

RWA® Mystery/Suspense Chapter presents
The Daphne du Maurier Award FOR EXCELLENCE IN MYSTERY/SUSPENSE
UNPUBLISHED DIVISION 2018
MAINSTREAM 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 This is a contest for unpublished writers, and entrants both need and rely on your comments to help them in their writing process.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 mainstream mystery/suspense?

___ Is the pacing appropriate to mainstream mystery/suspense?

COMMENTS:

CHARACTERIZATION

___ Are the characters skillfully developed?

___ Are the characters appropriate to the plot?

___ Are the characters' actions and reactions believable?

COMMENTS:

MAINSTREAM SPECIFIC

___ Is the external conflict evident?

___ Is the premise on which the story is created solid enough to build the story to its ultimate climax?

___ Is at least one protagonist introduced into the story in a timely manner?

___ Is at least one protagonist introduced in a way that makes you want to read more?

COMMENTS:

DIALOGUE/NARRATIVE

- Is there a good balance between dialogue and narrative?
- Does the dialogue progress the story and help build the suspense?
- Does the narrative progress the story and help build the suspense?
- Does the dialogue ring true (normal and conversational, not too stiff and unnatural)?

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?

COMMENTS:

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):