

Guidelines for Submission Format

NOTE WELL:

1. Each submission must have **ONLY** one story attached. You can send several stories at once, but each **MUST** be in a separate email and each must follow the guidelines.
2. We accept only .rtf files.
3. We prefer Times New Roman font Don't be cute with fonts or colours--we need to read it.
4. Put a short biography exactly as you want it to appear at the end of the story on a separate page of your manuscript. In your cover letter to On Spec, please be clear about any pseudonym or pen name you would wish for authorship credit in print.
5. **Word count limit is 6000 words. We will not read longer stories.**
6. We buy Speculative fiction stories only, i.e. science fiction, fantasy, dark fantasy, futurism, space opera, horror, etc. If you don't know what these are, we are probably not the best market for your story.
7. We do not buy Young Adult or Juvenile fiction.

On Spec Manuscript Style Sheet Guidelines

Please read this sheet carefully before you submit your manuscript. These points address matters that at worst prevent us from reading your work, and at best create a bad impression of what you have written.

1. Double-space (or 1.5 space) your work, please; but please pay attention to your paragraphing. Either indent with the tab key, or leave space between blocked paragraphs.
2. Times New Roman font only. Please.
3. Put just one space after terminal punctuation, such as periods. We will not fix this problem for you, but if your work is accepted, we will send the file back to you for you to do it, since it can be extremely time-consuming.
4. Do not put a carriage return at the end of each line. Carriage returns (since the days of typewriters) are just for paragraphing. Should you have done this, and we like your story, we will send the file back to you for fixing, since any fix we could try might well ruin your paragraphing.
5. Show italics as italics: *First time!*
6. Please show ellipses with three periods, rather than the font's ellipsis from the Special Symbols palette, or one generated with a keyboard shortcut. Do not space

- between the periods. An ellipsis should look like... THEN add your end punctuation.
7. If your word processor has trouble with “curly” quotation marks, which Word calls “Smart Quotes”, use the straight ones and let us sort it out. If your quotation marks are coming out backwards, change to the straight marks in your document preferences. You might have to enlarge your document to about 150% or more to check. Remember, you want them to look like “66 99” (or " ") around speech.
 8. Single quotes are for quotes within quotes only and are not to be used for emphasis: Eg. “I said, ‘I will not marry you.’”) For emphasis, use italics or occasionally all caps. (
 9. If you need a dash, double hyphens are fine, but please don’t put a space before and after. Hyphens--with no spaces.
 10. Best is an em-dash (not an en-dash, please) which is a keyboard shortcut worth learning. You should look up what is correct for your platform, and for your word-processing software.
 11. The Oxford, or serial comma, is our friend. It makes everything completely clear.
 12. Spelling is Canadian standard except for the actual story which may be in the standard spellings and common usages for the USA, the UK, and other English language countries. We use Canadian Oxford Dictionary and the Oxford Guide to Canadian English Usage.
 13. Learn what a comma splice is and how to fix it. Just saying.

Nota Bene: MS Word’s Track Changes is how we do our editorial markup if we accept and copyedit your story. It would be a good idea to learn how it works. If your story is accepted, our copyeditors will be glad to assist you; but a basic knowledge of the feature always helps.

MANUSCRIPT FORMATTING

Top left corner of page one:

Your real name (the name you want on your cheque)
Complete address, including country
Telephone number
Email address
Exact word count

Example:

Joe Smith
8871 Jones Avenue
Townsville, State/Province, Postal/Zip code, Country,
Country abbreviations are fine (e.g. USA, UK, AU, NZ, SA, etc.)
1-780-555-1234
joesmith@joesmith.com
3476 words

Middle of page one

Title of the story (Centred)
The name you want credited for the story, also centred on the next line. (Pen names here.)

Example:

The Name of the Story
by J. S. Smith

Double spaced manuscript, 5 space indent for each new paragraph.

Example:

The Roman soldiers working on the road had stripped to their waists as they toiled under the blistering Iberian sun. Rhonwen imagined she could smell them though she was barely close enough to hear their voices. The white-washed village of Castulo, and the people waiting for the medicines she bore, all stood on the far side of the new road, and the Romans building it.

She could keep walking and avoid the *Togas* as her mother admonished, or try to find a thinly manned section and scurry across--a Celtiberian mouse in a room full of Roman cats. She glanced at the workers, their ranks stretching to the horizon. A detour meant a long hike in the late afternoon heat and would delay her return home until dark.

"Crow scat!" the girl muttered. "There must be some place to cross." *

DO NOT USE double spaces to separate paragraphs as is often seen in print media.

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*Excerpt from DRUIDS by Barbara Galler-Smith and Josh Langston. Used with Permission.

Use a centred pound sign # for scene changes.

End your story with "The End" or some equally obvious wording.

Add the brief author biography you wish to use.

Number your pages.