

GENERAL FICTION

Definition: General Fiction novels may address any subject or theme. Careful use of language, style, and technique may be as important as subject matter, and character development may or may not take precedence over plot. Books in this category can break traditional fiction-writing conventions—endings may be upsetting or ambiguous, plot exposition may not be primary to the story, the author may employ new twists in dialogue or structure, etc.

General fiction books can be a combination of any number of genres of fiction that cause them to lie outside the limits and rules of those specific genres. For GCLS purposes, examples include a dramatic story for which a romance is not the primary arc, a love story that does not have a happy or hopeful ending, character studies, or fresh genres not included in other categories. Entries must have a minimum of 40,000 words to qualify for judging.

Judging Guideline: These novels must include significant themes, characters, situations, or other content about women or sapphically aligned nonbinary people who are romantically and/or sexually attracted to women or sapphically aligned nonbinary people. In this category, judges may encounter styles that do not adhere to traditional genre-writing norms and expectations.

Evaluation Items:

1. Thinking back on the GOLDIE entry you are about to judge, what were your overall impressions, positive and/or negative?

Using a 10-point scale where “1” means you “Totally Disagree” and “10” means you “Totally Agree,” please indicate how much you disagree or agree that each of the following statements describes this GOLDIE entry.

2. The opening of this novel draws readers into the story and makes them want to read further.

Totally Disagree									Totally Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

3. The premise of this novel does not depend too heavily on implausible coincidence or far-fetched circumstances that are inappropriate for this type of book.

Totally Disagree									Totally Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

4. This novel has enough conflict—that is, obstacles standing in the way of characters achieving their goals—to keep readers interested.

Totally Disagree									Totally Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

5. The plot of this novel is free of holes and logical inconsistencies—dropped story lines, puzzling disappearance of characters, underdeveloped or contrived story elements, actions leading to illogical consequences, etc.

Totally Disagree									Totally Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

6. This novel is appropriately paced. The story moves along smoothly without being too spare, rushed, saggy, bloated, or cluttered with unnecessary detail.

Totally Disagree									Totally Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

7. By the end of the novel, the author(s) has reasonably resolved all important plots, subplots, and character conflicts other than those clearly intended to remain unresolved.

Totally Disagree									Totally Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

8. This novel features compelling, three-dimensional main characters with credible strengths and flaws.

Totally Disagree									Totally Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

9. Secondary and/or minor characters are appropriately developed and do not detract from the main characters or plot.

Totally Disagree									Totally Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

10. The characters in this novel are portrayed in a believable way—dialogue is reflective of age and social class, actions are consistent with personalities, career levels are age-appropriate, backstories help deepen reader understanding, etc.

Totally Disagree									Totally Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

11. This novel has engaging, natural-sounding dialogue that brings the characters to life.

Totally Disagree									Totally Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

12. This novel is written in an engaging style. The story flows smoothly, with a sufficient variety of sentence structure and length; the language is fresh, vivid, and original; word choices are effective and fit the style, tone, and mood of the novel; etc.

Totally Disagree									Totally Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

13. This novel is virtually free of factual errors, incorrect spelling, poor punctuation and grammar, unnecessary repetition, paragraph structures that don't make sense, and confusing or missing dialogue tags that make it difficult to know who is speaking.

Totally Disagree									Totally Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

14. The novel does not jump unnecessarily from the "head" of one character to another within a given scene or describe things a given character can't possibly know, see, hear, or feel. Point-of-view transitions within a scene, if any, are clearly signaled to the reader.

Totally Disagree									Totally Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

15. This novel has an effective balance between "showing" what happens (via actions, dialogue, and/or vivid details from a given character's point of view) and "telling" what happens (via explanations and summary).

Totally Disagree									Totally Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

16. This novel has a distinct sense of time and place that skillfully captures the mood, tone, and setting of the story.

Totally Disagree									Totally Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

17. This novel has elements (stories, characters, themes, settings, evocative writing, a distinct voice, enjoyable confusion, etc.) that will linger in the reader's mind long after the book is finished.

Totally Disagree									Totally Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

- 18.** This novel includes significant themes, characters, situations, and/or other content about women who are attracted to women or sapphic individuals.

Totally Disagree									Totally Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

- 19.** Characters of various races, classes, cultures, ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender identities, physical or mental abilities, etc. portrayed in this novel are presented in ways that avoid offensive stereotypes.

Totally Disagree									Totally Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

- 20.** Fans of general fiction novels absolutely will want to read this book, maybe even more than once.

Totally Disagree									Totally Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

- 21.** This novel contains fresh, interesting, insightful, and/or entertaining elements relevant to its premise, plot, theme, style, and/or approach.

Totally Disagree									Totally Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

- 22.** The writing in this novel is consistent with the style, approach, and/or techniques used by the author(s) throughout the book, even if those techniques are experimental and/or unconventional.

Totally Disagree									Totally Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

- 23.** This novel employs imaginative, innovative, and/or unique ideas to put a surprising or unexpected twist on often-used stereotypes, themes, and approaches.

Totally Disagree									Totally Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

- 24.** This author(s) writes in an engaging way that evokes the senses (e.g., sight, sound, touch, smell, taste) in pleasing proportion.

Totally Disagree									Totally Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

25. This novel will move readers in one or more important ways—perhaps by making them laugh or cry or experience a sense of wonder, hope, sadness, nostalgia, joy, purposeful confusion, and/or other emotions.

Totally Disagree									Totally Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

26. This GOLDIE nominee is a splendid example of high-quality books in the **General Fiction** category.

Totally Disagree									Totally Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

27. Please summarize your overall thoughts about this book. Constructive criticisms, if any, would be especially helpful. An edited version of your insights and those of other judges—absent any identification—may be shared with the author(s).