

# SAMPLE SCORE SHEET

RWA® Mystery/Suspense Chapter presents  
**The Daphne du Maurier Award FOR EXCELLENCE IN MYSTERY/SUSPENSE**  
PUBLISHED DIVISION 2023  
NOVELLA SUSPENSE  
**SAMPLE SCORE SHEET**

SCORING (100 points max.)

5 = excellent

4 = good

3 = average

2 = fair

1 = poor

Important: Please comment extensively. This is a contest for unpublished authors and entrants need your comments to improve their writing process. Contests are an excellent place to get feedback from other authors. All comments must be professional and encouraging. For any question scored 3 or less, judges are particularly encouraged to include an explanation.

Any concerns to share with the contest committee? Please let us know if this book is entered in the wrong category, contains language or situations that are culturally or racially offensive, or is otherwise problematic.

Comments (not required to have a response)

## OPENING

\_\_\_ Opening hook: is it a real attention grabber?

\_\_\_ Opening pages: does the author reveal the right amount of information to compel you to read on?

Space for comments

## STORY

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

\_\_\_ Is the pacing appropriate to the category?

\_\_\_ Does the conflict arise naturally from the situation (is not forced)?

\_\_\_ Does the author effectively create a suspenseful atmosphere throughout?

Space for comments

# SAMPLE SCORE SHEET

## CHARACTERIZATION

- \_\_\_ Are the characters skillfully developed?
- \_\_\_ Are the characters' back stories shared in an effective and meaningful way?
- \_\_\_ Do the internal and external conflicts the characters face drive the story forward to a satisfying conclusion?

Space for 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?

Space for 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?

Space for comments

## DIALOGUE/NARRATIVE

- \_\_\_ Is there a good balance between dialogue and narrative?
- \_\_\_ Does the dialogue ring true (normal and conversational, not too stiff and unnatural)?

Space for comments

## CATEGORY SPECIFIC QUESTIONS – NOVELLA

- \_\_\_ Is there an atmosphere of suspense and/or curiosity about the central puzzle/conflict that creates a desire to read further?
- \_\_\_ Is there sufficient concern for the protagonist(s) as they investigate and attempt to find a resolution?
- \_\_\_ Are there sufficient twists and turns, red herrings and real clues to keep the reader guessing?

Space for comments

# SAMPLE SCORE SHEET

Please mark ONE statement that best describes this particular entry. This question will only be used as a tie-breaker.

- 5. An excellent book: one of the best I've read lately
- 4. A wonderful read
- 3. Well done
- 2. Some good moments
- 1. A struggle to complete the reading

Additional comments for the author:

Optional: Judge's Name