

# IFW

## CONTEST RULES

**Submission Requirements: Any original, unpublished piece not accepted by any publisher at the time of submission is eligible.**

# Get Started

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- Each entry must be accompanied by a non-refundable reading fee of \$19 (credit card or debit card).
- The entry fee will also entitle you to free entry to an instructional and educational webinar with the judge of the contest to be held after the winners have been chosen. You will have access to the replay for a limited time as well. Non-entrants must pay for their ticket to the webinar.
- Entries are submitted online: We have developed a safe and secure web page for your contest submission. It is easy to use.
- An “unpublished piece” means not published anywhere as of yet. That means anything from your own blog, someone else’s, or through a magazine or book. The idea is to get you writing, stretching, and following submission guidelines.

## How it works

- You will first be directed to the section requiring the pre-payment of a \$19 reading fee. You can enter as many times as you want, but each manuscript must be entered individually with its own reading fee.
- After your purchase, you will be sent to the manuscript entry page. Bookmark that page!
- After you pay your entry fee, you will be sent a welcome email with a link to the submission page. If you are not ready to upload your manuscript or you are not directed to the submission page immediately after your purchase, please check your email for the link to the submissions page. You do not need to pay the fee more than once per entry.

# Important Notes

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- When your manuscript is ready, use the submission form linked in the welcome email to upload your entry.
- The contest is open to writers 18-years-old and up. No minors may enter the contest.
- We cannot return submissions; please retain a copy of your manuscript.
- All submissions must meet the entry deadline outlined in the contest.
- Entries must be typed double-spaced.
- Entries should be text only and may not include illustrations or photographs.
- No cover page is required for this contest. Each page should have a page number in the lower right corner.
- Proofread your entry before submitting. Follow these contest rules, just as you would follow a publisher's submission guidelines.
- Entering this contest means you acknowledge and agree that, if you place in this contest, ICL may read aloud and critique your entry during the Winners Workshop where the winners will be announced. In addition, any positive comments made in the chat or about the webinar may be used as testimonials.

**NOTE: All submissions are final, once you click the submit button on the submissions form. If you send something incorrectly or without your name, etc., you must go through the process of submitting again, which includes another fee. Avoid errors by proofreading and taking your time to make sure everything is correct.**

## **Our Standards**

No entries containing violence or derogatory, racist, or sexist language or situations will be accepted, at the sole discretion of the judges. No employees, relatives of employees, or former employees of the Institute or its divisions are eligible.

## **International Submissions**

If you are purchasing with an address outside of the US, please allow 1-2 business days to process your registration and receive the submission link. If, after 3 business days, you do not receive the submission link in your email, please contact [learn@instituteformwriters.com](mailto:learn@instituteformwriters.com).

## **Winners and Rights**

The winners will be announced at the Winners Workshop, in our Facebook group and in any upcoming newsletters, which receives first rights to the prize-winning manuscripts, after which all rights revert to the authors. We do not own your work product in any way, shape, or form. However, we reserve the right to first publication of the winning entries in our newsletter and as soon as we've done that, you're free to send to anyone you wish. We do not hold the rights after the winners have been published in those places, which is approximately seven weeks after the announcement is made during the Winners Workshop.

## **Judges**

All entries will be read by faculty and editorial staff members of the Institute of Children's Literature. Winners will be notified by email (or other means) approximately 90 days after the close of the contest if not by other means. Once the winners are announced, all non-winning entries are released for submission elsewhere.

# How to Format Your Work

- Double space your manuscript.
- Margins should be one inch all around.
- Use Times New Roman or Courier, 12-point font.
- Include your first and last name in the upper left corner of every page. (Do not include any other contact information on your manuscript.)
- Word count only goes on first page and should be located in the upper left corner under your name.
- Number all pages in the lower right corner.
- Check the current contest's rules for the proper naming conventions. Submissions will only be accepted as a PDF or Word document.

## Tips to a successful entry

In the upper left hand corner on every page include your name. The word count only goes on the first page. (No cover page or other contact information is required on your manuscript.) Entries that do not follow this format are subject to disqualification.

We received this question in our ICL Facebook group (which you can join here):

Question: "I know it should be double-spaced, but is it OK to add the extra space between paragraphs (or stanzas for a poem or something)? Or is it just all double-spaced with no break between stanzas? I didn't see this in the contest rules."

Answer: As most things we do, this rule is meant to teach. The rule is to teach that there is a proper format. We hope that our contestants will be compelled to learn what that is, and submit correctly. Then, when they are submitting to a publisher, they will have had a good lesson and won't mess up when it's even more important. If an entry is sent in, for example, with a single-spaced, run-on sentence, that would be eliminated. Double-spacing and then formatting so there is more space to differentiate between stanzas makes perfect sense. If it's not a poem or rhyming story, the correct format is as follows in the images below.

**And remember, we're not out to "get you." We don't want to disqualify anyone and you'd have to really not follow the rules to be disqualified, like send in your full-length novel manuscript for a 500-word contest, or send a submission written in Vulcan.**

This is what your first page should look like.

Your Name Goes Here

Word Count Goes Here

A Note From Katie Davis, Director, Institute of Children's Literature

(Your Title Would Go Here)

I've written this so you can see how your entry should be formatted. (To be clear, where it says "A Note From Katie Davis, Director, Institute of Children's Literature" is where you'd put your title.) We want you to submit your entries this way so you get used to submitting your work to editors and agents properly. Plus, it makes it way easier for the judge to read. (And we sure do like making our judges happy.) But make sure to read the complete contest rules on the website because there is a lot more info on the page.

We hear from writers who are worried they'll get disqualified for little stuff. For legal reasons we *have* to state you can be disqualified if you don't follow the rules. I'm telling you, if you have a fabulous story that deserves to win, but you didn't format your entry, you're not going to be disqualified. Bad grammar? Wrong spelling? Crazy fonts? Single spacing? ALL CAPS? Those are definitely things you want to avoid in your efforts to be a good writer. Even a diligent writer can have mistakes, but if your story trumps your errors, you're not going to be disqualified. (And the good news is, whether you win or not, you'll be invited to our contest webinar where you can learn from the critiques of the winners' entries and apply those lessons to your future writing.)

# Sample Format

- Rights: The Institute of Children's Literature will have first rights to the prize-winning manuscripts to publish on their website and/or in their newsletter, after which all rights revert to the authors.

This is what your following pages should look like.

Your Name Goes Here

You won't be disqualified unless you severely stray from what we ask. In other words, and to mangle a quote by our newsletter editor, Jan Fields, if we ask for a sweet story about the romance between a tree and a dog, don't send your submission written in Vulcan. ;-)

You *do* need to include your name on every page in the upper left hand corner. So, first page: your name and word count; following pages get just your name. No cover page is required.

Good luck!