

NEORWA CLEVELAND ROCKS ROMANCE CONTEST

Scoresheet

(Paranormal Romance, Historical Romance, Contemporary Romance OR Romantic Published Author Categories)

Note: Before judging, please read the judging guidelines carefully. 100 points would be a perfect score.

10 Points	15 Points
9-10 = Submission ready 7-8 = Minor edits required 5-6 = Moderate edits required 4 = Extensive edits required	13-15 = Submission ready 10-12 = Minor edits required 7-9 = Moderate edits required 5-6 = Extensive edits required

Entry:

Code:

Judge #:

Judge's Name (optional):

FINAL SCORE:

ELEMENTS:

_____ **Opening (10 points):**

- Does the opening sentence/paragraph attract attention and entice the reader to continue?
- Is there immediate action or interesting dialogue?
- Does the opening scene create a sense of pending conflict or action?
- Does the writer use a mix of narrative, dialogue, and action?
- Is backstory used effectively within the prologue/first chapter?

_____ **Setting and Backstory (10 points):**

- Is the location/setting clearly established within the first chapter?
- Is backstory integrated into dialogue or action (that is, not an information dump)?
- Is character background integrated into dialogue or action?

Does the story make sense?

_____ **Characters (15 points):**

- Are the romantic lead(s) distinct, interesting characters from the beginning?
- Are the romantic lead(s) sympathetic?
- Are the behavior of the romantic lead(s) realistic and believable (for example, not TSTL [too stupid to live])?
- Do you have a clear indication of who the romantic leads are? If only one character has been introduced in the beginning, is this character's development paramount to the story? For example, is the character's journey preparing them for a future romance?
- Are the romantic leads described sufficiently for the reader to picture them?
- If the romantic leads have both been introduced at this point in the story, is there obvious and believable "chemistry" between the romantic leads? (That is, is their romantic attachment based on realistic and believable interactions?)

- Are the way the characters act or react plausible?
- Do supporting characters have distinct personalities?
- Do all the supporting characters appear to have a purpose in the story?

_____ **Story (Goal, Motivation, Conflict) (20 points):**

- Were you hooked by the plot? Is it fresh and original?
- Do both romantic leads have clearly defined goals/problems?
- Is the motivation of the main characters for their goals obvious and well-presented?
- Is a major conflict presented early in the story?
- Is the conflict credible and believable and arising out of the characterization and circumstances? (For example, *not* a simple misunderstanding, a clichéd big misunderstanding, or something that could be cleared up by h/h simply talking honestly to each other.)
- Do the characters make credible choices?
- Does the pacing fit the story?

_____ **Dialogue (10 points):**

- Is the dialogue natural, not stilted or overly narrative?
- Is each character's voice distinct and consistent?
- Does the dialogue move the story forward?
- Is there an appropriate mix of dialogue and narrative?

_____ **Craft (10 points):**

- POV: Is the point of view clearly related to one character in the opening?
- Are switches in point of view or emphasis easy to follow?
- Is the point of view clear and unconfused?
- Is the overall tone of the story apparent?
- Does the writing evoke a unique/distinctive voice?
- Does the story move along at an appropriate pace, without rushing or dragging?
- Is there good use of all five senses in descriptions?
- Is the writing active?
- Does the author 'show' rather than 'tell'?
- Is the use of sexual tension effective or can you see where it might develop later on?

_____ **Professional Presentation (Grammar, punctuation, spelling, word usage, sentence structure) (10 points) See judging guidelines!**

- Is the entry in a professional, neat, easy-to-read format?
- Is proper grammar used?
- Are spelling and typing accurate?

SPECIAL ELEMENTS (10 points)

Score **only the one** that applies to the entry category.

_____ **Paranormal Romance:** Does the entry create an expectation of a romantic story? Does the entry clearly establish the paranormal aspect to the story? Is the world-building logical, well-explained, consistent, and integrated into the story?

_____ **Historical Romance:** Does the entry create an expectation of a romantic story? Does the entry include historical details that clearly set the story apart from a contemporary plot and clearly indicate the historical period/setting?

_____ **Contemporary Romance:** Does the entry create an expectation of a romantic story? Does the entry include contemporary details/language to clearly indicate a contemporary setting? (Keep in mind the Contemporary category includes, series length, single title length and romantic suspense entries in a contemporary setting.)

_____ **Published Author:** Does the entry create an expectation of a romantic story? Do the opening pages clearly establish a single, well defined plot or story problem that appears to be resolvable within the bounds of a novel?

Judge's Comments

(Be informative and factual, don't hide problems, but use a constructive and tactful tone.)