

SHORT STORY (FICTION) GUIDELINES

YOURS is always looking for good short stories. Every submission is read but we receive more than a hundred manuscripts a month and are able to publish only one short story per issue.

Please allow up to six months for reply and enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you would like your manuscript to be returned. Submissions should be **1000-1,200 words long** and not have been published elsewhere before. Manuscripts must be TYPED on one side of the paper and the title page must include the following:

- 100 - 150 word synopsis.
- An accurate word count.
- Your full name (and real name if you write under a pen name), address and telephone number

If we can't use your submission and you would like it returned to you please enclose a SAE with enough postage to cover the cost of the submission/s.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

It is essential that you study three or four published stories in YOURS before writing anything for us.

Many manuscripts are rejected because, although they may be well-written, the stories are aimed at a completely different market, such as younger women or a largely middle-class readership.

Read several issues of YOURS. This will give you a good idea of the type of reader you should be writing for and the general tone we use.

Our readers range in age from fifties upwards, with most in their mid-sixties and seventies. They are mostly women, although YOURS is read by some men, so don't ignore their interests! They are Catherine Cookson readers rather than Jilly Cooper fans.

Please read on....

GOOD SUBJECTS

Some of the most popular themes with YOURS readers are romance, families, grandchildren, nostalgia and wartime comradeship. A lot of our readers did war work and/or had husbands or boyfriends serving in the Forces. Don't be limited to these subjects though; the style and tone of what you write about must appeal to our readers as much as the content.

The first line of your story should grab the attention; it is all too easy to start a story with a bang, which quickly turns into a damp squib by the end of the first page. Keep up the reader's interest until the end or they will not bother to get that far - and a brilliant surprise ending will not make them read it in the first place.

WHAT TO AVOID

Avoid stereotypical images of older people as ill, frail and lonely. Make sure your story is plausible and realistic and do not rely on unlikely coincidences. Try and avoid the hero turning out to be a cat or dog.

Avoid downbeat subjects such as death, widowhood, illness and loneliness, or write about them in a positive way that does not dwell on negatives.

Try not to rely on obvious plot devices such as twists in the tale and memory flashbacks. These are very common and, unless superbly written, can be predictable. A good story does not always need a surprise.

REMEMBER THIS

Always think of YOURS readers, not just as older people, but as ordinary human beings who have experienced everything in life - childhood, growing up, starting work, falling in love, friends and family, joy, sorrow, heartache, longing and laughter. YOURS readers have their own interests and needs which match their years of experiences but many of their hopes, fears and dreams are shared by all of us and they still enjoy a good story.

Send your manuscript to*:

Short Stories
Yours Magazine
Bauer Media
Media House
Peterborough Business Park
Peterborough, PE2 6EA

Or by email to: yours@bauermedia.co.uk (Subject: Short Story Submission) – email submissions must include contact telephone number and address details.

***PLEASE NOTE: If you would like us to return your submission, please include an SAE with the correct postage amount on it. We regret that any submissions without an SAE will not be returned.**