
GCLS AWARDS UPDATE

Prepared by

Independent Review Committee



July 5, 2018

Independent Review Committee (IRC)

➤ **Goals:**

- **Conduct an independent review** to ensure the quality, integrity and prestige **of the GCLS awards process**, a key component of GCLS's stated mission: "*to increase the visibility and quality of lesbian-themed literature.*"
- **Make recommendations for how the GCLS awards process can be improved** so best books have an even better chance of being recognized as GOLDIE finalists and GOLDIE winners.
- **Suggest ways to implement recommended improvements** in the awards process for 2018 and beyond.

Changes Adopted for 2018 Awards

- The IRC proposed, and the GCLS board agreed to, several changes for 2018, including:
 - **Nominations**
 - Nominators have one chance to correct poorly formatted books
 - Nominators have opportunity to provide link to purchase nominated book
 - **Judges**
 - Names listed alphabetically after Awards Ceremony (unless judge opts out)
 - Free one-year GCLS membership for judges completing three consecutive terms (must complete all assignments)
 - **Judged Categories**
 - **Debut Novel replaced Debut Author – only novels are eligible**
 - **Traditional Contemporary Romance split into three categories:**
 - **Contemporary Romance: Short Novels (40,000-70,000 words)**
 - **Contemporary Romance: Mid-Length Novels (70,001-85,000 words)**
 - **Contemporary Romance: Long Novels (85,001+ words)**
 - **All Novel entries must be at least 40,000 words in length**

Changes Adopted for 2018 Awards

➤ Finalists / Winners:

- At least **six entries are required** in a judged category for a GOLDIE to be awarded.
- The 25% - 10% Rule determines finalists and winners based on the number of judged category submissions:
 - **25% of entries are finalists**
 - **10% of entries are winners**
- **Results are verified** by “independent” third party.

NUMBER ENTRIES SUBMITTED	25% - 10% RULE			
	FINALISTS		WINNERS	
	#	%	#	%
1	0	0%	0	0%
2	0	0%	0	0%
3	0	0%	0	0%
4	0	0%	0	0%
5	0	0%	0	0%
6	2	25%	1	10%
7	2	25%	1	10%
8	2	25%	1	10%
9	2	25%	1	10%
10	3	25%	1	10%
11	3	25%	1	10%
12	3	25%	1	10%
13	3	25%	1	10%
14	4	25%	1	10%
15	4	25%	2	10%
16	4	25%	2	10%
17	4	25%	2	10%
18	5	25%	2	10%
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36	9	25%	4	10%
37	9	25%	4	10%
38	10	25%	4	10%
39	10	25%	4	10%
40	10	25%	4	10%
50	13	25%	5	10%
60	15	25%	6	10%
70	18	25%	7	10%
80	20	25%	8	10%

NOTE: EXCEL formulas used for rounding to the nearest whole percent.

2019 IRC Action Steps

- I. **Ask readers, authors, editors, publishers and volunteers with judging experience to help.**
 - After the 2017 GCLS convention, the IRC sent a SurveyMonkey **recruitment survey to approximately 60 GCLS members** who had expressed interest in participating.
 - Based on interests determined via the recruitment survey:
 - **20 volunteers** worked on **judging-related issues**.
 - » Led by the IRC's Rosa Moran and Jenny Fielder
 - **23 volunteers** worked on **evaluation instruments**.
 - » Led by the Jenny Fielder and author/editor Shelley Thrasher

2019 IRC Action Steps

- II. Recruit GCLS members to work on judging-related issues:**
 - **Codify procedures for recruiting, vetting and assigning judges.**
 - **Find ways to balance judging panels** to include authors, editors and readers.
 - **Brainstorm ideas for recruiting non-GCLS judges.**
 - **Investigate ways to provide feedback to authors/editors** on how judges scored their books.
 - **Suggest ways to beef up training for judges** on how to evaluate books in their category.
 - **Recommend additional judging aids** to improve the judging experience.

2019 Key Changes: Judging-Related Issues

- **Specific enhancements and/or changes for 2019 judged awards include:**
 - **Forming a board-appointed “judge recruitment committee”** to devise and execute strategies for recruiting both GCLS and non-GCLS judge.
 - **Redoubling efforts to assign a qualified editor to every judging category.**
 - This has proven difficult, as not enough editors apply to cover all categories, and their participation must be limited to categories containing books they haven’t edited.
 - **Asking judges for comments** that potentially might be used **for feedback** to help authors/editors improve their craft:
 - *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).*
 - **Adding this language** to the current requirement that judges must inform awards administrators immediately if they believe an entry does not fit in the assigned category and should be moved elsewhere:
 - *If the entry remains in the category, judges must agree to evaluate the entry without prejudice, even if they disagree with the decision.*

2019 Key Changes: Judging-Related Issues

- **Specific enhancements and/or changes for 2019 judged awards include:**
 - **Clarifying and publicizing procedures for assigning finalists/naming winners, namely:**
 - 1) *Multiple books by authors and/or co-authors may be submitted for judging in a single category.*
 - 2) *Only one book by the same author(s) may proceed as a finalist in that category.*
 - 3) *If two or more books authored by the same author(s) are ranked as finalists in the same category, immediately following the tally of judges' scores, the highest-ranking book by this author shall be retained and the other books in that category by this same author will be eliminated from the competition.*
 - **Allowing multiple entries in a category, but including ONLY the highest scoring book in the list of finalists, automatically means a given author/editor can win only one GOLDIE per category.**
 - A greater number of authors/editors potentially will be named among GOLDIE finalists.
 - GCLS has small categories for which there are now only three finalists and one winner. If procedures don't restrict the number of finalists, a small category potentially could have a single author/editor named as finalist #1, #2 or even #3.

