

# ROMANCE WRITERS OF AUSTRALIA INC.

## CONTEST TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Last revised: September 2021



### Definitions

1. In these terms and conditions, the following definitions apply:
  - a. **aspiring/aspiring member** means a member of RWA who is:
    - i. developing / writing a romance or romantic elements manuscript; and
    - ii. is developing their understanding of the craft; and
    - iii. is thinking about or actively entering contests; and
    - iv. may not yet know what length, or what genre, manuscript on which they will focus.
  - b. **commercially available** means any work of fiction (or part thereof) that is, or has been at any time, available for purchase or download in any format for any price including free:
    - i. in any marketplace where books are available (including but not limited to physical or digital bookstores, a publisher's website or store, and any other retailer or distribution outlet for books in any format); or
    - ii. 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 (which includes but is not limited to story-sharing or file-sharing sites, blogs, social media sites and other author websites.)
  - c. **emerging/emerging member** means a member of RWA who:
    - i. has had a romantic or romantic elements work commercially available or under contract for fewer than three years; or
    - ii. is consistently making finals rounds in writing contests; and/or
    - iii. is submitting and receiving requests from publishers or agents or who has already secured an agent.
  - d. **established/established member** means a member of RWA who:
    - i. has a romantic or romantic elements work commercially available or under contract; and
    - ii. has been consistently or actively publishing for three or more years.
  - e. Calling a manuscript a **romance** means that the development of a romantic relationship between the protagonists is the main focus of the work and includes all romance novel and novella markets, heat levels, genres and sub-genres. It is assumed that the manuscript will have a Happy Ever After (**HEA**) or Happy For Now (**HFN**) ending.
  - f. Calling a manuscript **romantic elements** means that the development of a romantic relationship between the protagonists is a significant part of the story, but is not the central plot, and the work may not end with HEA or HFN.

### Entrants

2. All entrants in any RWA contest (excluding entrants in the RUBY) must be financial members of RWA. If membership lapses at any time during the period from submission to the announcement of winners, the entry will be removed from the contest.
3. Previous winners of the Emerald (or its predecessor award(s)) or of the Sapphire are not eligible to re-enter the Emerald or the Sapphire respectively.
4. All entrants must be the original author of every entry they submit. Entries by joint authors are permitted.
5. Entrants must not volunteer to judge in any contest they have entered (except in the RUBY where, from time to time, entrants may be required to judge books allocated to them in categories they have not entered). If an entrant is found to have been a judge in any contest they have entered, their entry will be disqualified.
6. Contest Coordinators may not enter or judge a contest they are managing but may enter or judge any other contest.

7. If, after submitting an entry but before the finalists are announced, an entrant accepts an offer of publication for the entry or otherwise makes the entry commercially available, the entry is no longer eligible to go forward in the contest. In this case the entrant must contact the Contest Coordinator immediately to arrange for the entry to be withdrawn. No entry fees will be refunded.
8. If, after the finalists have been announced, but before a final decision is made as to a winner, an entrant accepts an offer of publication for the entry or otherwise makes the entry commercially available, no withdrawal is required, finalist placings will stand, and the entry will remain eligible to win a placing.

## Entry Fees

9. Entry fees are set by the Committee and may be varied from time to time.
10. Entry fees are non-refundable, except in exceptional circumstances as determined by the Contest Manager.
11. Payment of entry fees is by PAYPAL or STRIPE only.

