

Meryton Press Holiday Romance Short Story Contest

BEGINS – 9:00 a.m. June 15, 2015 (US Pacific Time)

ENDS – 11:59 p.m. July 15, 2015 (US Pacific Time)

Meryton Press is conducting a contest to find the best short stories.

The theme of the contest, “Holiday Romance,” represents the season from Thanksgiving to New Years Day. The interpretation of the theme is left to the writer’s imagination; the story may have the season as an incidental backdrop or may highlight the warmth and good will of the holidays. It may be a romance set entirely before a fire on a cold winter’s night, the plight of a young couple hosting their first family Thanksgiving, or the mystery of an anonymous holiday philanthropist with a reporter hot on his tale. So many holidays, so many stories: Thanksgiving, Christmas, the Winter Solstice, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, Boxing Day, New Years Eve...

Any genre is acceptable as long as there is ROMANCE. Austenesque is a plus, but is not required. In other words, so long as there is a commonly accepted or acceptable interpretation of the theme embedded in the plot, it works for us. However, this contest is not for children’s stories. Our target audience is readers over 18 years old.

The contest will be judged by a panel of independent judges, and the results will be announced around Labor Day 2015.

A long list of entries will be selected for final judging by a panel of expert editors and reviewers. The long list will consist of at least eight quality entries. All entries on the long list will receive a letter with constructive criticism on how the story could have been improved. Four winners will be selected from the long list and will be awarded prizes as detailed in the guidelines below (see “Contest Prizes”).

In addition, all four winning entries will be published in an anthology planned for release in late Autumn 2015. The anthology will include not only the four winners, but stories from Meryton Press’ popular and award-winning authors.

All published authors will be given a free copy of the anthology.

For detailed guidelines and rules, please refer below:

2015 Meryton Press Holiday Romance Short Story Contest Rules

The rules below govern the 2015 Meryton Press Holiday Romance Short Story Contest 2015 ("Contest").

Sponsor: The Contest is sponsored by Meryton Press, Inc.

Eligibility: The Contest is open to all writers **18 years** old or above. There is no limit to the number of entries per person, but this is not bingo, and more submissions do not necessarily translate into higher chances of winning.

Contest and Judging Criteria:

- Entries must be received by **US Pacific Time 11:59 p.m. July 15, 2015**. Submissions should be made to anthology@merytonpress.com
- Stories must be written in **English, original** and **unpublished** up to the time the winners are declared on or about **September 7, 2015**.
- Stories must be **double-spaced**, in **Times New Roman font size 10** and **not more than 15,000 words**.
- Entries must be submitted as a Microsoft Word attachment.
- The name of the story and total word count must be printed on the front page of the story.
- Entries must be made under your legal name; however, pseudonyms are permitted in the event your story is selected for publication.
- All submissions are final. No changes or substitutions to a story are allowed once your entry is received.
- Queries before submission are welcome but must relate to the contest rules or difficulties in submission.
- By entering the Contest, entrants agree to allow Meryton Press to publish their stories, names and biographical information in all media, including but not limited to newspapers and online websites, without any compensation except the prizes to the notified winners as detailed under "Contest Prizes." However, the above clause shall be null and void if the entry does not make it to the Long List after first round of judging, and all rights will revert to the authors.

- **Do not send photographs with entries.** Winners will be contacted about a photograph at a later date and must agree to publication of his/her photograph.
- In connection with your submission, you affirm, represent, and/or warrant that you own or have the necessary licenses, rights, consents, and permissions to use and authorize sponsors to use all copyright, trademark, or other proprietary rights in and to your submission to enable inclusion and use of the submission in the manner contemplated by these Contest rules.
- Sponsor reserves the right to reject and disqualify any submissions that could be offensive or inappropriate or that do not meet the terms and conditions of these rules.

Judging and notification:

- The Meryton Press panel will complete the first round of judging. The Long List will be submitted to a panel of experts who will select the three runners up and the grand prize winner.
- Entries will be scored on plot and/or character build up, quality of narrative, and relevance of the plot vis-à-vis the theme. Final decision will be based on the sum total of the scores from the judges. The decisions of the contest judges will be final in respect of any matter relating to this Contest.
- The winners will be contacted by email by the Sponsor; winners must reply within two working weeks to maintain eligibility. If the winner(s) cannot be contacted within this time period or fail(s) to respond to any attempted contact, such winner(s) will be disqualified, his/her entry will be declared null and void, and the Sponsor reserves the right, at its sole and absolute discretion, to select another winner based on the judging criteria, in which event these provisions shall apply to such other eligible entry.

Contest Prizes:

Apart from publication of the four winners in an anthology, prizes will be awarded as below. Payment will be through PayPal.

- First Prize:
 - **US\$150**
 - **Professional editing of entry**
 - **Blog tour inclusion**
 - **Priority submission of a longer work**
 - **Four copies of published anthology**
- Runners up:
 - **US\$100**

- **Professional editing of entry**
- **Blog tour inclusion**
- **Publication in the anthology**
- **Two copies of published anthology**

Ownership/Use Rights: Entrants retain the copyright to their stories. However, by entering the Contest and on being selected for the Long List after the first round of judging, you grant the Sponsor:

- A non-exclusive, royalty-free license to publish and reproduce in part or full in online media, e-books and traditional books
- Permission to display your full name, short story and photograph in connection with Sponsor's business through online media channels

However, before commencing with the exercise of such license, you will be allowed seven days' time from the date of the Long List notification delivered to you by email to decide whether you agree to retain your participation in the Contest.

Indemnity: By participating in this Contest, you agree to defend, indemnify and hold harmless the Sponsor and its office bearers from any and all damages, injuries, claims, causes of action, or losses of any kind (including but not limited to lawyers' fees) arising from your participation in the Contest, your violation of any term of these Contest rules, your violation of any third party right, including without limitation any copyright, property, or privacy right; or any claim that your submission caused damage to a third party.

Banning: The Sponsor may prohibit, in its sole discretion, any person from entering the Contest whom it believes to be abusing the rules. Such abuse includes but is not limited to falsification of information and/or identity, plagiarism, racial discrimination, and bigotry.

Force Majeure clause: The Sponsor is not liable for failure to perform their obligations under these rules if such failure is as a result of Acts of God (including natural disasters), Acts of War, civil unrest, usurped power or confiscation, terrorist activities, prevention by statutes, or interruption or massive and sustained failure of electricity, internet, or telephone service.

Any extension/reduction of contest and/or the judging window will be at the sole discretion of the organizers, and will be notified on the website if extended.

Taxes: You will be responsible for your own federal and state income taxes. Mervton

Press is required to keep signed W-9 or equivalent for non-residents on file. A 1099 will be issued annually per the laws of the United States Government to US citizens and resident aliens.

Assignment of Rights: Neither party may assign this agreement without first obtaining the written consent of the other party, unless we sell or transfer substantially all our assets or ownership interest to the assignee, when no consent will be needed.

Arbitration & Contract: Our agreement is subject to the laws of Washington State governing contracts made and to be performed there. Any disputes under the contract will be submitted for arbitration in the State of Washington.

For queries relating to the Contest, mail us at submissions@merytonpress.com