

# **2012 PIKES PEAK WRITERS FICTION CONTEST**

## **OFFICIAL RULES**

### **Eligibility:**

This contest is for unpublished writers of short stories and book-length fiction. Entrants must certify that the entry has not been accepted for publication prior to the date of submission.

- Anyone who has received monetary compensation for a shorter fictional work (short story, novella, novelette, etc.) is ineligible for the short story category but may be eligible for the book-length categories.
- Anyone who has received monetary compensation for a book-length work of fiction—whether through traditional, online, vanity or self-publishing—is ineligible for this contest. Previous compensation for nonfiction is allowed.
- Anyone whose book-length work of fiction has appeared or currently appears on any internet site or physical location where it was or is offered for sale is ineligible for this contest.
- Cash awards from writing contests do not count as monetary compensation.
- In case of any ambiguity in the rules, the contest coordinator will review eligibility on a case-by-case basis.
- Manuscripts that previously have won First Place in this contest will no longer be eligible for entry in our future contests. This is to encourage winners to get started on their next manuscript.

### **Contest Categories:**

Short Stories (fiction only; all genres)

Book Length:

- Children's (for ages 8-12)
- Young Adult (for ages 12-18)
- Historical Fiction
- Mainstream
- Mystery/Suspense/Intrigue
- Romance
- Science Fiction/Fantasy/Horror

**PLEASE NOTE:** Writer's legal name is required on the online entry form. (No initials, pen names, nicknames or abbreviations.)

## **Deadline**

Entries must be received electronically by 11:59 p.m. **Mountain Time** on November 15, 2011.

A maximum of 400 entries will be accepted.

## **Submission by E-mail**

The Contest is electronic. You will e-mail your entry as an attachment to [pgcontest@gmail.com](mailto:pgcontest@gmail.com). You will receive your judged entries and critiques the same way. The contest coordinator will delete all electronic copies at the end of the contest.

## **Selecting a Category**

The purpose of the contest is to give you an opportunity to prepare a manuscript and to focus on producing a marketable product. If you don't know what type of story you have written, then you really need to consider the marketing aspect of your story.

Decide who your readers are—who would buy your story? Where would they go in a bookstore to find your book? The categories reflect publishing genres.

- Children's books are written for ages 8-12, while Young Adult books (YA) are for ages 12-18. Please, no picture books or illustrations.
- Historical readers want their stories set in a specific and recognizable period of history, with accurate details of the time period.
- Mainstream is a catch-all category for stories that don't fit in a specific genre. They appeal to a wide range of readers, exploring themes and situations of broad interest, tending to focus on character and even the writing itself.
- A mystery reader wants to see a puzzle and join the protagonist in the hunt for the answer.
- Suspense and Intrigue readers want to be kept on the edge of their seats.
- A romance reader wants a central love story with an emotionally satisfying and optimistic ending.
- Science Fiction imagines future possibilities, usually based on what we know now. Fantasy includes elements of magic or other supernatural phenomena, while horror, at its most basic, is trying to scare you.

*Need more help with genre?* Refer to author Linda Rohrbough's excellent article, "[The Genre Hurdle.](#)"

If you don't recognize one of the genre elements strongly in your story, then enter the Mainstream category.

## **Format**

- Sample pages and synopsis/target market should all be one document, and the title of the document should be the title of the entry.
- The page numbers may be consecutive or may have the sample pages begin on page 1 and the synopsis/target market begin on page 1.
- Use 12 pt. Courier or 12 pt. Times New Roman.

- Double space and use a ragged right margin (no full- or right-justified margins).
- Use 1-inch margins all the way around and the level of professionalism you would present to an editor.

### **Entry Fee**

The fee is \$30 per entry. Entrants can also receive up to two one-page critiques per entry for \$20 each. Entrants who pay for a critique will receive an additional page of comments about the strengths/weaknesses and recommendations for improvement.

Payment must be made online via PayPal before entry will be accepted.

Important Note: There is a field in PayPal for delivery instructions. PLEASE put your last name and the title of your work in that field. If you are using your husband's/parent's/grandmother's/best friend's PayPal account, we need some way to match the payment to the correct entry.

### **Multiple Entries**

You may submit up to two entries in the same category. If you submit more than two entries in one category, only two will be accepted, and the other(s) will be disqualified. Writers may also submit entries in more than one category. Each entry will require an entry form and appropriate fees, but all entry fees may be included in a single check or PayPal payment.

### **Sample Pages**

If submitting a **short story**, entrants must send the complete short story, which cannot exceed 5,000 words.

Sample pages should also include a one paragraph Target Market. Entrants must explain what market this short story would appeal to and give examples of magazines or anthologies which might publish the story. The explanation should be one paragraph on its own page at the beginning of your short story. It does not count toward the 5,000-word limit. Your name may not appear on any of these pages.

If submitting a **novel**, entrants must send the first 4,000 words of their manuscript as a sample of their work. If the novel has a prologue, the first 4,000 words can begin with the prologue or with chapter one. Your name may not appear on any of these pages.

The sample pages must also include a synopsis. This is a CRITICAL piece of your contest entry. The synopsis should be up to 1,250 words in length and must be in the same document as your sample pages. Your name may not appear on any of these pages.

The first 4,000 words of your manuscript show the judges how well you write, prepare a manuscript, use dialogue, handle point of view, set a hook, plot, pacing, communicate mood, etc., but much of the judging criteria is based on information found only in the synopsis—how well you build conflict and handle the resolution, if you hit your market (or know your market), the development and motivation of antagonist, protagonist and secondary characters, story structure, research, and scene progression.

Many well-written and promising stories never place because the synopsis was treated lightly and/or poorly done.

