

Central Ohio Fiction Writers

Ignite the Flame Judging Workshop

August 13, 2022

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COFW
CENTRAL OHIO FICTION WRITERS



2022

IGNITE THE FLAME CONTEST

Grand Prize: Publication

**Contest for a 10-page excerpt from an
unpublished romance manuscript**

FOR DETAILS: cofwevents.org/contest

Submissions: August 1-31

In honor of COFW member Karen Harper

Process...

- Interested readers sign up at www.cofwevents.org/judging
- Chair creates spreadsheet to assign a judge number
- Judges are emailed entries consisting of ten (10) pages of a completed manuscript
- Judges have 15 days – September 1-15 - (entries may be sent as soon as received in August) to evaluate and return their forms to the chair by email
- Judges for first and second rounds

Review of Submission guidelines (1)

- The Ignite the Flame contest is designed to reward writers who polish that critical scene in an **original** work of romance fiction where the two protagonists meet and the spark of romance sizzles between them.
- In the language of the genre, this is the Meet/Cute scene. Each submission of ten pages (see submission criteria and format below for details) will be evaluated by three judges.

Review of Submission guidelines (2)

- All writers may enter regardless of their publishing status. However, the excerpt from the entered novel may NOT be published or have a publishing contract.
- **Finalists will be asked to submit the full manuscript to verify it is complete with a minimum of 40,000 words.**

Review of Submission guidelines (3)

- The entry, whether revised in whole or in part, cannot previously have won first place in this contest in any prior year.

Review of Submission guidelines (4)

- Each entry must be a work of original romance fiction, neither published nor under a publishing contract, and may be in any of the following categories:

Contemporary Romance

Erotic Romance

Romantic comedy

Paranormal Fantasy/ Time Travel

Romantic suspense

Young Adult/ New Adult

Historical Romance.

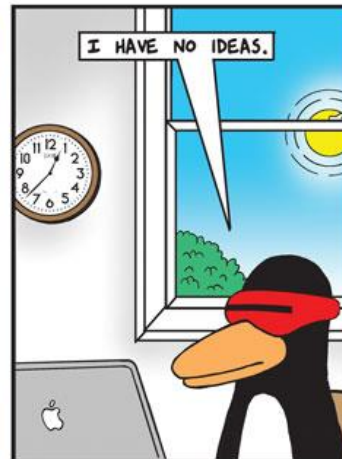
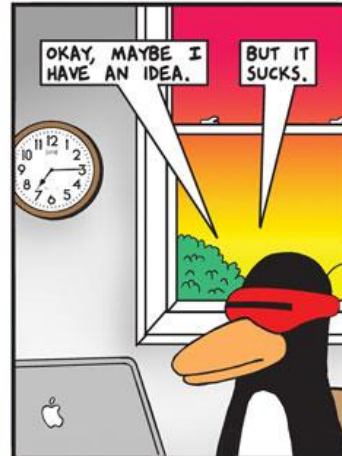
Review of Submission guidelines (5)

- **The work must contain a central love story. The resolution of the romance must be emotionally satisfying and optimistic.**
- Judging is based on ten pages showing the critical scene where your couple meets – whether it's for the first time or a reunion after a time apart – and that unforgettable spark of attraction that sizzles between them. All characters are welcome – ancient nobility or modern-day entrepreneurs, LGBTQ or straight, super stars or high school students, or not even quite human.

