

THOUSAND WORD THRILLS

SHORT STORY COMPETITION

INFORMATION SHEET, TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Welcome to **Thousand Word Thrills** – a short story competition for aspiring and established thriller writers around the world.

Get ready to write, read, get published, and maybe even win!

AT A GLANCE



Entry is FREE



Max word count: 1,000 words per story



One week to **write** (from September 29th, 2025)



Story must include ONE of the listed **CONTEXTS** and **ITEMS**



All stories will receive **written feedback**



All eligible stories will have the option to be **published in the Thousand**

Word Thrills short story collection (in ebook and paperback)



Prizes for top stories

KEY DATES

Event

Sign-ups open

Contexts announced

Writing window opens (items announced)

Submission deadline

Reading & feedback week

Finalists announced

Finalists editing window

Winner & prize announcement

Date

Monday Sep 15

Monday Sep 22

Monday Sep 29

Sunday Oct 5

Mon. Oct 6 – Sun. Oct 12

Wednesday Oct 15

Wed. Oct 15 – Sun. Oct 19

Wednesday Oct 29

SIGN-UP & SUBMISSION

1. **Sign up** via our online form before the submission deadline
2. When the writing window opens, you'll choose **one context** and **one item** to incorporate into your story
3. Your story must be a **maximum 1000 words**
4. You will have until the submission deadline (Sunday October 5) at midnight Pacific Daylight Time (PDT; GMT -7hrs) to submit your story
5. Submit your story using the **Thousand Word Thrills website**
6. By submitting your story, you grant Thousand Word Thrills royalty-free access to publicly display your story for reading and feedback week
7. All stories are **anonymised** and shown in random order during the reading and feedback week (Monday October 6 – Sunday October 12)

VOTING & FEEDBACK

- All participants must read and score **at least 5 stories**
- **Scores without feedback may not count** toward the final ranking
- You'll be asked to rate each story and provide at minimum:
 - One thing you liked
 - One suggestion for improvement
- After the reading week, you'll receive all feedback given on your story
- You'll have a short window to **revise your story/stories** if you plan to submit for publication (see below)

FINAL ROUND

The **highest-rated stories** will advance to the final round, where a panel of thriller authors and reviewers will judge the entries and select the winners.

Finalists will be given the option to **revise their story again** before submitting for final judging (Wednesday October 15 – Sunday October 19).

PRIZES

-  1st Place: \$50 USD Amazon Gift Card + cover feature
-  2nd Place: \$30 USD Amazon Gift Card + cover feature
-  3rd Place: \$20 USD Amazon Gift Card + cover feature

All three winners will be **featured on the anthology cover** (if they choose to publish).

PUBLICATION

All entrants may opt to have their story published in a digital and print short story collection titled ***Thousand Word Thrills***.

- Entrants will have until Wednesday October 22 to revise their story based on feedback and submit their final version (link will be provided via email)
- You are responsible for editing and proofreading of your own work prior to submission
- You may choose to publish under your real name, a pen name, or anonymously
- Stories will be organised **alphabetically by author surname**
- Inclusion is **non-exclusive** – you may publish your story elsewhere
- Stories will remain in the anthology for up to **18 months**
- The publisher will receive a small royalty (~\$2 USD per copy) to help fund prizes and publication costs
- Submitted stories will be **royalty-free** (the author will not be paid for publication of their story)
- You must have the **right to submit** the story (either own it or have permission)

STORY GUIDELINES

- **Genre:** Thriller (any sub-genre: psychological, domestic, crime, mystery, horror-thriller, etc.)
- **Word Count:** 1,000 max per story (no minimum, but we suggest 700+)
- Story must include one of the **provided context and items**
- **Submit via Thousand Word Thrills website** (thrills.rachgrahamreads.com)
- Do not include your name or any identifying information in the document

CONTEXT & ITEMS

Each story must be based around one of the three provided contexts, and include one of the provided items. You may choose from a list of each.

- A story **context** helps set the scene and events: e.g. "HOLIDAY HORRORS" may include stories about discovering a body washed up on shore while on vacation, or an evil Santa Claus
- Your chosen **item** must appear somewhere in the story, but does not have to be boldly featured. It also does not have to be the exact wording of the item: e.g. "SHOE" may be mentioned as boot, shoes, heels, etc.

PRIVACY & PERMISSIONS

- All submissions will be **anonymised for fair judging**
- Please **do not provide any identifying features** to influence voting. **This may result in disqualification.** Please **pass** on the story without voting, if you are presented with a story that you recognise during reading week
- Authors under 18 must have caregiver permission to participate, publish in the collection, and/ or claim a prize
- We will not share your personal information beyond this competition (unless you choose to sign up for further updates)
- You **must have the right** to submit the story (i.e. you wrote it, or have permission from the person who did)

BONUS: TIPS FOR SHORT THRILLER WRITING

All entrants will receive a free PDF with top tips on writing tight, twisty, thrilling stories in under 1,000 words.

QUESTIONS?

Email Rachel at author.unlocked@rachgrahamreads.com

Or join the discussion on [KILLER THRILLERS](#) or [PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLERS BOOK CLUB](#) Facebook groups.

READY TO ENTER?

Register your interest now: author-unlocked.rachgrahamreads.com/signup

Writing starts September 29th 2025 – we can't wait to see what you create!