

Gem Story – 500-1500 words

This piece may target the mainstream or the Christian Market. Truth may be presented subtly or openly, as long as there is no contradiction of Scripture.

All entries are original and unpublished.

Score out of 100	Youth Fiction
_/5	Format: Double-spaced; Left-aligned; 1-inch margins; Times New Roman, 12; Don't allow extra line space before or after paragraphs; Ensure a standard indentation of each new paragraph (usually 1.27 cm)
_/10	Hook: Title and opening pulls reader into the story. There is a strong hook. The story starts in the right place, not too late, not too soon.
_/10	Voice: The writing is compelling, clear, and consistent all the way through. There is a good balance between showing and telling. Figurative language, such as metaphors and similes, open up the story and make it more interesting and clear, rather than pulling the reader away. Writer does not slow down the action with too many passive verbs and adverbs.
_/10	Point of View: The point of view (POV) is consistent and clear throughout, without head-hopping. If the POV changes, it is intentional and denoted with 3 asterisks centered on the line between them. It takes the story forward. POV stays true to the character viewpoint. It includes only scenes this POV character can experience and knowledge that only this character can know. POV is deep enough and close enough when appropriate.
_/10	Setting & Description: Setting and physical details contribute to the mood and theme and move the story forward. There is a reason for the setting (for example in a murder mystery the sky could be dark and gloomy). There is a reason for the description of every detail; if there is a gun above the mantel, why? If it is never used in the story, then why did you describe it? All details must have a reason to belong.

_ /15	<p><u>Conflict/Tension</u>: Main character must want something, or want to get away from something, and it must be a desperate or critical situation in which they are stuck! At least, to the main character, it is significant.</p> <p>This character engages the reader with their emotional intensity. If they cannot get what they need, there will be some kind of loss for the character. The stakes are high.</p> <p>Because there are obstacles in the way, there is tension. This tension keeps the reader turning the page to see if the main character gets what he wants.</p>
_ /10	<p><u>Character Arc</u>: The main character is flawed in some way and needs to change. He may not sense that need at the beginning, but as this character engages in the conflict to get what he wants, he will grow or change in some major way. At the end of the story he may not get what he wanted (external want), but rather what he needed (internal need), and will be satisfied because he will have changed or transformed in a meaningful way. In a short story there may not be room for another character to be fully developed but they too will have their own flaws, goals, conflict, and character growth, even if only shown in a minor way.</p>
_ /10	<p><u>Dialogue</u>: Dialogue reveals character and advances the story.</p> <p>Characters do not reveal a lot of information that they already know, but their dialogue is natural, and distinctive to their personality.</p> <p>Dialogue does not use too much dialect or accent which jars the reader from the story.</p>
_ /10	<p><u>Literacy</u>: Author has a strong command of grammar, punctuation, capitalization, usage, and spelling. The command of English is excellent.</p> <p>Sometimes the author may break the rules of grammar, but it is done effectively and not so often that it causes confusion.</p>
_ /10	<p><u>Conclusion/Resolution</u>: The reader enjoys at the very least a satisfying conclusion or at best a powerful emotional experience. Any problems that were introduced at the beginning are now resolved; not that each character has solved all their problems, but they have either gained what they were striving for, or they have changed in such a way that they are equipped to deal with the problem.</p> <p>There are no story lines dropped, waiting to be finished. There may be interest for more, but the main problems are resolved.</p>

Additional Comments:

