

## Scribes Writers Short Takes Judges' Report

This year's competition entries took us on another whirlwind journey. All the stories were very different in both characters and storylines.

Sometimes it's not always about the "perfectly written" story. Of course punctuation, grammar, and spelling are important, but sometimes it's just of matter of making the judges laugh or getting a reaction from the story.

The overall standard was high, and were a pleasure to read, making the selection of a short list a tough call.

The winning entries all had several things in common. Their beginnings and endings were riveting, the titles clever and apt, their pace steady and their points clear.

Characters were clearly drawn through their actions and dialogue and we were caught up in the stories being told.

For those who were unsuccessful, some points to consider:

1. **read the competition conditions carefully and abide by them.** If you don't, your entry, no matter how good, won't even make it to the judges and your entry fee wasted.

2. **pay careful attention to your use of language,** particularly punctuation and spelling. If you claim to be a writer, learn to use the tools of your trade properly. If in any doubt, have someone check it over for you before sending it off.

3. **choose a good title** – let it grow out of the story, don't settle for something boring like The Letter or My Grandma. It's a part of your story, the first thing your readers (namely the judges) see.

4. **avoid the Ben Hur complex of a cast of thousands** – a good rule of thumb is two main characters, plus one extra for every thousand words. If the reader is forced to remember who's who in the zoo, your story pace slows down to a crawl.

5.. **never submit your first draft** – always do an edit yourself, then have someone else you trust to be honest with you do another. You'll only see what you think you wanted to say, another set of eyes will spot the mistakes and anomalies.

4. **don't give up** - remember this is only one set of judges' opinions. Read the judges' report, do a rewrite and submit elsewhere. Every story, no matter how good, will always benefit from a rewrite.

To all our entrants, thank you for trusting us with your work, and good luck with future entries.