

RWA® Mystery/Suspense Chapter presents  
***The Daphne du Maurier Award***  
FOR EXCELLENCE IN MYSTERY/SUSPENSE  
UNPUBLISHED DIVISION 2017  
HISTORICAL ROMANTIC MYSTERY/SUSPENSE  
**SAMPLE SCORE SHEET**

SCORING (123 points max.)

5 = excellent (publishable)

4 = good (close to being publishable, but still needs minor work)

3 = average (but not special)

2 = (shows promise, but needs improvement)

1 = poor (needs major work)

**Important:** Please comment liberally on both the score sheet and the manuscript. This is a contest for unpublished writers, and entrants both need and rely on your comments to help them in their writing process. Contests are one of the most important ways to obtain feedback. For any question scored 3 or less, the Daphne Committee strongly urges that you include comments and/or an explanation.

**BEGINNING OF MANUSCRIPT**

\_\_\_ Does the hook pull you into the story?

\_\_\_ Does the author reveal the right amount of information, not too much or too little?

\_\_\_ Is there an idea/foreshadow of the mystery/suspense to come in the opening pages?

COMMENTS:

**PLOT/PACING**

\_\_\_ Is the plot original and well-executed?

\_\_\_ Does the plot have the potential to sustain an entire book in historical romance?

\_\_\_ Is the pacing appropriate to historical romantic suspense?

COMMENTS:

**CHARACTERIZATION**

\_\_\_ Are the characters skillfully developed?

\_\_\_ Are the characters appropriate to the plot?

\_\_\_ Are the characters at home in their time, or are there 21st-century "drop-ins" with 21st-century agendas?

\_\_\_ In the opening pages, is there an idea or foreshadow of the relationship to come?

\_\_\_ Are the characters' actions and reactions believable?

COMMENTS:

### **HISTORICAL SPECIFIC**

- Are there any glaring anachronisms that would jolt the reader out of the story?
- Does the aspect of mystery/suspense blend with the romantic historical theme?
- Do the historical elements draw you into the overall setting?

COMMENTS:

### **DIALOGUE/NARRATIVE**

- Does the dialogue ring "true" for the time period?
- Is there a good balance between dialogue and narrative?
- Do the dialogue and narrative progress the story and help build the suspense?

COMMENTS:

### **SETTING**

- Does the setting give a sense of time and place and set the mood of the story?
- Is the setting interwoven into the plot and does it enhance the story rather than pull the reader from it?
- Are the details significant to the story? Do they move the plot along?

COMMENTS:

### **POINT OF VIEW**

- Is the POV clear at all times?

COMMENTS:

### **STYLE/VOICE**

- Is the writing vivid and evocative? Does it have a certain spark that keeps you reading?
- Are sentence structure and length varied?
- Is the entry free of typos and errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation?

### **OPTIONAL BONUS POINTS**

Check all that apply – Worth 1 additional point each

- Was the entry a compelling read?
- Would you like to read the entire book?
- Would you recommend this book to a friend if it were published?

### **TIE BREAKER STATEMENT**

Please mark ONE (1) statement that best describes this particular entry. This will be added to the total score ONLY in the event of a tie-breaker.

- 6. This manuscript is superb – masterfully written.
- 5. A wonderful read.
- 4. An entertaining read.
- 3. Well done.
- 2. Somewhat enjoyable.
- 1. Some good moments.

**OVERALL MANUSCRIPT COMMENTS** (feel free to add comments to the manuscript or add them here):

Optional – Judge’s Name:

Sample