

Romance Writers of Australia Inc
is proud to announce...



The Spicy Bites Erotic Romance Short Story Contest 2021

- Opening date:** 4 January 2021 – 17.00 AEST (5.00pm Sydney time). **Online entries only.**
- Closing date:** 25 January 2021 – 17.00 AEST (5.00pm Sydney time).
- Eligibility:** RWAustralia members only. All membership categories are eligible (Aspiring, Emerging and Established). Entry must not be commercially available/contracted.
- Entry fee:** AU\$33.00 per entry (GST incl.)
- Judging:** The Spicy Bites Short Story Competition will be judged by a mix of reader and writer judges.
- Entry specifications:** A 3000 to 5000 word erotic romance short story, featuring the 2021 theme – **DENIM**
Stories must be romance (HEA/HFN is mandatory) and feature a sexually explicit storyline.
- No. of entries:** Maximum of TWO entries per person
- Prizes:** N/A
In addition, the top-scoring 10 to 14 stories will have the chance to be published in our 2021 Spicy Bites Anthology.
- How to enter:** Go to the RWA website and click on the link to enter online:
<https://romanceaustralia.com/contests-overview/spicy-bites-anthology/>
- Queries:** **Contest Coordinator: Annette Laarakkers**
spicybites@romanceaustralia.com

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ENTRANTS:

Entries:

Please complete your **contest registration and payment** via the online form. No postal entries are accepted.

The form will ask you to enter your details and upload your entry file.

Each entry should comprise the following:

Entry: one file in .doc format (not .docx) with the story title in the filename. Include your title page, then the story, as follows:

- **Title page**, listing the story title and subgenre
- **Short story**, beginning on a new page. Minimum 3000 words, maximum 5000 words.

Maximum word count is exact. Any extra lines or words will be trimmed, so ensure your entry is between 3000 and 5000 words inclusive.

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 spicybites@romanceaustralia.com to check that your 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 spicybites@romanceaustralia.com BEFORE you submit

Download a formatting sample and example scoresheet:
<https://romanceaustralia.com/contests-overview/spicy-bites-anthology/>

Formatting your manuscript:

- Page is A4 size, portrait orientation
- Include a title page containing **short story title**, and **sub-genre** of erotic romance (e.g. Regency, contemporary, paranormal etc.)
- Text for short story 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 1cm
- 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
- Include a document header, containing:
 - a. Page number in upper right corner. Start page numbers at page 1 on the story (don't number your title page)
 - b. Your short story title
 - c. Sub-genre.

e.g. A Wild Romance/Regency
Sexy Space Pirates/Futuristic

This information is to enable us to properly allocate your entry to judges. **Do not include your name anywhere on the entry. Your name goes only on the entry/payment form.**

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 Spicy Bites Short Story Award is for an erotic romance short story of 3,000 to 5,000 words that includes the 2021 theme – ***DENIM***. Stories that are commercially available or contracted for publication are not eligible for entry. 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:
 - a. 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*);
 - b. 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.*)
2. All RWA members (Aspiring, Emerging or Established categories) are eligible to enter.
3. All entrants must be financial members of RWA. If membership lapses at any time during the judging process, the entry will be removed from the contest.
4. Members are not allowed to judge for contests they have entered. Contest Coordinators may not enter or judge a contest they are managing, but may enter or judge for another contest.
5. If, after entering a story in Spicy Bites, the entrant makes that story commercially available (or accepts a contract for its publication) during the judging period (from submission of entry to the public announcement of placegetters), the entry is no longer eligible to go forward in the contest, or to be included in the anthology, and the entrant must contact the contest coordinator to arrange for the entry to be withdrawn.
6. The **definition of 'erotic romance'** implies the romantic development of a relationship between the protagonists via a sexually explicit storyline with a 'happy ever after' or 'happy for now' ending (HEA/HFN), and includes all erotic romance sub-genres, i.e. contemporary, historical, Regency, futuristic, fantasy, paranormal, time travel, romantic suspense, new adult, rural/outback, science fiction, gay/lesbian, menage. 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**. Your entry must be an erotic romance to be eligible for the contest, a prize or a place in the anthology. Stories that are not romances are not eligible. No pornography.
7. The entrant must be the original author of every entry they submit. Entries by joint eligible 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.
8. RWA reserves the right, at any time during the contest or anthology production, to reject and/or disqualify entries that in the contest coordinator's opinion contain any of the following presented in a positive light or as titillation: rape, pedophilia, incest, non-consensual violence, necrophilia, bestiality or any other conduct that is degrading or promotes hate, misogyny or homophobia. All characters involved in romantic and/or sexual situations must be 18+ years of age.
9. Up to two (2) entries per person are permitted. Copyright in the manuscript remains with the entrant.
10. Entry fees are non-refundable once your entry is accepted. Credit card payment only, via the online system. No cash or cheques.
11. 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.
12. Ties for finalist placings and placings in the anthology are resolved by highest total X-factor score. A minimum total score of 85% must be gained for an entry to win a 1st, 2nd or 3rd placing, or to be eligible for a place in the anthology.
13. 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.
14. **Prizes:** the first 3 placegetters will receive a certificate. The top-scoring 10 to 14 stories (depending on word count) will also be invited to participate in the Spicy Bites 2021 anthology (see below).
15. If by the promulgated closing date, the contest has received fewer than ten (10) eligible entries, the contest coordinator may elect to: a) extend the closing date; and/or b) declare the contest void and refund all entry fees received. If the contest is declared void, no judging will be conducted, and no placings or prizes will be awarded.

