

The Grey Rooms - Season 4 Story Submission Guidelines

We are excited to bring you another season of our horror anthology series. But we can't do it without *you.*

Please read the following submission guidelines below, as we've shaken them up a great deal for this season! Thanks for joining us in... the Grey Rooms!

Submissions Begin: October 1st, 2020

Submissions Close: April 18th, 2021: 9am PT / Noon ET / 5pm BT

Content Requirements

- Stories must be original submissions. To be considered for the Grey Rooms, stories may not have been published in a printed or ebook format, or produced as a podcast or radio drama narrative.
- Your story's main character must be killed at the end of the story, or the narrative must heavily imply that the main character will die just after the story concludes.
- In general, content in Grey Rooms stories is similar to what you might find in a Rated R horror film, or an HBO series. Violent acts, psychodrama, confrontational ideas, torture, and pulpy demonic explosions are all welcome additions to the Grey Rooms.
- Sexual encounters with underage characters, of any kind, is not acceptable content for Grey Rooms stories.
- Rape or sexual assault of any kind is never acceptable content for Grey Rooms stories.
- Abuse or torture of children is never acceptable content for Grey Rooms stories. While horror may happen because of children, or around children, we are not looking to publish fictional depictions of children suffering.
- Racially charged violence for the sake of it is never acceptable content for Grey Rooms stories.
- There are no genre restrictions to Grey Rooms anthology stories. While the frame story each season aims for a specific tone, anthology stories can be any space you desire to explore. In the past we've published mysteries, sci-fi, fantasy, love stories, and even a story with a fluffy stuffed bear.
- Above all else, the Grey Rooms is a horror podcast. That means that your story should be a horror story. Horror means a lot of things to a lot of people. We encourage authors to consider the many different ways horror can be considered (*Alien* vs. *IT*), genre-specific interpretations (*Haunting of Hill House* vs. *The*

Conjuring), and how horror can speak to people beyond simple scare factor (*Get Out*, *The Shining*, *Silence of the Lambs*).

Formatting Requirements

- Stories can range from 2500 to 3500 words. If it's a few more or a few less, it's fine, but this is the range we're looking for. Note that this is a smaller number than in previous years, because of how we'd prefer you format your stories this year. Please see below.
- Narration elements of your story must be in the past tense. Using tense changes occasionally for drama is fine, but please check your tense to ensure most of your narration is in the past tense.
- Foul language is allowed, but please keep it contextual and light. If the word "fuck" appears every sentence in your piece, we will most likely reject it.
- For the first time this year we would prefer that authors submit their stories in a radioplay format rather than as prose. For Season 4 of the Grey Rooms, we will still accept prose-style submissions, but please be aware all stories will be converted to a radioplay format. Submitting your story in that format means less work on our part, and makes it easier to accept your submission. (More details on this under Editorial Process, below.)
 - This is a change from previous years on the Grey Rooms. In Season 3 we moved to converting all submissions into radioplay documents, and saw an immediate improvement in production speed, quality, and comprehension on the part of our voice actors.
 - The Grey Rooms is a podcast, an audio medium. While we love prose, we want to focus on and highlight that audio medium for our audience.
 - Prose format content, for the purposes of this discussion, is what you might see in a novel, with narrative elements bookended by dialogue in quotation marks, and with artifacts like "she said" or "he snarled."
 - Radioplay format is more like a screenplay format. It can use narration, but it recognizes that most content in the story is going to be spoken out loud.
 - For example, here is a snippet from a Season 2 script, setting a scene within the Grey Rooms:

INT. - THE GREY ROOMS - THE HOTEL RESTAURANT

The Jazz music fills our ears as Samantha and Bob walk over and take their seats at the table Todd has prepared. The table is laden with dishes, all with a platter over top. Todd comes walking up to the table behind them, rubbing his hands together in glee.

TODD
All right then, this is quite a spread isn't it? All these fancy platters and doilies and napkins! And plenty to drink, don't you worry. Hehe.

Neither Bob nor Samantha say a thing, looking daggers at each other over the table.

TODD (CONT'D)
(uncomfortable)
Ehhh. Okayyyy. So old Todd then, he'll do the honors. We've got all your favorites, Miss.

As he goes down the table, Todd takes the platter off of each with a flourish.

- Here's an example of a quick back and forth between two characters:

Todd grabs some food and starts to tuck in.

SAMANTHA
I keep looking for the maggots.

TODD
(food in his mouth)
Wha? Maggots?

SAMANTHA
I mean, this is a trick, right?

I'm going to go to eat some of Aunt Mary's chicken parm and it'll suddenly be filled with maggots. Or it'll look like a dead baby, or something horrible.

- And here's an example of how narration could still work very well in this format:

Sam points at a doorway on the far wall. Raymond shakes his head.

NARRATION

I couldn't see anything where she pointed. Just a blank wall.

RAYMOND

Wait. I haven't... I haven't talked to anyone in a while.

I don't know how long.

Did. Did Bob send you?

NARRATION

(to self)

Her eyes widened at the mention of his name.

- We have an example script in this format appended at the end of this document.
- If you currently use a tool like Word or Google Docs to write your scripts, your best approximation of this formatting is totally fine. The most important factor is to write your story like a radioplay, and not a prose short story.
- Word can be configured to approximate this formatting fairly easily. We have also had success using the software tools Final Draft, or Magic Movie Screenwriter.

Selection and Editorial Process

- After submissions close, our staff will retire to Management's lounge to consider your story. The food isn't great, but we usually have a good time.
- Authors will be contacted before the end of spring, most likely sometime in May. We take great care in selecting anthology stories for the series, and will want to take some time.
- Once your piece is selected, you will be contacted by our submissions staff! Congratulations!
- At that point our staff writer will contact you to work through the editorial process. All pieces will undergo the same editorial process, no exceptions.
- The goal of this process is to clarify authorial intent, as well as streamline the work to become a voice acted production.

- Examples of changes we might make in this pass include correcting typos and ungrammatical sentences.
- As stated above, we will also make any changes deemed necessary to create a compelling audio drama, such as chopping down long sections of narration into manageable VO, and removal of prose signposts like ‘he said, she said.’
- Again, while prose submissions are acceptable for Season 4 of the Grey Rooms, all submissions will be converted to radioplay format. Writing your submission in a radioplay format means less editing work required on the back end.
- Our only goal with this process is to make the best possible audio drama from your piece. We can’t wait for the chance to work with you!

Submitting, Payment, and Promotion

- To submit, attach your story in a Word, .rtf, .txt, or Final Draft format to an email. Address the email to submissions@thegreyrooms.com. Please put “The Grey Rooms Season 4 Submission” in the subject line.
- Any and all questions regarding submissions should be directed to submissions@thegreyrooms.com.
- Submissions entered after **April 18th, 2021 at 9am PST** will not be considered for entry into Season 4 of the Grey Rooms.
- Payment for each story will be \$25 dollars US.
- Authors selected for their stories to run as part of the series will enjoy several other benefits, including, but not limited to:
 - An invitation to join us on the Behind the Door ‘making of’ episode for your story.
 - A Grey Rooms website blog entry outlining your narrative accomplishments and asking a few questions about you.
 - Social Media promotion and Promotional artwork created to support your story.
 - Our deep appreciation for joining the Grey Rooms family of contributors.