## Entries

12. Entries will only be accepted via the RWA online portal.
13. The projected word length of the completed manuscript from which an entry for any contest (excluding the RUBY, SPICY BITES or SWEET TREATS) is taken must be 10,000 words or more. Word counts are exact; please use computer word count and include all chapter titles and section breaks.
14. SWEET TREATS entries may be no more than 3,000 words. SPICY BITES entries must be between 3,000 and 5,000 words.
15. Except for the RUBY, only two entries per person per contest are permitted. Up to three entries per person may be submitted for the RUBY.
16. Entries must be in English, containing text only, no images, emojis or similar.
17. Each entry file must meet the following requirements (a sample document is provided on all contest websites):
  - a. Each entry should be contained in one document in the following order: title page; synopsis or set up (where required); manuscript. Each section should commence on a new page;
  - b. For Publishing Basics the entry should be compiled in the following order, each section commencing on a separate page; tag line; blurb; two chapters; author bio;
  - c. All entries are to be in Microsoft Word format (.doc or .docx is acceptable);
  - d. No identifying marks or meta-data are to be included in the entry;
  - e. Font must be 12pt, Times New Roman or Courier;
  - f. Margins on all pages must be 2.5cm;
  - g. Each page must include a header as follows: TITLE / GENRE / # (where # is page number);
  - h. The title page must include Title; Genre/Subgenre; and projected word count;
  - i. Any synopsis or set up provided must be single-spaced; and
  - j. Any manuscript must be double-spaced.
18. Failure to meet the requirements will result in a penalty being applied.
19. Copyright in the manuscript remains, at all times, with the entrant.
20. Fan fiction (stories using characters, settings, worlds or other elements that belong to someone else) are not eligible.
21. Entries in the RUBY must be published in Australia or New Zealand and are entered into one of the following seven categories:
  - a. **CONTEMPORARY ROMANCE (LONG)**: a novel of more than 65,000 words where the love story is the main focus on the novel and the end of the book is emotionally satisfying and optimistic. Must be set post 1950 and may contain any level of heat/sensuality
  - b. **CONTEMPORARY ROMANCE (SHORT)**: a novel of between 40,000 and 65,000 words where the love story is the main focus on the novel and the end of the book is emotionally satisfying and optimistic. Must be set post 1950 and may contain any level of heat/sensuality;

- c. **HISTORICAL ROMANCE:** a novel of more than 40,000 words where the love story is the main focus on the novel and the end of the book is emotionally satisfying and optimistic. Must be set prior to 1950 and may contain any level of heat/sensuality;
  - d. **ROMANTIC ELEMENTS:** a novel of more than 40,000 words of any tone or style, set in any place or time, in which a romance plays a significant part of the story but is not the central plot or where other themes or elements take the plot beyond the traditional romance boundaries. May contain any level of heat/sensuality.
  - e. **ROMANTIC SUSPENSE:** a novel of more than 40,000 words which contains a suspense, mystery or thriller element, as well as a romance, as an integral part of the plot. May contain any level of heat/sensuality;
  - f. **SPECULATIVE FICTION:** a novel of more than 40,000 words which is set in a fantasy world and which contains paranormal, fantasy, or science-fiction, as well as a romance, as an integral part of the plot. May contain any level of heat/sensuality; and
  - g. **NOVELLA:** a work of between 10,000 and 40,000 words which fit into any of the broad genre descriptions above. May contain any level of heat/sensuality.
22. RWA reserves the right, from the time the contest opens to a date three months after the announcement of any winner(s) or placegetters, to disqualify or exclude any entry that in RWA's reasonable opinion contains any of the following presented in a positive light: rape or sexual assault, domestic violence, pedophilia, incest, genocide, racism, bigotry, vilification or any other conduct that is degrading or promotes hate.
23. A decision to disqualify or exclude an entry will not be made lightly. Before any decision is made, a panel of at least four current RWA members will be constituted. The panel (who will remain anonymous), along with the Contest Manager, will be asked to review the material and provide an opinion as to whether the entry contains unacceptable material (as defined in the clause above). The decision of a majority of the members of the committee will stand.

