re-establish a sense of self when new circumstances seem formidable. It can help you find order amongst chaos, make complex feelings easier to manage, restore optimism, and feed your spirit. And who knows? What was once a journal entry may become a poem that touches another, a newspaper essay that rallies a community, a magazine article that raises awareness, or a memoir that establishes a legacy. Many of us stuff away uncomfortable feelings. This workshop will help you release them to the page. (2 hours)

GOOD FROM PAGE ONE

This workshop is a hands-on introduction to the procedures and subjectivity of the world of publishing—and you make the big decisions! Participants will either scope out books in their genre (library or bookstore) or bring along a book they think they'd like to read but have not yet done so (writing groups), and take a turn in the "hot seat" to defend their choice to the "panel of editors." Will they *buy* it? Wait and see! (90 minutes)

CRAFTWRITING

In these hands-on sessions, each one different, Kathryn will introduce a narrow slice of craft, give an example from a published work, and then provide prompts that will allow attendees to practice employing that craft in on-the-spot writing. Bound to add to your writer's tool kit, this will be a fun way to spark your creativity—with friends! (90 minutes)

**Didn't find what you were looking for on this menu?
Contact me and let's see if we can cook up something new
to meet your needs!**