2019 IRC Action Steps

- III. Recruit GCLS members to re-conceptualize evaluation instruments for all judged categories.**
 - **Revise category definitions, judging guidelines and evaluation items** for all GCLS genre categories.
 - **Secure membership input** on proposed category definitions, judging guidelines and evaluation items.
 - SurveyMonkey pretests sent to:
 - **2016 and 2017 GOLDIE finalists** in a given category.
 - **2016-17 judges** in each genre category.
 - **2018 judges** on revised approach.
 - **Obtain board approval** of proposed category definitions, judging guidelines and evaluation items.

2019 Key Changes: Evaluation Instruments

- **Specific enhancements and/or changes for 2019 judged awards include:**
 - Judges will rate all nominees on a **1-to-10 point scale** rather than the 1-to-5 point scale used previously. Specifically, judges are told:
 - *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.*
 - Statements are intended to capture:
 - **Essential elements of award-winning novels, anthologies, poetry collections, or works of nonfiction.**
 - **Essential elements of award-winning books in each genre-specific category.**
 - By eliminating and restructuring items, the **number of closed-ended questions** has been **reduced significantly**, typically by one-third to one-half.

2019 Key Changes: Evaluation Instruments

- **Specific enhancements and/or changes for 2019 judged awards include:**
 - **Open-ended questions** have been **reduced from eleven to two.**
- *Thinking back on the GOLDIE entry you are about to judge, what were your overall impressions, positive and/or negative?*
- *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).*

2019 Key Changes: Evaluation Instruments

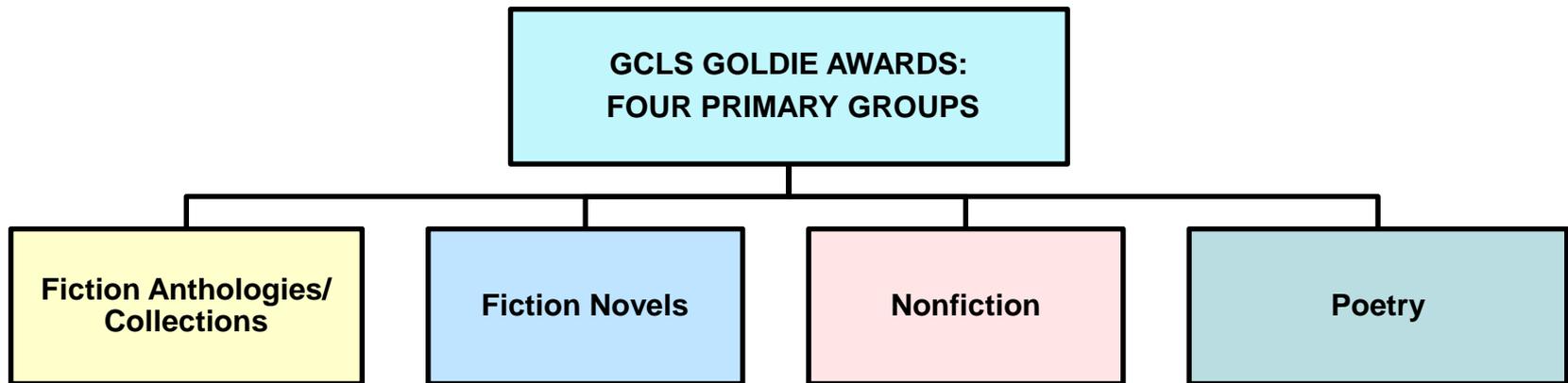
- **Specific enhancements and/or changes for 2019 judged awards include:**
 - To reflect growing diversity, all GOLDIE categories include this wording in proposed judging guidelines:
 - *These books must include significant themes, characters, situations, and/or other lesbian-oriented content—i.e., literary works about women who love women.*
 - NOTE: The following IRC wording was rejected by the GCLS board:
 - *These books must include significant themes, characters, situations, and/or other content about lesbian, bisexual, queer, transgender, sexually fluid, asexual, and other women who are attracted to women.*

2019 Key Changes: Evaluation Instruments

- **Specific enhancements and/or changes for 2019 judged awards include:**
 - **GOLDIE entries must adhere to these length requirements:**
 - **Anthologies/collections** must have:
 - A minimum of three individual pieces totaling at least 40,000 words.
 - **Novels** must have:
 - A minimum of 40,000 words.
 - **Nonfiction books** must have:
 - A minimum of 40,000 words.
 - **Poetry** must meet these requirements:
 - Submissions must be at least 48 pages long.
 - At least 50 percent of poems must be new, meaning not previously published.
 - » Previously published poems include those that have appeared in print in any format (book, journal, anthology, magazine, etc.) or anywhere publicly online (including the nominee's blog or Facebook page but excluding critique groups).