ENTRY AND FORMATTING

16. Online entries only (no snail mail). Fill in your entry form and pay your entry fee online.
17. Your **entry** is an erotic romance **short story**, featuring the **theme** – ***DENIM*** – with a **word count** between 3,000 and 5,000 words inclusive. It must be saved in .doc format (not .docx). Word count is exact and any words exceeding the limit will be trimmed. With shorter entries, bear in mind that judges are looking for character and plot development (see sample scoresheet on the website for details).

18. The **title page must include**: story title and sub-genre. The **header must include**: story title, sub-genre and page number, starting at page 1 on the story (don't number the title page). **Author's name must not appear on entries**. RWA contests strive to preserve anonymity between judges and entrants.
19. **Theme**: The 2021 theme – *DENIM* – must be included somewhere in the story. Judges can award marks for intrinsic, original and creative use of the theme.
20. **Formatting**: A4 page, portrait orientation. Font: 12 pt Courier New or Times New Roman. 2.5 cm margins all round. Text begins approx. one-third of the way down the page, is aligned left (not fully justified), and is double spaced, with no blank lines or extra spacing between paragraphs, and the first line of each paragraph is indented 1cm. Remember, this is a digital contest, and 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.
21. 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.

ABOUT THE SPICY BITES ANTHOLOGY

22. The top-scoring 10 to 14 stories (depending on word count) will be invited to participate in the 2021 Spicy Bites 'Denim' anthology. This is optional, and is in addition to certificates for the first three placegetters.
23. The Spicy Bites 2021 anthology will be published by RWA in digital and print, to be released in time for the RWA Conference 2021. Stories will be edited by RWA's experienced Spicy Bites editing team, and high-quality cover art will be sourced from a professional artist.
24. Authors will license to RWA the right for a limited period (exclusive for 1 year from date of publication and non-exclusive thereafter) to publish worldwide in digital and print as part of the anthology. Copyright will remain with the author.
25. Stories will be donated. Any proceeds from the sale of the anthology will be used to recover production expenses and/or to fund RWA programs and services. RWA reserves the right not to produce the anthology in the event that the number of eligible stories is not sufficient to make the publication viable (see conditions 12 and 15).

Tips from the contest coordinators:

- A sample scoresheet is available from the contest website: <https://romanceaustralia.com/contests-overview/spicy-bites-anthology/>. Check it out to see what the judges will be looking for—perhaps there are some improvements you can make before entering.
- 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/spicy-bites-anthology/>
- Make sure your story doesn't fall outside the required word count. We use exact computer count. To ensure fairness to all entrants, we can't accept even one word outside the mandated counts.
- To make the page numbers start at 1 on the manuscript, 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 requirements are simple and easy to achieve—if in doubt, ask for help.