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

THE CREATIVE PROCESS

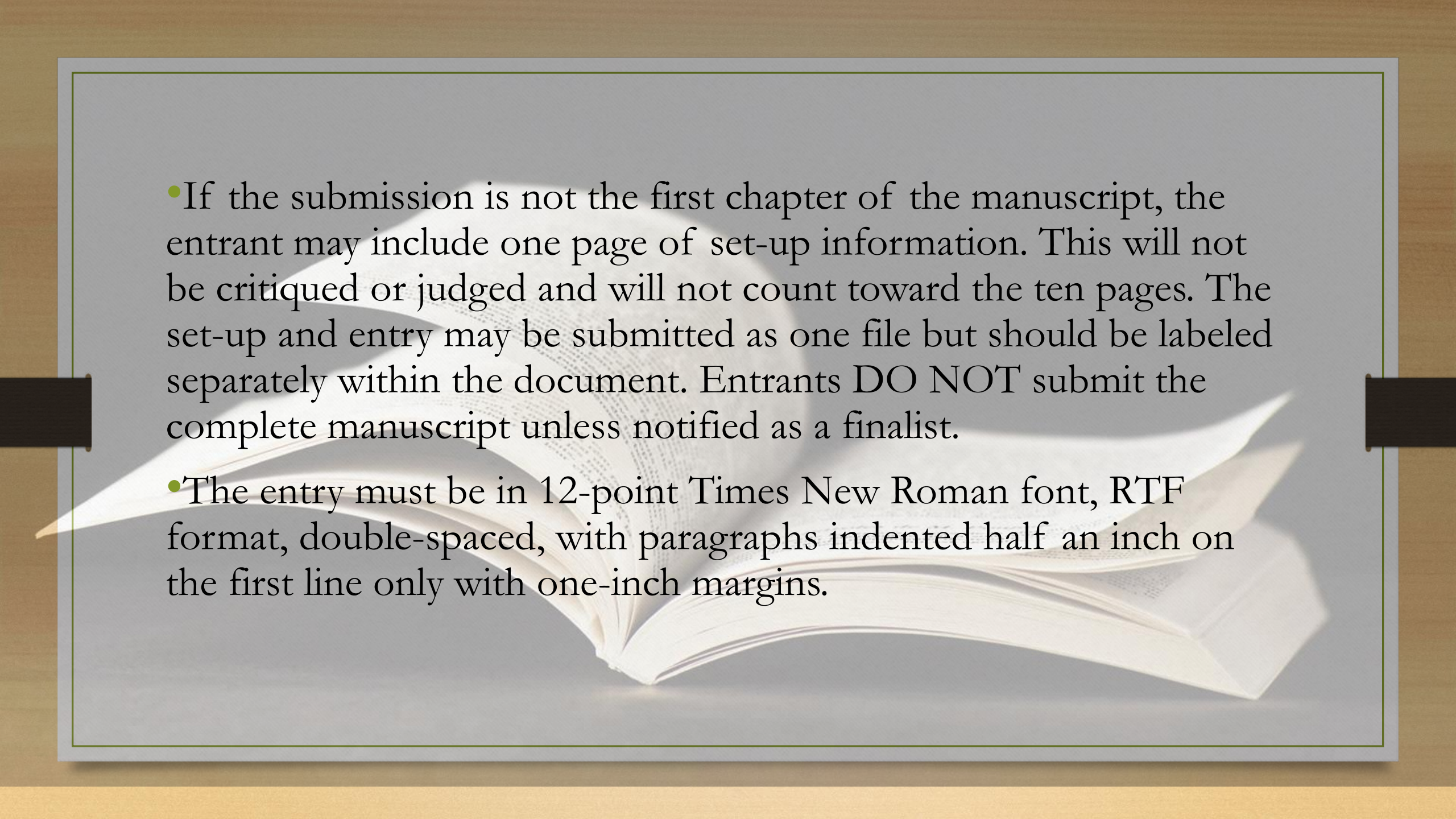


TOM TOMORROW © 2017

Chair will check the following. If you note a discrepancy, PLEASE contact the chair!

ITF-Contest@cofwevents.org

- The author's name **MUST NOT** appear anywhere on the actual submission.
- **All entries must be submitted online in RTF. Entries in any other format will not be accepted.**
- Submit a maximum of ten (10) continuous pages from your *unpublished and uncontracted* novel-length manuscript. (minimum: 40,000 words).
- Include a header with the title of the manuscript and page number on every page in the left-hand corner. Example: *The Bride Can't Cook/ Page 1*.

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- If the submission is not the first chapter of the manuscript, the entrant may include one page of set-up information. This will not be critiqued or judged and will not count toward the ten pages. The set-up and entry may be submitted as one file but should be labeled separately within the document. Entrants DO NOT submit the complete manuscript unless notified as a finalist.
 - The entry must be in 12-point Times New Roman font, RTF format, double-spaced, with paragraphs indented half an inch on the first line only with one-inch margins.

DEIA

- Diversity
- Equity
- Inclusion
- Accessibility

Evaluating the Entries

Sample Entry: The Hiding Game

Contestant #3

Judging: General Instructions (1)

IDEALS:

- **Igniting the Flame:** The selection focuses on the scene where the protagonists first realize a romantic attraction for each other
- **Characterization:** The selection introduces characters who are believable, irresistible, or captivating.
- **Plot:** The selection introduces a believable story arc that includes an attraction strong enough to bring the protagonists together despite the odds against them.

Judging: General Instructions (2)

- **Marketability:** The selection creates a hook that draws readers into the story, expresses a theme that resonates with readers, and makes continued reading essential.
- **Mechanics:** The selection is well-written, demonstrating a solid grasp of spelling, usage, grammar, and paragraph structure.

Judging: General Instructions (3)

- As you evaluate each entry, consider the feedback you wish to provide the writer. **Focus** on the basic requirement of the contest – the scene where the protagonists meet or reunite –
- **and the overall quality of the writing. Remember,** this is part of a completed manuscript. The winning entry will be published.

What to do as a Judge:

Complete the two scoring sheets: the Rubric and the
and the Contestant Feedback.

Please score each entry in each of the five categories on a scale between 1
and 5 (See the Rubric.)

When scoring, keep this scale in mind:

5 indicates excellence, a publishable work with minor flaws easily corrected with editing

4 indicates very good work that requires minor revision to make the manuscript sparkle.

3 is average, work that is good but needs polish or lacks any quality that makes it stand out.

2 indicates below average quality, a piece that requires serious revision.

1 indicates writing that reflects a lack of mastery of the basics of story construction and good writing

RUBRIC

Title of Entry: _____

Author #: _____ Judge's ID: _____

Score the entry from 1 to 5 in each of the following categories:

Igniting the Flame: _____

Consider:

The selection focuses on the scene where the protagonists first realize a romantic attraction for each other

The believability and degree of excitement the reader has for the relationship between the main character and the love interest.