2019 Key Changes: Primary Groups

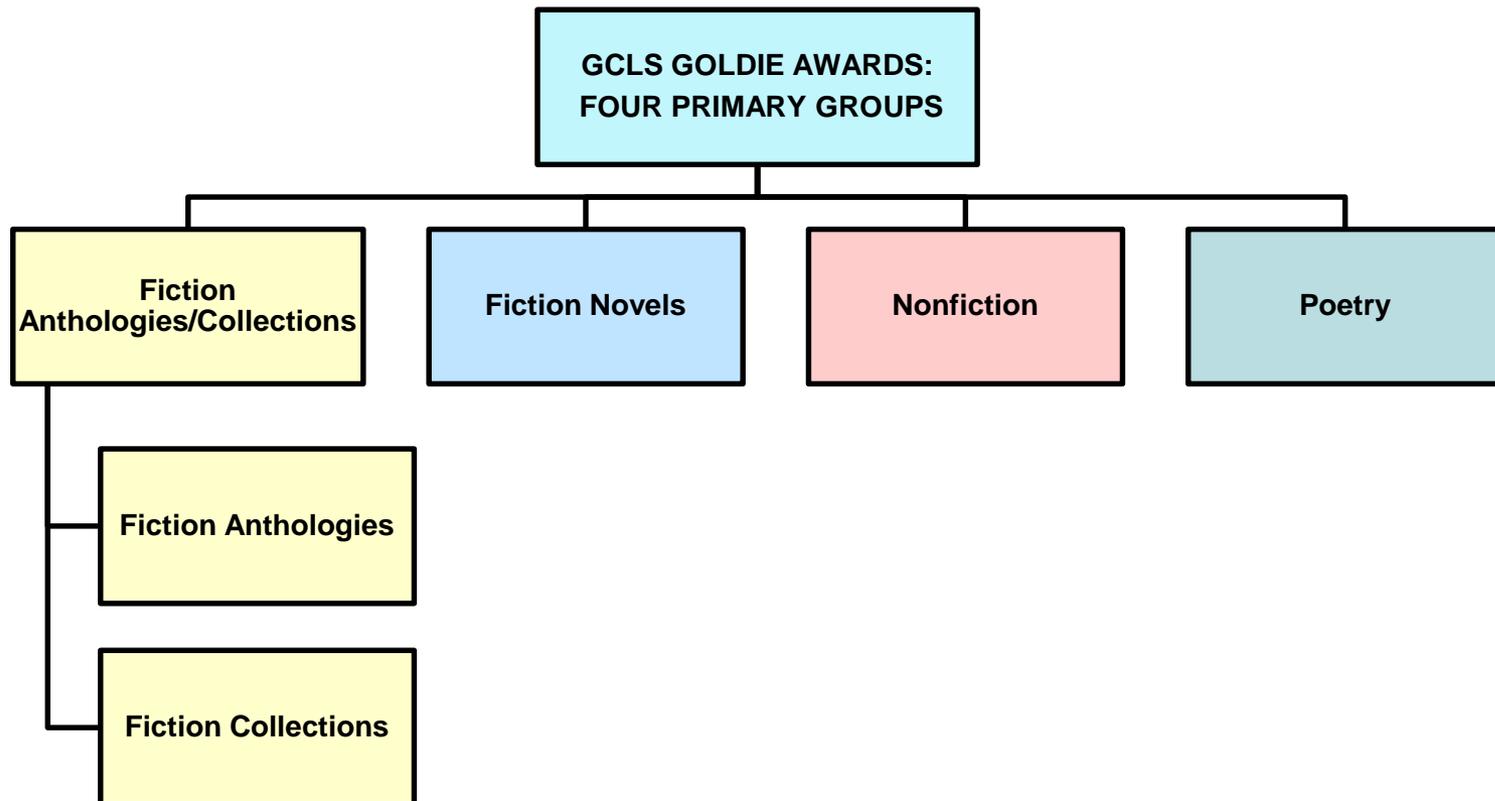
- Specific enhancements and/or changes for 2019 judged awards include:
 - GOLDIE categories are differentiated by four exhaustive, mutually exclusive “primary” groups:
 - Fiction Anthologies/Collections
 - Fiction Novels
 - Nonfiction
 - Poetry



- Final versions of proposed 2019 evaluation instruments for all categories are available and will be posted on the GCLS website.

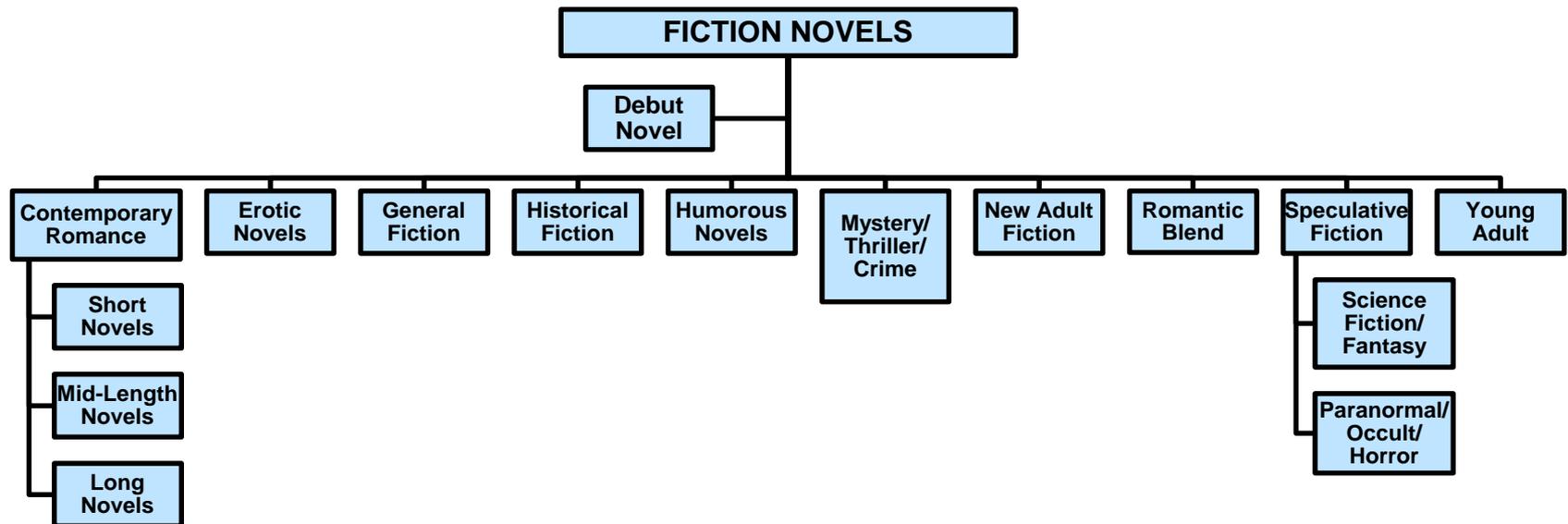
Fiction Anthologies/Collections: Categories

