

Include a header on each manuscript with the title, category/genre, estimated manuscript word count on the left. Page numbers on the right. NO entrant's name or pseudonym should be in the header.

1" side margin

For your Crown Award entry, the one-page synopsis should be single-spaced with one-inch margins, and begin one double-space below the header. The synopsis may use indented paragraphs with no spaces between the paragraphs or block paragraphs with a double space between paragraphs. This sample page uses indented paragraphs with no spaces between paragraphs. Please insert the synopsis first in the document, then the manuscript pages. You should have six pages total. You must use a 12-point font. The contest requires the use of one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier New, Garamond, Cambria, or Book Antiqua.

Be certain that only your synopsis goes on the first page. This is where you tell story so judges, agents, and editors will know exactly how it plays out and what the ending is. For resources on writing a synopsis, visit acfwvirginia.com/writers-toolbox or do an online search.

At the end of the synopsis (and the end of each chapter), it is highly recommended you insert a page break since the rest of your entry will have different formatting. The page break prevents the two types of formatting from overlapping. If you are unsure how to do this, Google *how to insert a page break* and designate Mac or PC.

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Thank you for entering the Crown Award! We pray it is a beneficial experience.

4 double spaces or 8 single spaces from the header to the chapter or prologue beginning.

Chapter One

Start the first page of your manuscript 4 double spaces (8 single spaces) below the header. There should only be one double space between the chapter heading and the first paragraph. The manuscript should be double-spaced with indented paragraphs and one-inch margins.

1" side margin

Each new paragraph should be indented .5 inches from the margin, and all font sizes and styles must be the same as used for the synopsis.

Your entry will contain, in this order, a one page, single-spaced synopsis, followed by your first chapter, up to the first 5 pages of your manuscript. Prologues are acceptable and are included in the 5-page count. The entry will be 6 pages total, including synopsis. You may send less than 6 pages. DO NOT SEND MORE THAN 6 PAGES.

.5" indent

To indicate a scene break, insert a single hashtag (#) or three hashtags (###) or three asterisks (***) one double-space down from the last line of the previous scene. Begin the new scene one double-space down from the hashtag(s) or asterisks.

Entries with borders, frames, or incorrect formatting will not be allowed. Entries not fulfilling the specifications will be returned to the entrant with one opportunity to correct and resubmit. After this, the entry will be rejected. Entry fees will not be refunded.

1" side margin

Do NOT place your name or pseudonym anywhere on the synopsis or manuscript.

Please do not post the name or other identifiers of your Crown-entered manuscript(s) to any of your online profiles (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) to allow judging to be unbiased and anonymous.

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To properly center the chapter headings or hashtags for a scene break, you must back space to remove the indentation, then center the line.

Authors must be age 18 years or older.

An author whose work has not been previously published in novella* or any book-length fiction (in ANY print or online form, including lead magnets and sites such as Wattpad, Substack, etc.) is eligible to enter The Crown. *For the Crown Award, a novella is any work of fiction whose length is between 20,000-50,000 words.

Authors who are published in non-fiction and picture books are eligible to enter an unpublished fiction manuscript.

There is no limit to the number of entries an author may submit, however, a single manuscript may not be entered into multiple categories.

Contest is open to ACFW-VA members and non-members.

Any author contracted for publication in fiction, on or before August 5, 2022, is not eligible to enter. If an entrant receives a contract after August 5, 2022, they may remain in the contest. Please email us to withdraw your entry if you are contracted for any work of fiction prior to this date.

Any author who has entered The Crown may not independently publish any work until after The Crown finalists are announced. However, if they are a finalist in the contest, then they may not independently publish any work until after the winners are announced.

In any category, if fewer than five (5) entries are received, the category will be dissolved and the entrant's alternate choice category on their submission will be used. The author is responsible for choosing the appropriate category for their entry.

Previous winning entries of The Crown are not eligible to be entered in this year's contest. Previous finalist (non-winning) entries may be entered again.

The manuscript should not contain profanity, graphic sex, gratuitous violence, or other objectionable material and must otherwise conform to generally accepted standards of the CBA. The ACFW-VA Conference Board may order the disqualification of submissions not meeting this requirement.

Manuscripts are not required to be complete in order to enter, but it is strongly suggested as industry professionals will judge the finalists.

New chapters must begin after a page break, on a new page. As with the first chapter, each new chapter begins 4 double spaces or 8 single spaces down. All previous formatting applies.

Chapter Two

The Contest Coordinator reserves the right to combine categories if a minimum of five entries are not received per category.

Contemporary: Novels or sagas set in any location with a contemporary setting. This category includes literary fiction, women's fiction, time-slip, and mainstream fiction. Stories in this category may have romance elements but are not central to the plot.

Contemporary Romance: In Contemporary Romance, the love story is the main focus of the novel. These stories in this category can be dramatic or comedic and will have an emotionally satisfying ending for the hero and heroine.

Historical/Historical Romance/Historical Romantic Suspense (through the Vietnam era): Novels or sagas set in any location, in which the time frame of the majority of the story is historical rather than contemporary. The time period can be up to and including the Vietnam era. If the entry is Historical Romance, the love story should be a central focus of the novel, and the end of the story is emotionally satisfying for the hero and heroine.

Mystery/Thriller/Suspense/Romantic Suspense: Novels set in any contemporary location in which suspense or mystery is an integral part of the plot, including those with a strong romance element. Historical romantic suspense stories should be entered in the Historical category.

Speculative: Novels in which the science fiction, the future, other planets, a fantasy world, or paranormal happenings are a major element of the plot or setting. This category includes science fiction, fantasy, paranormal, futuristic, allegory, and alternate history fiction. Stories targeted primarily at young adult readers should be entered in the Young Adult category.

Young Adult/Middle Grade: Novels targeted toward young adult readers ages 12 through 18. The stories in this category can be dramatic, comedic, romantic, or non-romantic. Science Fiction/Fantasy/Allegory stories targeted primarily at young adult readers can be entered in this category. Stories targeted at Middle-Grade readers are included in this category.

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Under no circumstances should comments provided by a judge be used for publicity purposes without the express consent of the judge.

During the first round, judges (traditionally published or well-established Indie authors) will score each entry, up to a maximum of 100 points per entry. Judges will use a scoresheet to evaluate entries. The scores will be averaged. The use of track changes to leave comments for contestants is strongly encouraged but not required. The top three (3) finalists in each category will continue to the final round.

Final round judges consist of industry professionals (agents, editors, leading authors in each category, and influential book bloggers). In each category, the entry receiving the top final round score becomes the category winner. In the event of a tie, the previous round scores of the tied entries will be used to break the tie. If any category winner is disqualified or withdraws for any reason, the next highest-scoring finalist will be moved up to become category winner.

All judging is blind. Entrants' names are only known by the coordinator.