

*Romance Writers of Australia Inc*

*is proud to announce...*

**The Valerie Parv Award 2020**

**for unpublished writers of romance**

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| **Opening date:**  | Monday 6 April 2020. Online entries only. |
| **Closing date:** | **The VPA will be capped at the first 90 eligible entries.** Once 90 eligible entries have been received, the contest will close to further entries.**Deadline for last entry is 11.59pm Sydney time, Monday 26 April 2020.**  |
| **Eligibility:** | RWAust members: Aspiring and Emerging with no romantic fiction 40K+ commercially available or contractedNon-members: unpublished/uncontracted in romantic fiction 40K+ |
| **Judging:** | Preliminary judging is by writers. Each entry will receive 3 scoresheets. The six highest scoring entries will be read and ranked by bestselling author and acclaimed writing coach Valerie Parv AM ([www.valerieparv.com](http://www.valerieparv.com))  |
| **Entry specifications:** | First 10,000 words (maximum) of your unpublished, novel-length (40K+) romance/romantic elements manuscript, plus a 1,000 word (maximum) synopsis. Use exact computer word count. |
| **No. of entries:** | Maximum of TWO entries per person |
| **Entry fees:** | In AUD, per entry:RWA members in Australia: $44 incl GSTNon-members in Australia: $110.00 incl GST |
| **Prize:** | 1st ~ 1 year mentorship with Valerie Parv |
| **Email entries to:**  | **vpa@romanceaustralia.com** |
| **Queries:** | **Contest Coordinator:** **vpa@romanceaustralia.com** |

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR ENTRANTS:**

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| **Entries:**Please complete your **contest registration and payment** online: <http://romanceaustralia.com/contests-overview/valerie-parv-award/> No postal or emailed entries are accepted.The form will ask you to enter your details and upload your entry file. Each entry file should comprise the following:Each entry file should comprise the following: one file in .doc format (not .docx) with the manuscript title in the filename. Include your title page, then synopsis, then manuscript pages, as follows:* **Title page**, including the following: manuscript title, subgenre/targeted line, projected word count of full manuscript
* **Synopsis**, beginning on a new page, no more than 1,000 words
* **Manuscript,** beginning on a new page, no more than 10,000 words.

**Word counts** are exact. Use computer count. Any extra words will be trimmed, so ensure your entry does not exceed 10,000 words (manuscript) and 1,000 words (synopsis).Once your entry/payment is completed, you will receive an automatic acknowledgement email. If you do not receive this within 24 hours of submitting your entry, please email the contest coordinator at vpa@romanceaustralia.com to check that you entry has been received. Your coordinator is a volunteer, so response times may be variable.The coordinator will also contact you if there are any problems with your manuscript formatting.**The contest coordinator is here to help you.****There are no stupid questions.****If you are unsure of anything, contact** **vpa@romanceaustralia.com** **BEFORE you submit****Download a formatting sample and example scoresheet:** [**http://romanceaustralia.com/contests-overview/valerie-parv-award/**](http://romanceaustralia.com/contests-overview/valerie-parv-award/) | **Formatting your manuscript:*** Page is A4 size, portrait orientation
* Include a title page containing **manuscript title;** **sub-genre** (e.g. Regency, Sci-fi with romantic elements, paranormal, rural romance etc.) **or targeted line** if applicable (for category romance, e.g. Harlequin Desire, Sexy, etc.); and **projected word count** of completed manuscript
* Text for synopsis is single-spaced, with a blank line between paragraphs; first line of each paragraph is not indented; no heading or blank space at the top of the first page is required
* Text for manuscript begins on a new page, approx. one-third of the way down, and is double-spaced, with no blank lines or extra spacing between paragraphs; the first line of each paragraph is indented 1 cm
* Margins set to 2.5 cm all around
* All text is aligned left (not fully justified)
* All text is 12-pt Courier New or Times New Roman font
* Begin each new chapter approx. one-third of the way down a new page
* Include a document header, containing:
	1. Page number in upper right corner. Start page numbers at page 1 on the synopsis, and continue on the manuscript (don't restart at 1). Don't number your title page.
	2. Your manuscript title
	3. Targeted line/sub-genre as applicable