- The primary **Fiction Anthologies/Collections** group has two categories:
 - **Fiction Anthologies**, for multi-author works.
 - **Fiction Collections**, for single-author works.
- These two categories will be combined if either does not achieve the required six entries.
- Evaluation instruments are “parallel,” so the two categories can be combined for judging purposes.



Fiction Novels: Categories

- The primary **Fiction Novels group** has **13 categories**, including three subsumed under Contemporary Romance and two under Speculative Fiction.
 - **Genre items for Contemporary Romance are identical**, meaning entries can be combined and/or otherwise grouped for judging purposes.
 - Though not identical, **genre items for Science Fiction/Fantasy and Paranormal/Occult/Horror are “parallel,”** meaning they can be combined if either does not achieve the required six entries.
 - **All remaining novel categories** have distinct, genre-specific items that cannot be combined for judging purposes. Categories with fewer than six entries will not be awarded a GOLDIE but will remain eligible for Debut Novel.
- **Finalists and winners in Debut Novel** will be determined by cross-novel scores on “essential elements” and the final cross-genre item common to all novel categories.
- **Nominees in new categories Humorous Novels and New Adult Fiction** will be asked to pick a second category in case the new category does not achieve the required six entries.



Fiction Novels: Essential Elements

➤ Opening/Premise

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

➤ Plot

3. This novel **has enough conflict**—that is, obstacles standing in the way of characters achieving their goals—to keep readers interested.
4. 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.
5. This novel **is appropriately paced**. The story moves along smoothly without being too spare, rushed, saggy, bloated, or cluttered with unnecessary detail.
6. 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.

➤ Characters

7. This novel features **compelling, three-dimensional main characters** with credible strengths and flaws.
8. **Secondary and/or minor characters are appropriately developed** and do not detract from the main characters or plot.
9. 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.
10. This novel has **engaging, natural-sounding dialogue that brings the characters to life**.

Fiction Novels: Essential Elements (continued)

➤ Writing

11. 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.
12. This novel is **virtually free of such distractions** as 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.
13. **Point of view is clear**. 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.
14. 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).

➤ Setting/Reader Impact

15. This novel has **a distinct sense of time and place** that skillfully captures the mood, tone, and setting of this story.
16. 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**.
17. This book includes **significant** themes, characters, situations, and/or other **content about women who are attracted to women**.

➤ Cross-Genre Item

18. This GOLDIE nominee is a **splendid example of high-quality books** in the (GENRE) category.

Fiction Novels: Category Definitions

➤ Several novel categories have significantly revised definitions:

- ***Contemporary Romance is a modern (set within the past 25 years) love story in which the main characters overcome differences or challenges to achieve and/or sustain a romantic relationship. The love story must be the main focus of the novel, and it must have a happy or hopeful ending.***
 - *This category is distinguished by novels whose **main plot focuses on the obstacles a new couple faces to get together or the threats an existing couple must overcome to stay together**. Sequels, series, and standalone novels in which the main plot centers on issues such as children, illness, career upheavals, etc., are eligible only when these issues significantly threaten the romantic relationship (i.e., sufficient to consider it the main plot).*
 - *This category includes novels in which the main characters fall in love, as well as other romantic plots in which characters already may have fallen in love (e.g., a sequel or series based on a story in which the characters fell in love in an earlier book; a standalone story of an established couple experiencing difficulties in their romantic relationship).*

Fiction Novels: Category Definitions

- Several novel categories have significantly revised definitions:
 - ***Romantic Blend includes novels with two interwoven plot lines—a significant romance and a complex storyline involving elements of suspense, intrigue, adventure, and/or dramatic events.***
 - *For GCLS purposes, romance is defined as a love story in which the main characters overcome differences or challenges to achieve and/or sustain a romantic relationship. **Suspense** often includes a mystery, crime, chase or search with imminent personal and/or social peril. **Intrigue** often includes puzzles, covert identities, and/or corporate or geopolitical spy craft with both immediate and long-term consequences. **Adventure** often focuses on an unexpected physical trial where nature is the antagonist, or a purposeful quest for achievement where failure holds physical or psychological consequences for the protagonist(s). **Dramatic events** often are central to stories of social activism, legal or courtroom dramas, political power struggles and/or other externally inspired plots.*
 - ***Focus may shift throughout the novel from the romance to elements of suspense, intrigue, adventure, and/or dramatic events and back again. Culmination of storylines in these novels must achieve an emotionally satisfying romance and resolve issues of suspense, intrigue, adventure, and/or dramatic events. More than one of these elements may combine as they blend with the romantic arc.***
 - NOTE: The former **Romantic Suspense/Intrigue/Adventure** category has been redefined to provide a more precise definition of “romantic” and also to include Dramatic Events.

Romantic Blend: Genre-Specific Example

Judging Guideline: *Judging in this category should not give undue weight to either the romance or the suspense/intrigue/adventure/dramatic events but consider both storylines together. The romance must have a happy or hopeful ending...This category is not to be confused with Mystery/Thriller/Crime Novels (where a mystery, thriller, and/or crime constitutes the main plot line) or General Fiction (where romance with a happy or hopeful ending does not constitute a significant plot line).*

Genre Items:

- 1. This novel skillfully blends its two interwoven plot lines—a significant romance and a complex storyline of suspense, intrigue, adventure, and/or dramatic events—into a unified, pleasing whole.*
- 2. This novel contains a compelling romantic relationship featuring two characters who exhibit—through realistic interactions—emotional and physical chemistry with each other.*
- 3. It is believable that the two characters in this novel would be romantically attracted to each other, despite any differences in personality, education, status, or values.*
- 4. Details relevant to the suspense, intrigue, adventure, and/or dramatic events of this novel are skillfully blended throughout the book’s plot, dialogue, and other character interactions.*
- 5. This novel contains sufficient suspense, intrigue, adventure, and/or dramatic events to keep readers keenly interested in finding out what happens next.*
- 6. This novel has an emotionally satisfying romantic ending for the couple, one that is happy and/or hopeful. A couple need not be in a fully committed relationship by the end of the book, but they both should feel happy where they are.*
- 7. The author(s) resolves issues related to the suspense, intrigue, adventure, and/or dramatic events in this novel in a satisfying way.*

Fiction Novels: Category Definitions

- Several novel categories have significantly revised definitions:
 - ***Mystery/Thriller/Crime includes novels in which a mystery, puzzle, chase, or search, particularly in the realm of crime, is central to the main plot.***
 - *In **mystery** novels, a crime typically is committed early on, and the story focuses on discovering who committed the crime and why. Subgenres include cozy and hard-boiled mysteries; police procedurals; medical, scientific or forensic mysteries; and legal or courtroom dramas. In **thrillers**, the focus often is on stopping a crime or event beforehand, capturing the villain(s), solving/resolving the issue, and/or preventing another, potentially more devastating crime or event from occurring. Subgenres include political thrillers (set against the backdrop of a political power struggle); epic thrillers (perhaps threatening an entire community, city, or country); and psychological thrillers (in which the threat is more contained—for example, to the protagonist, her partner, and/or other family members). In **crime** novels, the focus typically is on the contest of wills between protagonist and villain. Subgenres include certain types of police procedurals, “noir” books with a morally compromised hero, and perhaps even a mystery/thriller blend.*
 - **NOTE:** If the novel includes two interwoven plot lines – a significant romance and a complex storyline involving elements of suspense, intrigue, adventure and/or dramatic events—the book belongs in Romantic Blend.

Fiction Novels: Category Definitions

➤ Several novel categories have significantly revised definitions:

- **Paranormal/Occult/Horror** *includes novels with familiar or recognizable settings in which the occult (vampires, werewolves, shape-shifters, zombies, witches, warlocks, etc.) or paranormal (ghosts, spirits, psychics, etc.) constitute a major part of the plot, as well as novels in which events of horror cause overwhelming feelings of fear, dread, or shock.*
 - *Typically, paranormal novels are set in our current world as we know it—as opposed to an entirely new world—but with a paranormal/occult/horror twist. Novels with an alternative or futuristic setting should be entered in Science Fiction/Fantasy.*
- **Science Fiction/Fantasy** *includes novels in which a significant portion or aspect of the story is set in a fantastical, future, or parallel world. Generally, these alternative settings include resources not currently available to humanity (magical abilities, alien experiences, yet-to-be invented technologies, etc.).*
 - *Typically, science fiction stories are set in a futuristic setting, while fantasy novels take place in an alternative, entirely new world. Novels set in our current world as we know it, but with a paranormal/occult/horror twist, should not be entered in this GCLS category.*

Fiction Novels: Category Definitions

➤ Several novel categories have significantly revised definitions:

- **General Fiction novels may address any subject or theme...** *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.*
- **Historical Fiction novels are comprised of narratives that take place at least 25 years in the past and provide a realistic reconstruction of life in the historical time period in which they are based.** *The story must be predominantly set in a historical period, even if some of the scenes take place in the present. Historical novels should come as close to reflecting historical reality as possible.*
- **Young Adult Fiction includes novels written primarily for, and targeted to, readers aged 12 to 18.** *Young adult books can be romances, historical fiction, science fiction, or any other genre, but they must focus on themes, characters, situations, and/or issues of interest and importance to 12-to-18-year-olds. Language must be readily accessible to young people in the targeted age group.*

Fiction Novels: Category Definitions

- Several novel categories are new for 2019:
 - **Erotic Novels include novels that contain a high level of sexual content, especially stories about erotic sexual interaction.** *The sex must be such an inherent part of the plot, setting, narrative, characterization, etc., that it could not be removed without damaging the storyline. In this category, sexual interactions are central to the work, though stories may contain elements of other genres (romance, paranormal, historical, etc.).*
 - **Humorous Novels range from light and bubbly, to dark and warped, and include comic situations, wry observations, satirical setups, or all of these and more.** *This category includes any novel that tells the story primarily through humorous devices—absurdity, hyperbole/exaggeration, incongruity, sarcasm, slapstick, surprise, irony, puns, etc. In this category, humorous elements must be part of the main plot/theme of the novel. There can be romantic elements, but they are not necessarily the main focus.*
 - **New Adult Fiction includes novels written primarily for, and targeted to, readers aged 18 to 29.** *In New Adult Fiction, at least one main character must be aged 18 to 29 and dealing with one or more life “firsts”—e.g., first job, first apartment, first serious relation—and/or with adult situations for the first time. New Adult Fiction focuses on life after legal age, and how one deals with the beginnings of adulthood.*

Erotic Novels: Genre-Specific Example

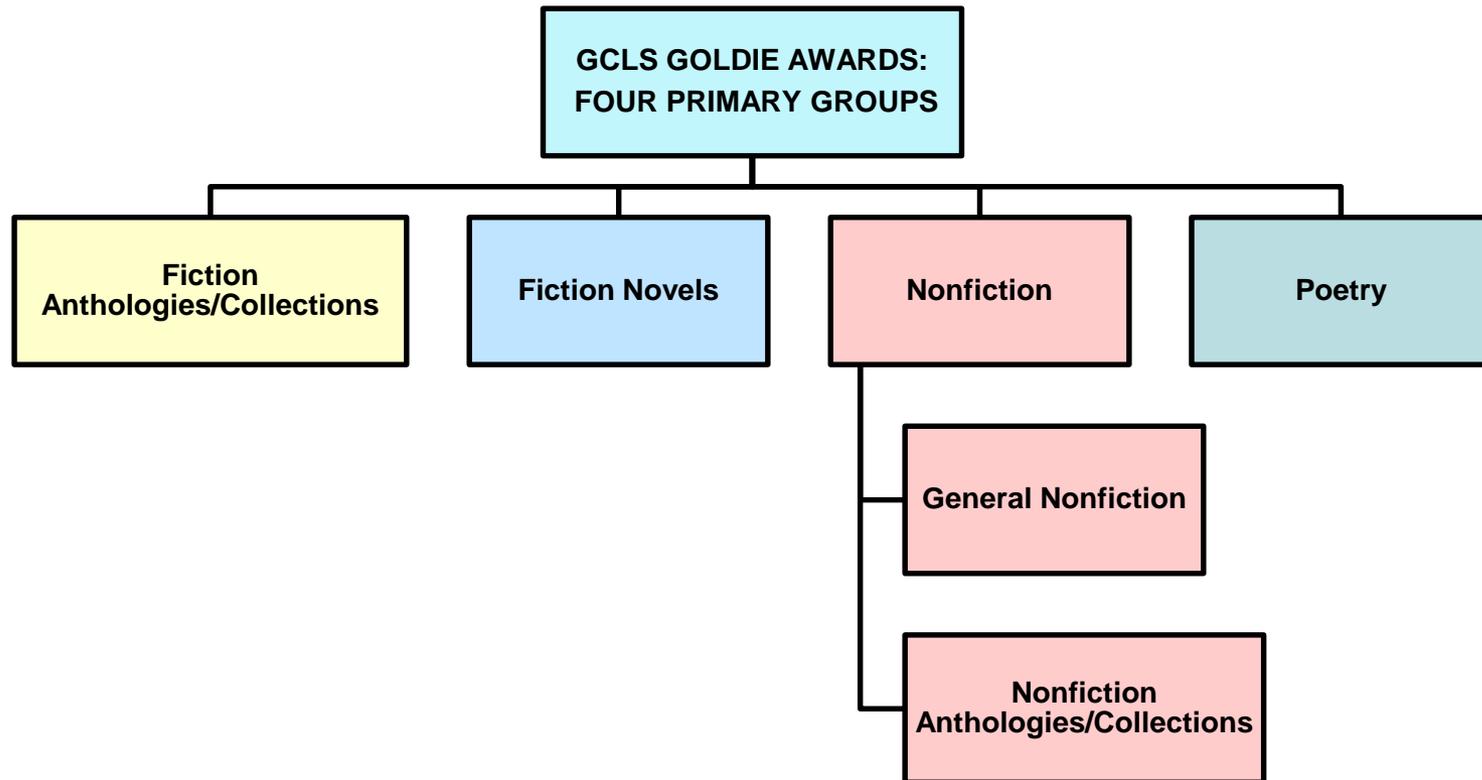
Judging Guideline: *In this category, sexual interactions are central to the work, though stories may contain elements of other genres (romance, paranormal, historical, etc.). Sexual relationships must be a driving force, with intensely erotic scenes that flow naturally from the overall story or premise. **For GCLS purposes, all physical and/or sexual encounters in erotic novels must reflect mutual consent.***

Genre Items:

- 1. The erotic scenes in this novel flow naturally from the overall story.*
- 2. The plot of this erotic novel is appropriately developed within the context of its sex-centered story.*
- 3. This novel employs imaginative, innovative, and/or unique ideas within the sex-centered boundaries of erotica.*
- 4. This erotic novel is sufficiently provocative, alluring, and/or sexy to kick up the reader's heartbeat a few notches.*
- 5. The dialogue in this erotic novel—particularly in sexual situations—naturally reflects the character who is speaking.*
- 6. Clarity of spatial relationships is particularly important in sex scenes. Readers of this erotic novel are almost never confused about which characters are doing what to whom, where these sexual interactions are taking place, how they could have gotten themselves into the various positions described, etc.*
- 7. The author(s) skillfully negotiates the complex nuances of consent. This erotic novel is free of disturbing scenes, episodes, physical encounters, and other coercive scenarios of non-consensual sex.*
- 8. Readers will remember this book as a hot, sexy, and exciting erotic novel.*

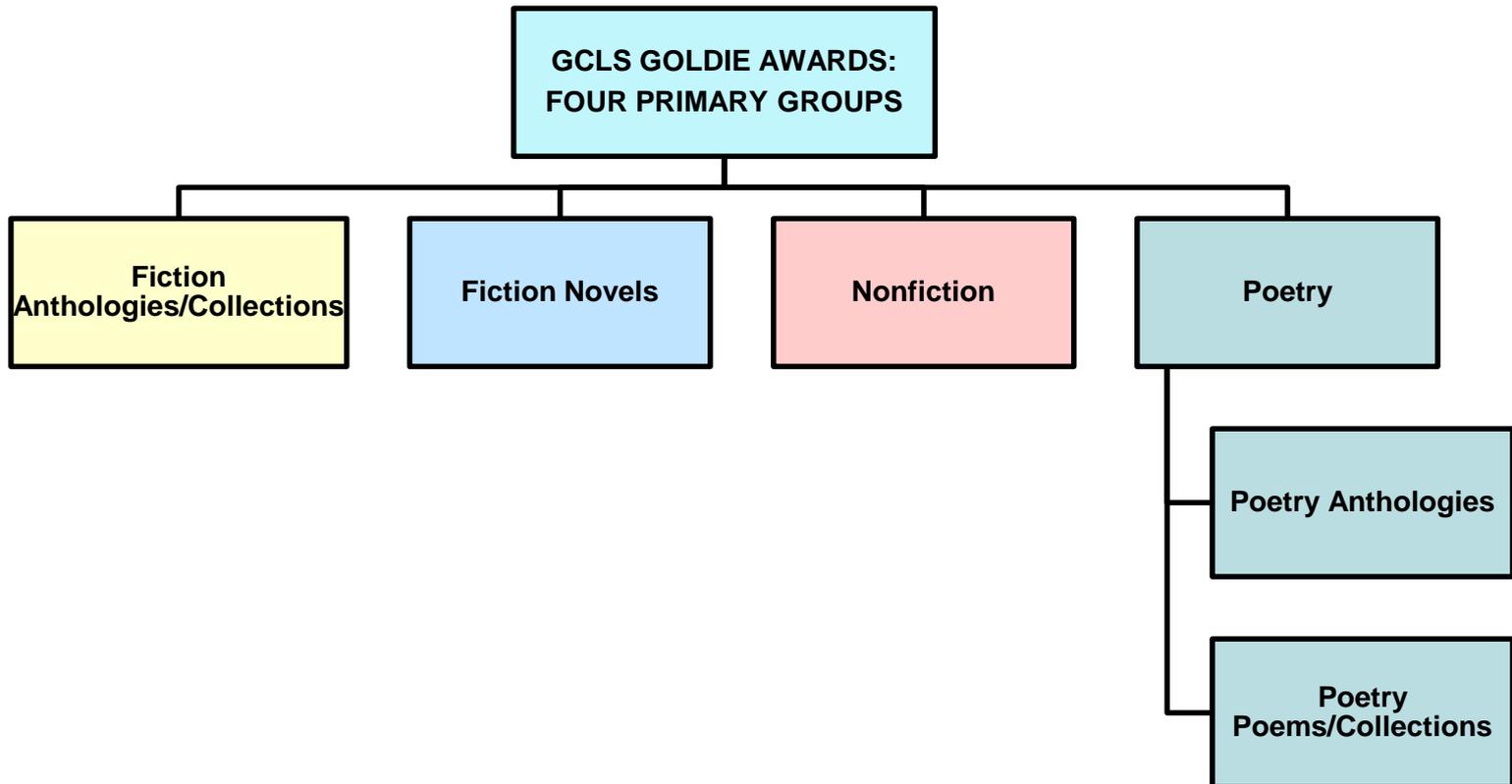
Nonfiction: Categories

- The primary **Nonfiction** group has two categories:
 - **General Nonfiction**, for books of narrative prose.
 - **Nonfiction Anthologies/Collections**, for multi-author anthologies and/or single-author collections.
- These two categories will be combined if either does not achieve the required six entries.
- To the extent possible, evaluation instruments are “parallel,” meaning categories can be combined for judging purposes.



Poetry: Categories

- The primary **Poetry group** has two categories:
 - **Poetry Anthologies**, for multi-author anthologies.
 - **Poetry Poems/Collections**, for single-author poems or collections of poetry.
- These two categories will be combined if either does not achieve the required six entries.
- Evaluation instruments are “parallel,” so categories can be combined for judging purposes.



2019 IRC Action Steps

IV. Work with awards administrators and others to implement recommended improvements.

- Steps required for successful implementation by awards administrators include:
 - **Incorporating changes into the awards management software**
 - » New procedures for recruiting, vetting and assigning judges.
 - » New category descriptions, judging guidelines and evaluation items.
 - **Posting all descriptions and judging guidelines** in time for entrants to determine in which categories to nominate their books.
 - **Revising training aids** for judges to reflect changes in evaluation instruments.
 - **Accomplishing a zillion other things!!!**

