

## Frequently Asked Questions for Authors Entering the Diamond Heart Awards and Golden Hearts Awards

**Q:** Who is eligible to enter the contests?

**A:** The Diamond Hearts Awards are open to both RWA members and non-members who have published a romance novel or novella in 2021, 2022, or 2023.

The Golden Hearts Awards are open to RWA members who have not accepted a publishing contract for or self-published a work of original fictional narrative prose of 20,000 words or more under any pen name. For determining eligibility to enter the Golden Heart Awards, “Novel” means a work of fiction of more than 40,000 words (as defined by computer word count) that has been commercially available. “Novella” means a work of fiction of 20,000-40,000 words (as defined by computer word count) that has been commercially available. Golden Heart entries must not have finished in whole or part into previous contests for unpublished RWA members administered by the RWA national organization (e.g., THE VIVIAN or past Golden Heart Award contests).

**Q:** How many entries can an author submit?

**A:** June 5 to June 16, the Diamond Heart Awards and Golden Heart Awards are open, and authors can submit one entry. June 17 to June 21, authors can submit a second entry if the contests have not reached their entry caps. Each author may submit up to two entries.

**Q:** What are the entry fees?

**A:** Diamond Heart entry fee for the first book is RWA members \$65 and non-members \$195; second entry fee is RWA members \$85 and non-members \$195. The entry fee for the Golden Heart is \$55 per entry.

**Q:** What are the requirements for entries?

**A:** All entries must be original works of romance fiction with a central love story and an emotionally satisfying, optimistic ending. Entries cannot contain any harmful or offensive content. Published entries must have a 2021, 2022, or 2023 English language release date and be submitted as a PDF file authorized by the publisher. Golden Heart entries must be unpublished, full manuscripts, and submitted as a PDF file.

**Q:** How do I choose the category for my entry?

**A:** Authors select the category that best fits their book. If the minimum number of entries for a category is not met, authors can opt to move their entry to another category within the same genre or select a second category during initial entry.

**Q:** What are the rounds of judging?

**A:** There are three rounds of judging.

Round One

- The purpose of this first round is to establish a minimum standard for submissions.
- Round One will have three judges per entry.
- Judges will receive the entire work and answer six yes/no questions.

Round Two

- The purpose of round two is to narrow the entrants to the finalists.
- Round Two will have five judges per entry.
- The judges will read the entire work and assign scores according to the rubric.
- There are 10 areas to be scored per entry.

Round Three

- The purpose of round three is to select the winners.
- Round Three will have five judges per entry.
- The judges will read each finalist work and assign scores according to the rubric.

**Q:** When will finalists and winners be notified?

**A:** Finalists will be notified by phone call on November 1, 2024, with a public announcement on RWA's website by 2 p.m. Central Time that day. Winners will be announced at the Virtual Awards Ceremony date TBD.

**Q:** How are winners determined?

**A:** The top scoring 5% of entries in each category from the second round (with a maximum of 10 entries per category) will advance to the third round. Winners are determined by the

highest total of the three middle scores from the five third round judges based on the third-round rubric.

**Q:** When and how will final scores be provided?

**A:** Final scores will be made available to entrants up to five business days after the contest has concluded, and the winners have been announced.

**Q:** Whom should I contact if I have questions?

**A:** Please direct all questions to [contests@rwa.org](mailto:contests@rwa.org).

**Q:** What is the contest schedule?

**A:** The contest schedule is as follows:

Wednesday, April 17, 2024

Judge sign-up begins.

Friday, May 10, 2024

Judge sign-ups close.

Friday, May 17, 2024

Last day for judges to complete training and testing.

Monday, June 3, 2024

An initial entry cap will be announced based on the number of accepted judges.

Wednesday, June 5, 2024

The contest opens at 11 a.m. Central Time. Members and non-members may submit one entry into the Diamond Heart Awards at this time. Unpublished RWA members may submit one entry into the Golden Heart Awards at this time. Entries will be placed on a waitlist if the initial entry cap is met.

Monday, June 17, 2024

At 11 a.m. Central Time, both member and non-member entrants may enter a second book into the Diamond Heart Awards if the final entry cap has not been met. Unpublished RWA member entrants may enter a second manuscript into the Golden Heart Awards if the final entry cap has not been met. All entrants may enter up to two works in total. Works may not be entered into more than one category.

Friday, June 21, 2024

The contests close to entries at 5 p.m. Central Time.

Monday, July 1, 2024

Deadline for books to be submitted to RWA's contest site. Failure to meet this deadline will result in disqualification and forfeiture of the entry fee.

Friday, June 28, 2024

Onboarding will be available to judges on the training website.

Friday, July 19, 2024

The first round of judging will open. Entries and score sheets will be available to the judges on the contest website.

Monday, August 26, 2024

Round One score sheets are due.

Friday, September 13, 2024

The second round of judging will open. Entries and score sheets will be available to the judges on the contest website.

Monday, October 21, 2024

Round Two score sheets are due.

Friday, November 8, 2024

The Third round of judging will open. Entries and score sheets will be available to the judges on the contest website.

Monday, December 16, 2024

Round three score sheets are due.

Virtual Awards Ceremony

January 2025 (date TBD).

**Q:** How do I enter the Diamond Heart Awards or the Golden Heart Awards?

**A:** Go to [rwacontest.org](http://rwacontest.org) and register. Follow the prompts to create a profile. Once you have verified your email address, you can login, select the contest you are entering, and complete the entry form.