e.g. The Hot Greek Billionaire/Harlequin DesireA Wild Romance/RegencySexy Space Pirates/Sci-fi with romantic elementsThis information is to enable us to properly allocate your entry to judges. **Do not include your name anywhere on the entry file.** To ensure fairness to all entrants, and consistency and ease for judges, **all the above formatting conditions are compulsory.**If any condition is not met: at the contest coordinator's discretion, the entrant will be given reasonable opportunity to fix any formatting issues and resubmit a correctly formatted entry before the closing date/time. If your entry is not received with correct formatting by that time, it will be entered in the contest, but a 5-mark deduction (total, not per error) will be made from your score, and your entry will be ranked below equivalently-scored entries that do not have formatting errors. This will disadvantage you if there is a tie for a finalist placing.The purpose of this system is to teach entrants the proper formatting – so you're encouraged to submit your entries in advance closing date, to ensure you have time to correct any errors.If in doubt about how to achieve any of the formatting, please ask the contest coordinator for advice. Check your entry against the formatting sample on the website and ask yourself: *does my entry look like this?* If the answer is no, then ask for help. |

**ENTRY CONDITIONS**

**RWA Inc. reserves the right not to accept entries that do not comply with the entry conditions. The contest coordinator's decision in this regard is final.**

1. The Valerie Parv Award is for a partial manuscript and synopsis from a romance (or romantic elements) novel (40K+) that is not commercially available or contracted for publication.
2. Works that are commercially available are not eligible for entry into this competition. For the purposes of this contest, RWA deems ‘commercially available’ to mean: any work of fiction *(or part of)* that is *(or has been at any time)* available for purchase or download in any format for any price including free:
	1. in any marketplace where books are available *(this shall include physical or digital bookstores, a publisher's website or store, and any other retailer or distribution outlet for books in any format);*
	2. at any other venue where the work includes *(or is followed by)* links to non-free content, or otherwise appears with the intent of selling or encouraging purchase of any of the author's works *(this shall include story-sharing or file-sharing sites, blogs, social media sites and other author websites.)*
3. The projected word length of the completed manuscript from which your entry is taken must be 40,000 words or over (novel-length) for your entry to be eligible. Entries taken from novellas cannot be accepted.
4. Open to all writers (members and non-members of RWA) who have not been published or accepted for publication in novel-length (40,000+ words) romantic fiction. For RWA members, this means Aspiring and Emerging writers who are not contracted for publication, and have no works of romantic fiction 40K+ commercially available. Previously published authors MAY be eligible to enter and will be decided on a case-by-case basis, taking into account contract/publication date, book availability and whether you are actively promoting yourself as a published author. To request a ruling, contact the contest coordinator prior to the contest deadline.
5. Entries from a manuscript that has won a previous Valerie Parv, Emma Darcy or Emerald Award are not eligible.
6. Members are not allowed to judge for contests they have entered. Contest Coordinators may not enter or judge a contest they are managing by may enter or judge for another contest.
7. If after submitting his/her entry, the entrant accepts an offer of publication for any romantic fiction manuscript 40K+, or makes such a manuscript commercially available, during the judging period (from submission of entry to the public announcement of finalists), the entrant is no longer eligible to enter, and must contact the contest coordinator to arrange for his/her entry(ies) to be withdrawn. If finalists have already been announced when the entrant accepts the offer of publication, no withdrawal is required, finalist placings will stand, and the entry remains eligible to win prizes.
8. The definition of ‘romance’ implies the romantic development of a relationship between the protagonists, and includes all romantic novel markets, heat levels and sub-genres, i.e. category romance, single title contemporary, historical, Regency, futuristic, fantasy, paranormal, time travel, romantic suspense, erotic romance, chick lit, young adult, new adult, gay/lesbian, rural/outback, inspirational, science fiction. Entries from novels with romantic elements (where romantic development between the protagonists is a subplot) are also eligible. Judges will judge your entry based on the information you give, so **contact the contest coordinator in advance if you are unsure of the correct sub-genre.** If your entry includes explicit sex, mark the applicable box on the entry form. This is to help us allocate your entry to judges familiar with those elements.
9. Entry numbers will be capped at the first ninety (90) eligible entries in order of receipt by the coordinator. Once 90 eligible entries are admitted, the contest will close to further entries. Any entries received after closing will be notified of non-acceptance, and any payment made will be refunded.
10. The entrant must be the original author of every entry they submit. Entries by joint authors are permitted. Fan-fiction (stories using characters, settings, worlds or other elements that belong to someone else) is not eligible. Entries must be text only, no images.
11. RWA reserves the right, at any time during the contest, to reject entries that in the contest coordinator's opinion contain any of the following presented in a positive light or as titillation: rape, pedophilia, incest, or any other conduct that is degrading or promotes hate.
12. Up to two (2) entries per person are permitted. Copyright in the manuscript and synopsis remains with the entrant.
13. Entry fees are non-refundable once your entry is accepted. PayPal/credit card only, via the online system.
14. Judges' decisions and scores are final. No correspondence will be entered into. If you have suggestions on the contest process, advise the coordinator by separate email.
15. Ties for finalist placings are resolved, if necessary, by highest total X-factor score. Entries must score 85% or higher in the preliminary round to be eligible to advance to the final.
16. Thank you notes to judges are welcome. Please email any thank yous to the contest coordinator, including the judge numbers, and they will be forwarded. No gifts, please.

