

Women in Horror Symposium
February 25-26, 2026

The 2026 Authorcon Women in Horror Symposium is a two-day event for women in the horror field to discuss ways to protect, reinvest in, and build their careers. It will feature workshops and panels designed to educate women about the professional side of the horror genre and provide an opportunity for brainstorming ways to reach a wider audience and secure various types of work. It is meant to illuminate women, to give them an opportunity for networking and fellow(female)ship and a safe space to be heard and exchange ideas. It is a place for women to celebrate and recognize each other's accomplishments as well as their own. The goal of the symposium is not to identify problems women professionals face in the horror genre, but to discover practical, actionable, and measurable solutions.

Attendance at workshops and panels is limited to women.

Special Guests:

Lisa Kroger
Gemma Amor
Melanie Anderson
L. Marie Wood
Jennifer McMahon
Sherrilyn Kenyon

Day 1 (Wednesday, Feb 25)
Education

9 AM: Opening Remarks by Brian Keene, Mary SanGiovanni

WORKSHOPS

11:30 AM-12:30 PM: *Don't Give Up*: **Jennifer McMahon** leads a workshop on techniques we can use to keep inspired and productive – how to keep moving forward, to regroup, and push harder than ever when we feel like the bottom has dropped out on our careers

1:30-3:00 PM: *Confidence in the Workplace*: **Gemma Amor** leads a workshop on building confidence in oneself within the publishing landscape, with an emphasis on practical skills to help succeed in this career and deal with things like imposter syndrome, business skills, boundary setting, and more.

PANELS

9:30-10:30 AM: *The Art of the Hustle*: How to get and keep work coming your way and build career stability. How can we keep getting high-profile work once the door is opened? How do we use opportunities we've been given to create further opportunities that we want? How can we use those opportunities to help each other? **L. Marie Wood, Jennifer McMahon, Melanie Anderson**

10:30-11:30 AM: *Diversifying Your Career*: How to find work in media tie-in, video games, comics, non-fiction, make the most of subsidiary rights, and more. **Lisa Kroger, Melanie R. Anderson, Mary SanGiovanni, Sherrilyn Kenyon**

12:30-1:30 PM: Lunch

3-4 PM: *Making Money on the Fringe*: How to supplement writing with activities on adjacent to it – speaking engagements, teaching, online courses, editing, etc. **L. Marie Wood, Melanie R. Anderson**

4-5 PM: *How Much is Too Much?* How to balance self-worth, market price, and reasonable expectations when negotiating contracts and payment. **Sherrilyn Kenyon, Lisa Kroger, Jennifer McMahon**

Day 2 (Thursday Feb 26th)

Strategy

WORKSHOPS

1-2 PM: *Career Planning*: **Mary SanGiovanni** leads an open discussion about what should we be doing now to prepare for the future – what should we consider at every step of our careers?

PANELS

9-10 AM: *Improve Name Recognition/Promotion Outside the Box*: What works to build a larger audience and what doesn't. What might the future hold? Can we capitalize on technology to promote ourselves to a larger audience? What new things can we try? **Gemma Amor, Mary SanGiovanni**

10-11 AM: *Balancing Work and Family*: How to manage your time effectively and not feel guilty about it. **Gemma Amor, L. Marie Wood, Jennifer McMahon, Melanie Anderson**

11 AM-12 PM: *Networking*: Tips, tricks, and best practices for breaking past the discomfort of “bothering” professionals and learning to network like a pro. **L. Marie Wood, Lisa Kroger**

12-1 PM: Lunch

2-3 PM: *Best Markets and Market Practices*: Who should we be working with, and how? Who treats their authors well, pays fairly and equitably, has good relationships with booksellers and librarians, has marketing reach, has a business plan? Who would we recommend new young publishers model their new publishing ventures after? **Lisa Kroger, Jennifer McMahon, Mary SanGiovanni**

3-4 PM: *Opening Doors and Shattering Glass Ceilings*: How do we open up opportunities usually closed to us? How do we get media to engage with and report on us at times other than Women in Horror Month? How do? **Sherrilyn Kenyon, L. Marie Wood**

4-5 PM: *Storytelling Across Media*: How do we make the transition from books to movies or television – how to inform and convince TV/Movies acquisitions people that we are producing commercially viable work, how to pitch it to them, and what to expect when we do. **Sherrilyn Kenyon, Lisa Kroger, Melanie Anderson**

5 PM: Closing Remarks: **Mary SanGiovanni**