## Judging

24. For the **RIPPING START**, **PUBLISHING BASICS**, and **FIRST KISS** contests, judging is conducted in two rounds as follows:
- a. In the first round:
    - i. entries will be judged by writer and/or reader judges as randomly allocated by the Contest Coordinator;
    - ii. each entry will be judged by at least three anonymous judges; where more than three judges are used, the highest three scores will be counted; and
    - iii. the highest three scores will be added together, and the entries ranked. The entries with the top six scores will then progress to the second round.
  - b. In the second round, the top six entries will be judged by an industry judge identified as suitably qualified and invited to be a final judge by the Contest Manager. The publishing professional will select first, second and third from the finalists.
25. For the **EMERALD** and the **SAPPHIRE**, judging is conducted in three rounds as follows:
- a. In the first round:
    - i. entries will be judged by writer and/or reader judges as randomly allocated by the Contest Coordinator;
    - ii. each entry will be judged by at least three anonymous judges; where more than three judges are used, the highest three scores will be counted; and
    - iii. the highest three scores will be added together, and the entries ranked. No more than fifteen entries, provided that those fifteen entries have all scored at least 85%, will progress to the second round.
  - b. In the second round,
    - i. no more than fifteen entries will be judged by reader judges as randomly allocated by the Contest Coordinator;
    - ii. each entry will be judged by at least three anonymous judges; where more than three judges are used, the highest three scores will be counted; and

- iii. the highest three scores will be added together, and the entries ranked. No more than three entries, provided that those three entries have scored at least 85%, will progress to the third round.
  - c. In the third round, the top three entries will be judged by an industry judge identified as suitably qualified and invited to be a final judge by the Contest Manager. The publishing professional will rank the final three as first, second and third.
26. For the **SPICY BITES** and **SWEET TREATS** contests, judging is conducted in one round as follows:
  - a. Entries will be judged by reader and/or writer judges as randomly allocated by the Contest Coordinator;
  - b. each entry will be judged by at least three anonymous judges; where more than three judges are used, the highest three scores will be counted;
  - c. the highest three scores for each entry will be added together and the entries ranked;
  - d. the entries with the highest three scores will be the first, second and third placegetters; and
  - e. the authors of the entries ranked fourth to twelfth (Spicy Bites) or fourth to fifteenth (Sweet Treats) will be invited to participate in an anthology published by RWA in the relevant year.
27. For the **RUBY**, judging is conducted in one round as follows:
  - a. entries will be judged by reader and/or writer judges as randomly allocated by the Contest Coordinator;
  - b. each entry will be judged by at least three anonymous judges; where more than three judges are used, the highest three scores will be counted; and
  - c. the highest three scores will be added together, and the entries ranked within their category;
  - d. an entry must score at least 85% to be considered a finalist.
28. In the **RUBY**,
  - a. Where there are:
    - i. between 15 and 25 entries in a category there will be three finalists;
    - ii. between 26 and 50 entries in a category there will be four finalists; and
    - iii. more than 50 entries in a category there will be five finalists; and
  - b. each entrant may be required to judge up to two books and, if judging is not completed in accordance with time requirements, the entrants entry or entries may be disqualified.
29. An entrant in any contest must not contact, or make any attempt to contact, a judge (or a person who is presumed to be a judge) in a contest they have entered for the purposes of discussing any aspect of the judging of the contests.
30. Reading by a publishing professional in any final judging process does not imply acceptance into a publisher's selection or editing process.
31. Judges' decisions and scores are final and no correspondence will be entered into.
32. Thank you notes to judges are welcome and are to be sent via the Contest Coordinator, but no gifts are allowed.

### **Other matters**

33. RWA Inc. reserves the right to:
  - a. disqualify entries that do not comply with the entry conditions. The Contest Manager's reasonable decision in this regard is final, and no correspondence will be entered into;
  - b. set reasonable limits for the number of entries accepted in any contest in any particular year; and
  - c. cancel a particular contest, or section of a contest, if insufficient entries are received. In such cases, a RUBY entrant will be given the opportunity to move their entry to an alternative section if eligible; and all entrants affected by such cancellation, whose entries do not continue in a contest, will have their entry fees refunded.