

SHORT STORY COMPETITION

Rules & Rubric

Shelves of Shalom
PUBLISHING

Do you have aspirations to be a published author, but writing an 80,000+ word novel seems daunting? Do you have a story to share and 10,000 words is plenty to tell the tale? Do you have a short story sitting in your hard drive collecting dust?

Shelves of Shalom Publishing is here to help! We are excited to announce this inaugural contest for our Short Story Anthology! Winners of the contest will featured in this year's publication!

Submit your short story for a chance to become a published author!

Rules



1. By submitting to the contest, all entrants agree to abide by all contest rules.
2. Members of the Shelves of Shalom team may contribute a story to the anthology, but they are NOT eligible for prizes.
3. A \$15.00 fee is to be paid at the time of registration.
4. Plagiarism of any kind will result in disqualification from the contest.
5. All entries must be in English.
6. Entries must have a rating no higher than "PG-13". *No graphic violence, excessive vulgar language, or explicit on-page love scenes.*
7. Entries must be between 2,500 and 10,000 words.
8. You may submit more than one short story; however, separate entry fees are required for each entry you submit.
9. Entries will be read and voted on by published authors and the Shelves of Shalom team.
10. Judges will use the scoring rubric to rank the entries. *See over page*
11. All entrants included in the anthology will receive a publishing credit.
12. Top three prize winners will receive a paperback copy of the anthology.

Prizes



1st

1st Place

20% Anthology royalties, and a free paperback copy of the anthology

2nd

2nd Place

TUC gift certificate, and a free paperback copy of the anthology

3rd

3rd Place

A free paperback copy of the anthology



Timeline



- April 30th, 2025**
All entries, including entry fees, must be submitted by this date.
- May 1st, 2025**
Short stories distributed to judges. Judging is according to the judging rubric.
- June 30th, 2025**
All judging finalised.
- July 7th, 2025**
Authors notified if their short story has been selected as part of the anthology. *Selected stories will go through one round of edits to prepare for publication.*
- August 4th, 2025**
Edit rounds finalized.
- September 1st, 2025**
First, Second, and Third place winners will be announced.

Anthology Publication - No later than September 30th, 2025

Cover art is prepared, anthology prepared for publication, winners details confirmed. Once ready for publication, copies sent to winners as soon as available.

Winners may be invited to complete live readings for promotional purposes after publication.

Submission



Pay entry fee

Head to the TUC Store and purchase the correct number of entries you want to submit.



Write your story

Using your favorite text editor, write your story up to 10,000 words.



Submit entry

Submit .docx/PDF entry using our official entry form.



Judging Rubric



Element	4 - Excellent	3 - Strong	2 - Fair	1 - Poor
Originality: Is the story unique? Is it predictable or does the plot keep the readers guessing? Is the story impactful and meaningful?				
Idea	The idea is completely unique or contains a unique perspective of an already existing idea.	The idea may be original, but the story is somewhat predictable.	Some original thoughts/ ideas, but the story is very predictable.	The story feels like a retelling with little to no original features
Voice: Does the writing show a strong sense of personality or is it lifeless and robotic? Does the writing evoke strong emotions from the reader? Is the writing engaging or boring?				
Sense of personality	Writing shows a strong sense of personality, individuality, vivid expression, and emotion.	Writing shows occasional moments of personality and decent amounts of vivid expression.	Writing may show some personality, but it is not strong.	Writing is lifeless and flat.
Emotion	The voice evokes a strong response from the reader.	The reader feels a mild emotional response.	Little to no emotional response is felt by the reader.	No emotion is evoked in the reader.
Structure: Does the story establish a strong plot, setting, and characters? Does the structure of the story flow and make sense to the reader with a solid beginning, middle and end? Does the story have a satisfying resolution?				
Structure	A well-organized story with smooth transitions.	The story is mostly logical and clear.	Somewhat logical, but lacks development and/or clear direction.	The story is unorganized and confusing. It is lacking a structured plot.
Story elements	Contains all elements of a story including: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.	It contains at least three of the story elements.	Story element transitions may be awkward or cliché.	Story element transitions very disjointed.
Characters: Are the characters fully formed? Are they unique from each other? Are they dynamic and relatable or are they one-dimensional and forgettable? Do characters act in accordance with their age and background?				
Form	Well rounded characters that show strengths as well as flaws. Multi-faceted, deep characters that feel real and relatable. The reader gains a strong understanding of the characters wants/need/ conflict.	Round characters that have some depth. Strengths may be present, but no hint at flaws (or vice versa) The characters are somewhat relatable to the readers.	Flat characters that might not be stereotypical, but lack depth.	Flat, boring, stereotypical characters that lack depth.
Setting: Is the setting well established? Do descriptions help the reader form a proper mental image of the setting? Do the characters fit well in the described setting?				
Story and engagement of senses	The story is grounded in a clear setting/place with dynamic descriptions. The five sense are engaged in the descriptions.	Story is grounded, descriptions are appropriate and there is some engagement beyond the sense of sight.	Some idea of the setting, but the descriptions are sparse. The only sense engaged in the description is sight.	The story is not grounded in a setting or lacks setting description.
Spelling/Grammar: Is the story grammatically correct and free of spelling and typing errors? Is dialogue written clearly? Is it easy to understand who is speaking?				
Spelling and grammar	An excellently edited document. Next to no errors in the story.	Few spelling, grammatical errors.	Many spelling, grammatical, and punctuation errors, but it is still decipherable.	Poor spelling and minimal command of grammar.
Punctuation	Punctuation is consistent and free from punctuation errors.	Few punctuation errors.	Punctuation is inconsistent and has errors.	Story is riddled with typos and punctuation errors.

