



SCORING GUIDELINES – WFWA STAR AWARD

Please use the following criteria as a guide for judging the novels you receive.

How well does this novel meet WFWA's definition of women's fiction?

- * Does this novel have layered stories?
- * Is the plot driven by the main character's emotional journey?

Story

- * Is the plot original and engaging?
- * Did you want to know what would happen next?
- * Do the characters face obstacles to achieving their desires?
- * Do the stakes involved for the protagonist impact whether they do, (or don't), achieve their goals?

Characterization

- * Are the characters interesting and multi-faceted?
- * Do the characters learn and grow over the course of the story?
- * Are the characters real within the context of this story?
- * Does the dialogue represent the characters appropriately and serve the story well?
- * In a book with multi-ethnicities represented, is the author authentic in how characters from the non-dominant group are portrayed?
- * Are their roles organically woven into the story as part of the plot and not as tropes and stereotypes or a stand-in for diversity?
- * Characters from any group need to be in the book because they have their own "stories" as fully fleshed individuals to move the whole plot along.
- * Is the marginalized character (where applicable) fully realized in the context of his/her/they relationship with the main character without focusing on skin color, sexual orientation, abilities, age, status etc.
- * If the book is not tackling a social issue that concerns the marginalized character, then the focus shouldn't be on being different but rather on characteristics that apply to all characters in the book.
- * If a character is not part of the dominant group (white, European descent, middle-class, heterosexual, Christian) than he/she/they is on the margin by society's standards.
- * Depicting a character's biases or stereotypical views presented in context is appropriate.
- * **Books shouldn't be marked down for not being diverse.** They should be rated for how they address cultural norms of the day.

Writing

- * Does the writing style match the narrative?
- * Does the dialogue represent the characters?
- * Is there an overall command of the language?
- * Are chapters and scenes constructed well?
- * Do transitions flow with ease and compel you to keep reading?
- * Are the descriptions interesting and original?
- * Are there adequate proportions to the “showing” and “telling,” or is it too heavy on one or the other?

Overall Impression

- * How likely would you be to recommend this book to someone else?
- * Did it stick with you after you finished?
- * Do you feel it is special?