**ENTRY AND FORMATTING**

1. Online entries only (no email or snail mail). Fill in your entry form and pay your entry fee online.
2. Your **entry** includes the **first** 10,000 words (maximum) of your romance or romantic elements novel, plus a 1,000 word (maximum) synopsis. Word count limit is exact and any words exceeding the limit will be trimmed. Entries can be shorter than these counts, but bear in mind that judges are scoring for character and plot development (see sample scoresheet on the website for details). Put the synopsis first, followed by the manuscript pages, in a single .doc document.
3. The **title page must include**: manuscript title, sub-genre/targeted line (e.g. Regency, paranormal romance, contemporary with romantic elements, Harlequin Desire, Entangled Blush) and projected word count of completed manuscript. The **header must include**: manuscript title, sub-genre/targeted line, and page number, starting at page 1 on the synopsis and continuing (don't restart the numbering for your manuscript pages). **Author's name must not appear on entries**. RWA strives to preserve anonymity between judges and entrants.
4. **Formatting:** A4 page, portrait orientation. Font: 12 pt Courier New or Times New Roman. 2.5 cm margins all round. Text is aligned left (not fully justified). Text for the synopsis is single-spaced, with a blank line between paragraphs, and the paragraphs are not indented. Text for the manuscript pages is double-spaced, with no blank lines between paragraphs, and the first line of each paragraph is indented 1 cm. Begin each chapter approx. one-third of the way down a new page. Remember, entries will not be printed. Formatting will be assessed on having your margins, indents etc. set to the specified sizes, not by the appearance of your manuscript on a printed page.
5. To ensure fairness to all entrants, and consistency and ease for judges, **all the above formatting conditions are compulsory**. If any condition is not met, and time allows, you will be given the opportunity to fix the problem and submit a correctly formatted entry before the closing date/time. If your entry is not received with correct formatting by that time, it will be entered in the contest, but a 5-mark deduction (total, not per error) will be made from your raw score, and your entry will be ranked below equivalently-scored entries that do not have formatting errors. The purpose of this system is to teach entrants the proper formatting, so you are encouraged to submit your entries well in advance of the closing date, to ensure you have time to correct any errors.

**Tips from the contest coordinator:**

* A sample scoresheet is available from the contest website: <https://romanceaustralia.com/contests-overview/valerie-parv-award/>. Check it out to see what the judges will be looking for—perhaps there are some improvements you can make before entering.
* Make sure you include the full story in your synopsis. Don't leave out the ending, the plot twist or the resolution to the romance. Judges need to know how it ends!
* Run a spell-checker over your entry—but then ask a friend to read it, too, to check for any typos or errors you've missed. There are 15 easy marks available for spelling, grammar and punctuation, so make sure you get them all.

**Tips on formatting your entry:**

* Download the formatting sample form the contest website to see what your entry should look like, and for more hints: <https://romanceaustralia.com/contests-overview/valerie-parv-award/>
* Make sure your entry doesn't exceed 10,000 words, and your synopsis doesn't exceed 1,000 words. We use the count feature on MS Word. To ensure fairness to all entrants, we can't accept even one word over.
* It's best not to hit 'return' multiple times to start a new page. Some judges read on e-readers, and multiple returns will not appear. If you want to start a new page, use 'Insert' & 'Page Break'.
* MS Word sometimes has a default setting that inserts unwanted space between paragraphs. Click 'Format & Paragraph' and make sure 'Spacing: Before' and 'Spacing: After' are set to zero.
* To make the page numbers start at 1 on the synopsis, and not on your title page: have the page numbers start at zero, and then untick 'Show number on first page'.
* Finally: *please* don't spend hours stressing over the formatting. The rules are simple and easy to achieve—if in doubt, ask the coordinator for help.