New Jersey Romance Writers

2021 Put Your Heart in a Book Contest

**First Round Score Sheet**

**JUDGING RULES**

1. Each submission contains up to the first thirty (30) pages of an unpublished manuscript as well as a synopsis. Read each submission in its entirety, keeping in mind the synopsis is for reference and will not count toward outcome of contest.
2. Judging is based on the following criteria:
	1. Storytelling
	2. Style/Elements
	3. Format/Technical Writing
3. Judges must leave in-line comments where necessary and/or beneficial for the author in a larger font and color of your choosing other than black (in order to be differentiated from the original manuscript) for both the manuscript and synopsis, and returned with this score sheet.
4. After reading the entry and leaving comments, mark one (1) score for each question, using the guidelines below. Be aware any mark of two (2) or lower **MUST** be accompanied by a comment in the space provided of that section on this score sheet.
5. Books are **NOT** rated against each other. You may give more than one book the same score.
6. The following are **NOT** disqualifiers and should not have any impact on your scoring:
	1. LGBTQIA+ protagonists or protagonists from traditionally marginalized groups
	2. More than two (2) lovers (ménage)
	3. A story that does not end in marriage or engagement.

**SCORING**

The scoring sheet is broken into two distinct sections: Submitted Chapter/Sample of Writing and the Synopsis. Please use the scale below for both sections.

 5 = Yes/Strongly Agree

 Writer successful/Ready to submit or needs very minor revisions.

 4 = Yes/Agree

 Writer accomplishes goal most of the time/Could be submitted with minor revisions.

3 = Yes/Somewhat Agree

Writer accomplishes this/Not quite ready for submission -- some revisions needed.

**\*\*\*COMMENTS ARE MANDATORY FOR ANY SCORES 2 OR BELOW\*\*\***

 2 = No/Disagree

 Writer doesn't accomplish this/Initial or rough draft level of writing.

 1 = No/Strongly Disagree

 Writer doesn't accomplish this/Initial or rough draft level of writing.

 N/A = Not Applicable

 Not able to evaluate this item (please explain)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Entry Number:** | **Title:** |
| **Judge Number:** | **Category:** |
| **Total Score:** |

**SECTION 1 - SUBMITTED SAMPLE OF WRITING**

***Storytelling (Maximum 45 points)***

 Does the story make sense?

 Does the author plant the seeds that ultimately drive the story forward?

 Does the opening grab your attention?

 Is the writing clear and tight?

 Does the writer use a mix of narrative, dialogue, and action?

 Is backstory used effectively within the prologue/first chapter?

 Are the characters well-written, believable?

 Does the pacing fit the story?

 Does the story fit the category?

 Comments:

***Style/Elements (Maximum 35 points)***

 Are the scenes essential in moving the story forward?

 Is the point of view clear and unconfused?

 Does the writer evoke the various senses with his/her writing?

 Is the overall tone of the story apparent in the prologue/first chapter?

 Is the use of sexual tension effective or can you see where it might develop later on?

 Does the writing evoke a unique/distinctive voice?

 Are the main characters introduced in a compelling manner?

 Comments:

***Format/Technical Writing (Maximum 20 points)***

 Is the entry in a professional, neat, easy-to-read format?

 Is proper grammar used?

 Are spelling and typing accurate?

 Does the point of view of the character/narrator remain consistent?

 Comments:

**TOTAL SCORE (100 Points Total):**

**General Assessment** or explanation of your scores: \_\_ \_\_\_

**The best elements of this entry are:** \_\_\_\_

 \_\_\_\_

 \_\_\_\_

 \_\_\_\_

 \_\_\_\_

 \_\_\_\_

 \_\_\_\_

**Additional comments are on submitted sample.**

**SECTION 2 – SYNOPSIS**

***POINTS OPTIONAL – WILL NOT COUNT TOWARD ENTRY TOTAL***

***Plot/Characters/Conflict (Maximum 40 points)***

 Does the first interaction of the protagonists establish the tone of the relationship?

 Does the plot, storyline, characters, conflict, drive the storyline from beginning to end?

 Are the love story and the action plot integral to each other?

 Do the characters grow and develop during the story?

 Do secondary characters and/or sub-plots enhance the main plot?

 Are the internal and external conflicts sufficiently substantial to sustain the storyline?

 Are the conflict/resolution logical and believable?

 Does the pacing move the story to completion?

 Comments:

***Mechanics (Maximum 10 points)***

 \_\_\_\_\_\_ Does the plot/projected length fit the intended market?

 \_\_\_\_\_\_ Is the present tense used as much as possible?

 Comments:

**Synopsis Total (50 Points Total):**

 **Additional comments on synopsis**: