

TOUCH OF MAGIC 2010
Short Contemporary (Series) Romance Scoresheet

Use these criteria for scoring short contemporary (“series”) romance. Each criterion is worth 5 points.

Short contemporary is defined as a novel in which the primary element is the romance (if the romance is important, but not the guiding plot, consider whether this MS should be in the NSRE category), and the book length is at least 50,000 but fewer than 80,00 words.

Assign points as follows:

5 – ready for publishing!

4 – minor tweaking is all that’s needed here

3 – this area isn’t bad, but it does need some improvement before submitting

2 – needs extensive reworking

1 – needs better understanding of basic concepts in this area, then extensive reworking

Our goal is to give the author *useful feedback* that she or he can use enroute to successfully publishing the work. Please comment on all areas to the extent possible. Comments are required for any score of 1 – 3, and highly recommended for any score of 4.

Entry title:

Entry#	Judge#
1. Setting (10 points)	
Criterion	Score 1-5
Author created a plausible world through setting, with a clear sense of time and place.	
Author used all five senses to put me in the world of the book.	
Total points for Setting	
Comments:	
2. Characters (40 points)	
Hero is likable, interesting, or otherwise “heroic” enough to sustain the plot of a contemporary romance.	

Hero is fully developed. Not just a two-dimensional on-paper character, but author gives us a good sense of his motivation, goals and conflicts from the beginning of the story (or alludes to them sufficiently to hook us). Intriguing characteristics help bring him to life.	
Hero is realistic. His actions/reactions are realistic, his dialogue gives us a sense of his character, and sets him apart from the other characters.	
Heroine is likable, or at least intriguing (if she has less-than-likable characteristics), or otherwise meets expectations of a heroine in the plot of a contemporary romance.	
Heroine is fully developed. Not just a two-dimensional on-paper character, but author gives us a good sense of her motivation, goals and conflicts from the beginning of the story (or alludes to them sufficiently to hook us). Intriguing characteristics help bring her to life.	
Heroine is realistic. Her actions/reactions are realistic, her dialogue gives us a sense of her character, and sets her apart from the other characters.	
Secondary characters are well-developed and necessary, without overshadowing hero/heroine. If no secondary characters are present, they are not missed.	
Villain/antagonist is introduced or alluded to, or if no villain (ie an external foe) is present, his/her presence is not missed.	
Total points for Characters	
Comments:	
4. Dialogue (10 points)	
Dialogue is used effectively to further the plot and is appropriate to the setting.	
Dialogue tags are used appropriately and dialogue is easily attributable.	
Total points for Dialogue	
Comments:	
5. Pacing (10 points)	
Pacing is appropriate for a short contemporary novel. There is appropriate balance between dialogue and narrative, and the action is suited to the genre.	
Backstory and other explanatory prose are layered in appropriately.	
Total points for Pacing	

Comments:	
6. Plot/Conflict (30 points)	
Author reveals an intriguing plot that is appropriate for a short contemporary.	
Plot is fresh, or author's voice is distinctive and brings a fresh perspective.	
Plot complexity is appropriate for a book of this length.	
The type and degree of conflict are appropriate to the genre.	
Both external and internal conflict are present or alluded to.	
Romantic elements are present, including romantic conflict and tension.	
Total points for Plot/Conflict	
Comments:	
7. Point of View (10 points)	
Point of view is clear and effective. Author's voice does not intrude.	
Point of view switches are smooth and appropriate.	
Total points for Point of View	
Comments:	
8. Mechanics (30 points)	
Manuscript is professionally formatted. (do not take off points for odd page breaks caused by electronic transmission) Appropriate (readable) font is used in a standard type size, with standard margins. Author ended entry at an appropriate break (that is, not in the middle of a sentence).	
Spelling, grammar, and punctuation are correct.	
Sentence fragments, if any, are used effectively.	
Author's word usage is appropriate to the short contemporary and adds to the story/setting. If slang is used, it is appropriate and doesn't feel dated.	
'Showing' outweighs 'telling'.	
Active verbs balance passive verbs as appropriate to the story and genre.	
Total points for Mechanics	

Comments:		
9. Voice and other intangibles (10 points)		
Author's voice shines through and lends itself well to the contemporary genre.		
The opening pages are intriguing, drawing me in and making me want to read more of the story (the hook!).		
Total points for Voice		
Comments:		
Total Score (150 possible)		
Other comments:		
Judge's info:		
Published, romance		
Published, other		
Un-published		