

# Getting to Know Your Character

Charlotte Writer's Club, Jan 19, 2021

Kevin Winchester / [info@kevinwinchesterwriter.com](mailto:info@kevinwinchesterwriter.com)

## **I. Introduction**

By definition, “fiction” is a lie, a made-up story. But, in order for fiction to be compelling—the kind of stuff we can’t put down as readers, the stories that stick with us long after we’ve read the last page—fiction must be “true.” By “true,” I mean fiction must be filled with verisimilitude. That’s a fifty cent word for the adage we’ve all heard—show, don’t tell. But how do we show, not tell? The secret lies in our characters. In short, our characters must be “true” to their natures and they must act accordingly. If we, as authors, force lies and untruths on our characters, the readers—and even before them, editors and publishers—spot it immediately...and move on to the next story. With that in mind, this evening’s session will explore ways to make sure your characters tell the truth. Their truth, not necessarily *your* truth...

## **II. Where Do Characters Originate?**

Three types of writers and the role of modeling (stealing from) “real people;” quirks, tics, and tendencies; and an author’s dark secrets...

## **III. Asking the Right Questions**

Introduce yourself, start the interview, stand back and observe...

## **IV. Answering Those Questions to Create Conflict**

People don’t change of their own volition, neither should your characters. Lights, camera, action—put them in trouble, let them get themselves out of trouble, re-ask questions that look for “change...”

## **V. An Example**

Apologies, but this is an example from my short story collection, a novella titled, “It Was After Shelby Foote Died...” that first appeared in StorySouth (2006)...

## **VI. Q & A**