Emotional and physical possibilities create a spark of awareness between them, either positive or negative.

Characterization: _____

Consider:

The selection introduces characters who are believable, irresistible, or captivating.

The main character is three-dimensional, with believable traits and flaws.

The love interest is three-dimensional, with believable traits and flaws.

The dialogue moves the story forward. It sounds natural and realistic. The author balances dialogue with narrative.

Rubric (continued)

Plot: _____

Consider:

The selection introduces a believable story arc that includes an attraction strong enough to bring the protagonists together despite the odds against them.

The two main characters have clear cut goals that feel capable of sustaining a novel.

The two main characters have believable motivations for their actions; their actions are logical for the situation.

You can determine what's at stake within this scene for each of the two main characters.

The narrative moves the story forward versus being bogged down with backstory or unnecessary descriptions.

Marketability: _____

Consider

The selection creates a hook that draws readers into the story, expresses a theme that resonates with readers, and makes continued reading essential. It totally ignited the flame.

The author uses a fresh, unique voice with a consistent tone throughout the entry.

Pacing flows well throughout the entry and pushes the story forward, holding your interest.

Sense of time and place are established. Setting is easy to picture.

Multiple senses are used to create a vivid picture.

Rubric (continued)

Mechanics: _____

Consider:

How well-written the selection is, demonstrating a solid grasp of American English spelling, usage, grammar, and paragraph structure, given that the novel of the winning piece will be published by a US publisher.

How well dialogue tagging worked.

Actions and emotions are shown rather than told. They pull you into the scene.

The entry was formatted as the guidelines required.

Total Score (5-25): _____

Determining Total Score and Finalists...

3 judges per entry

Maximum Total Points Possible: 75

Entries receiving 67.5 or more points go on to 2nd round of judging.

Can you use decimals? Yes.

Questions about scoring?

Feedback for Entrant

Title of Entry: _____

Author #: _____ Judge's ID: _____

Total Score (5-25) : _____

Positive Elements:

Elements to improve:

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"I want a detailed analysis, your best educated guess, and then round it out with some wild speculation."

OVERVIEW: Points to consider as you judge each area:

5 indicates excellence

Meets the requirement of the contest for the Meet/Cute scene where the protagonists first realize their romantic attraction for each other

Depicts two characters who are believable, irresistible, and captivating

Clearly presents the moment when the protagonists from separate aspects of their world recognize a spark of attraction strong enough to eventually, despite all odds, take them to a happily-ever-after

Captures the reader's heart, draws the reader into the story, and reflects one of many possible romantic tropes or themes

Is publishable with minor flaws in mechanics, usage, grammar, and/or paragraph structure _____

4 indicates good work

Meets requirement of the contest for the Meet/Cute scene where the protagonists first realize their romantic attraction for each other

Depicts characters who are interesting, believable, and worth rooting for

Presents the moment when two characters from seemingly different aspects of their world recognize an attraction for each other

Draws readers into the story and reflects at least one of many possible romance tropes or themes

Is publishable but not without corrections in mechanics, usage, grammar, and/or paragraph structure _____

3 indicates average work

Offers the scene where the protagonists meet but the selection isn't clear as to whether they realize their romantic attraction for the first time

Depicts protagonists who may be interesting but lack believability

Does not clearly represent two protagonists from different aspects of their world and who may show a liking for each other but not strongly enough to overcome the odds and reach a happily-ever-after

Lacks enough attraction to the characters and the scene to keep the reader's interest, and a romance theme or trope is difficult to define

Needs a fair amount of rewriting and polish to be publishable _____

2 indicates work requiring serious revision

Veers from focusing on the protagonists and their romantic attraction for each other for the first time

Fails to depict protagonists who are interesting enough to capture the reader's attention

May show two protagonists but the two do not come from two distinct aspects of their world and the spark of attraction isn't strong enough to be believable

Lacks clear direction to keep the reader interested and lacks any romance trope or theme

Shows serious deficiencies in spelling, usage, mechanics, and grammar and the need for significant editing _____

1 indicates poor work

Offers a scene(s) that does/do not show the protagonists recognizing their romantic attraction for the first time

Characters are not clearly defined as protagonists, lack interest, and are not worth rooting for

Characters are not clearly defined protagonists from separate aspects of their world and fail to show enough attraction to each other to carry them to a happily-ever-after

Rambles, preaches, shows little to no direction relevant to a romance story and the characters are more akin to stereotypes than relatable people

Contains poor writing, spelling, usage, mechanics, and grammar and requires major rewriting _____

COFW promises feedback to all entrants.

When you finish...

Please complete the feedback form with at least two statements in each heading. Additional comments are optional but encouraged if you see fit.

After you have scored your entries, email your score sheets and feedback forms, along with each entry you are judging, to ITF-Contest@cofwevents.org.

Keep a copy of each scoresheet and entry until the winner is announced.

IGNITE THE FLAME 2022

Thank you!