Judging-Related Team Volunteers

TASKS	TEAM LEADERS	TEAM MEMBERS
Codify procedures for recruiting and vetting judges; suggest ways to improve procedures for 2019.	Michelle Lisper	Stephanie A. Allen, Karen Badger, Lori Lake, Paula Martinac, Liz McMullen, Patty Schramm, Carsen Taite, Caren Werlinger
Brainstorm ideas for recruiting non-GCLS judges; work with awards administrators and other volunteers to implement ideas.	Stephanie A. Allen	Ann Aptaker, Karen Badger, Jessie Chandler, Patty Schramm, Carsen Taite
Codify procedures for assigning judges to a given category; find ways to balance judging panels to include authors, editors and readers.	Georgia Beers	Fay Jacobs, Lori Lake, Michelle Lisper, Eileen Marks, Franci McMahon, Carsen Taite, Caren Werlinger
Develop ways to provide feedback to authors/editors on how judges scored their books on specific dimensions.	Susan Meagher	Melissa Brayden, Pamela Buchmeyer, Jessie Chandler, Liz Gibson, Franci McMahon, Liz McMullen
Suggest ways to beef up training for judges on how to evaluate books in their category; work with awards administrators and other volunteers to revise training materials to reflect changes in evaluation instruments.	Karen Badger	Ann Aptaker, Pamela Buchmeyer, Sandy Lowe, Eileen Marks, Susan Meagher, Caren Werlinger
Recommend additional judging aids to improve the judging experience; investigate ways judges in a category might communicate with each other (or a lead judge) to improve judging.	Franci McMahon	Melissa Brayden, Liz Gibson, Lori Lake, Michelle Lisper, Sandy Lowe, Eileen Marks, Paula Martinac

Evaluation Team Volunteers

AWARD CATEGORIES: 2019	TEAM LEADERS	TEAM MEMBERS
Anthology/Collections: Fiction	Alissa McGowan	Nancy Ashmore, Sandra Gerth
Anthology/Collections: Nonfiction	Cheryl Pletcher	Shelley Thrasher, Salem West
Anthology/Collections: Erotica	D. Jackson Leigh	Sacchi Green, Nell Stark, Shelley Thrasher
Contemporary Romance	Rachel Spangler KG MacGregor	Lynn Ames, Sandra Gerth, Jeanine Hoffman
Erotic Novels	Sacchi Green	Karin Kallmaker, D. Jackson Leigh
General Fiction	Salem West	Lynette Beers, Barb Sawyer, Carol Rosenfeld
General Nonfiction	Cheryl Pletcher	Shelley Thrasher, Salem West
Historical Fiction	Sandra Gerth	Nancy Ashmore, Lynette Beers, Jeanine Hoffman
Humor	Carol Rosenfeld	Barb Sawyer, Ann McMan, Cindy Rizzo
Mystery/Thriller	Erica Abbott	Lynn Ames, Michelle Grubb
New Adult Fiction	Rachel Gold	Sacchi Green, Cindy Rizzo, Rachel Spangler, Claudia Wilde
Paranormal/Horror	Sandra Gerth	Barb Sawyer, Alissa McGowan, Nell Stark
Poetry	Shelley Thrasher	Rachel Gold, Leslea Newman, Carol Rosenfeld
Romantic Suspense/Intrigue/ Adventure	Karin Kallmaker	Erica Abbott, Lynn Ames, Michelle Grubb
Science Fiction/Fantasy	Nell Stark	D. Jackson Leigh, Jeanine Hoffman, Alissa McGowan
Young Adult Fiction	Cindy Rizzo	Nancy Ashmore, Rachel Gold, Rachel Spangler

Independent Review Committee Bios

- **Donna Brown**, a member of GCLS since the beginning, served as a GOLDIE judge for one term. Except for volunteering at the conventions, she has had no involvement in the organization in a governing capacity. Donna is an Administrative Assistant for the Hampden County (MA) Sheriff's Support Services Department.
- **Jane Chen** has attended three conferences and awards ceremonies. She won a GOLDIE in 2010 writing under the pen name Trinity Tam (with wife Nell Stark) for *everafter*. She had never served as a judge or been involved in the awards process in any capacity prior to her review committee work. Jane is a vice president of marketing at Live Nation and holds a BA in East Asian Studies from Harvard University.
- **Virginia Dodge (Jenny) Fielder**, a GCLS member for six years, has attended nine conferences and awards ceremonies. Prior to her appointment as committee chair, she had never served as a judge or been involved in the awards process in any capacity. A long-time partner of GOLDIE winner KG MacGregor, Jenny is a retired corporate executive and researcher for the newspaper industry. She holds a PhD in Mass Communications from Indiana University-Bloomington.
- **Leigh Howell** has been attending GCLS conferences with her sister, Lynne Pierce of Lesfic Unbound, for seven years and been a member for six. A high school English and Drama teacher for 38 years, Leigh served as an editor for Blue Feather Books. She lives with husband Steve and enjoys spending time with her two grown children, Stephanie and Drew.
- **Mary Jane (MJ) Lowe**, a member of GCLS since 2004, has attended 11 conferences. She served on the Board of Directors in 2008-2010 and as Awards Administrator for 2012-2014. Working as a librarian for a range of public entities, MJ holds an MA in History from Western Kentucky University, and an MS in Library and Information Sciences from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.
- **Elaine (Lainie) Lynch** has attended 11 conventions and served as a GOLDIE judge five times. She has been reviewing books since 2005. A graduate of Villanova University with concentrations in English, Economics and History, Lainie is a retired corporate banking operations manager with a focus on Quality Control. She is married to GOLDIE winner Lee Lynch.
- **Rosa Moran**, a GCLS member since its inception, has attended all conferences and awards ceremonies. She served as a judge for four years early on and has presented awards four times. Rosa works as a Systems Developer in the Department of Information Technology with Prince William County (VA) government. Rosa holds a BA in Public Administration with a minor in Information Systems from George Mason University.
- **Sharon Owens** is an avid reader who has belonged to GCLS for seven years and attended five conferences. She has not previously been involved in the awards process, although she helped present an award at the 2016 and 2017 conferences. Sharon is a retired library worker and former attorney.