Do not start the synopsis where the entry leaves off; the synopsis needs to tell the entire story/plot. You must include the resolution of the story/plot.

### **Blind Judging**

So that the judges will not know the identity of the writer, the writer's name should appear only on the entry form. Do not put the writer's name on the synopsis or the manuscript pages, or the entry will be disqualified. Entries with authors' names attached will still be judged and critiqued, but will not be eligible to be a finalist or win their category.

### **Initial Judging**

Two judges will read, judge and comment on each entry. If the scores are more than 25 points apart, a third judge will score the entry. The most skewed score will be dropped and the remaining two scores added to determine placement.

The three entries with the highest scores in each category will advance to the VIP judging round. An entry must have a minimum total score of 160 to be considered for the final round. The contest coordinator reserves the right to send fewer than three entries per category to the final round as circumstances warrant.

### **Final Round VIP Judging**

Publishing professionals, usually editors and agents, serve as judges for the final round. They determine the order of the top three entries in each category. This will give entrants the opportunity to get their manuscripts before industry professionals in their genre.

Due to time considerations, entries sent to the VIP judges will not be returned and they are not asked to make comments or offer critiques. If a VIP judge *does* give feedback on the submission, it will be sent to the author as soon as possible.

Judges for the final round will be announced at a later date. Check the PPW Website after September 1 for more information and updates.

### **Awards**

Winners will be recognized at the Paul Gillette Awards banquet on the Saturday night of Conference.

The first place winner in each category will be refunded his/her Conference registration fee if attending that year's PPWC or will be awarded a cash prize of \$100 if not attending.

Second place will be awarded \$50, and third place will be awarded \$30. In addition, winners attending the Conference that year will be given top priority with respect to their editor/agent pitch appointment selections.

### **Manuscript Return and Notification of Winners**

We begin emailing the manuscripts, critiques and completed score sheets back to you in March. The top three finalists in each category are typically notified in early April by phone, or if no phone number is provided, by email or regular mail.

### **Important Dates**

- September 15, 2011: Contest opens and begins to accept entries
- November 15, 2011: Deadline for contest entries
- November 15, 2011: Registration opens for the 20<sup>th</sup> Pikes Peak Writers Conference
- Mid March, 2012: Contest entries returned electronically
- Early April, 2012: Contest winners notified
- April 20-22, 2012: 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Pikes Peak Writers Conference at the Marriott in Colorado Springs

### **Questions?**

If you can't find your answer here or the Contest FAQ, feel free to email [pgcontest@gmail.com](mailto:pgcontest@gmail.com) for the quickest response. You may also send snail mail to:

Pikes Peak Writers Fiction Contest  
C/O Pikes Peak Writers  
PO Box 64273  
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80962

# Contest Checklist

## **Deadline:**

Entries must be received electronically by 11:59 p.m., Mountain Time, on November 15, 2011.

## **Format:**

Sample pages and synopsis/target market should all be one document, and the title of the document should be the title of the entry. The page numbers may be consecutive or may have the sample pages begin on page 1 and the synopsis/target market begin on page 1. Use 12 pt. Courier or 12 pt. Times New Roman. Double space and use a ragged right margin (no full- or right-justified margins). Use 1-inch margins all the way around and the level of professionalism you would present to an editor.

## **Entry Form:**

\_\_\_ I have gone online to [www.pikespeakwriters.com](http://www.pikespeakwriters.com) and filled out my entry form. I have printed a copy of this entry form for my records.

## **Book-Length Fiction Submission:**

\_\_\_ My synopsis and manuscript are double-spaced with the title and page number in the header on every page.

\_\_\_ Author's name IS NOT IN THE HEADER or elsewhere in/on the manuscript.

\_\_\_ My synopsis is no more than 1,250 words long.

\_\_\_ My manuscript, which begins with Chapter One or the Prologue, does NOT exceed 4,000 words.

\_\_\_ I have e-mailed ONE electronic copy of my entry as an attachment to [pgcontest@gmail.com](mailto:pgcontest@gmail.com).

## **The Attached Document:**

\_\_\_ is in .doc format (no .docx please).

\_\_\_ has the same name as the title of the entry being submitted.

\_\_\_ is a single document that includes BOTH the synopsis and manuscript, but not any mention

of the writer's name.

\_\_\_ The subject of the e-mail is the title of the entry being submitted and the category.

**For Example:** I am submitting my entry "War and Pieces." Both my synopsis and sample pages are included in a document titled "War and Pieces.doc," and the document is attached to an e-mail with the subject line "War and Pieces, mainstream."

### **Short Story Submission:**

\_\_\_ My short story entry is double-spaced with the title and page number in the header on every page.

\_\_\_ Author's name IS NOT IN THE HEADER or elsewhere in/on the manuscript.

\_\_\_ My short story entry, which contains the ENTIRE STORY, does NOT exceed 5,000 words.

\_\_\_ I have e-mailed ONE electronic copy of my entry as an attachment to pgcontest@gmail.com.

### **The Attached Document:**

\_\_\_ is in .doc format (no .docx please).

\_\_\_ has the same name as the title of the short story being submitted.

\_\_\_ is one document that includes BOTH the target market and short story, but not any mention of the writer's name.

\_\_\_ The subject of the e-mail is the title of the short story being submitted and the category.

**For Example:** I am submitting my short story "Small World." Both my target market and short story are included in a document titled "Small World.doc," and the document is attached to an e-mail with the subject line "Small World, short story."

**Payment:**

I have paid online via PayPal.

PayPal payments include the title of my entry and my last name.

Amount of entry fee enclosed:

Entry, No Critique \$30

Entry and 1 Critique \$50

Entry and 2 Critiques \$70

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Looking for more details on the submission process? Read the article "How to Make a Contest Coordinator Happy."