

ENTERING COMPETITIONS

You have decided you would like to write but are unsure where or how to begin. Or maybe you don't think you will be any good at it so don't want to bother someone like me in case you end up embarrassing yourself?

Well let me tell you right from the start you will not embarrass yourself by speaking to me. That's not to say that you might not come across someone who will be a bit off-putting or negative towards your enquiry. In most cases authors are, as long as time permits, always willing to share their experience with newbies. There are exceptions to this and unfortunately there is little you can do but, as my daughter would say, 'suck it up, don't get upset, swallow the rejection and move on.' Besides if you are going to become an author then you will need to learn to grow a thick skin as rejection is all part of the job.

The one thing I have learnt over my lifetime, and during the last 30 odd years in this industry in particular, is that genuine people will be generous with their time and knowledge. The art is not to abuse this generosity and to show your appreciation for it. 'Paying forward,' makes for a wonderful mantra in life.

So, back to my original point about not sure if you would be any good at writing? Well why wouldn't you? If you have a reasonably good knowledge of the language in which you speak and write, then write. But if you are still wondering if it's for you then why not try entering a few writing competitions. Short stories or poetry ones are usually the easiest to enter. But do try as many different ones as you want. It will show you which genres suit you best and whether poetry or stories are your thing. Besides, you never know, you might just win one, or more. Now wouldn't that be a boost to your writing ego. Entering competitions gives you lots of writing practice and are the first steps on your writing journey.

There are quite a number of competitions held throughout the year. Some offer big prizes, some are just small ones, while others are just for fun. The way to discover these is to search the Internet for writing competitions, short story competitions, poetry competitions etc. Make sure you read the terms of entry carefully and follow all the rules, including hitting the deadline.

As it happens Mentoring Writers is currently holding a Writing Challenge. Entry is free and is open to anyone, of any age, whether a writer or not. You can enter as many times as you like. There are rules as the stories or poems have to be based on one of a certain number of titles. The winners will be included in a Children's Short Story book to be published later this year. The deadline is 30th June so why not have a go. Get the kids involved as well.

Entry details can be found at www.mentoringwriters.co.uk Check out the link attached to the word Challenge on the front page of the website. Or you can email contact@mentoringwriters.co.uk placing Challenge details in the subject line and we will email a copy of the rules to you.

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