

# Marshalltown Community Theatre Playwriting Competition, 2023

## What

A judged playwriting contest, with submissions due March 1, 2023, sponsored by the Marshalltown Community Theatre (MCT); winning entries to be announced in May, 2023. A prize of \$200 for a winning full length play, prizes of \$50 for up to two one-act plays will be awarded.

## Who

Iowa authors are encouraged to submit unpublished scripts which have not been performed. The plays will be evaluated by three judges with years of experience in community and high school theatre.

## Submissions

Submissions may be:

**One act plays** (not to exceed 45 minutes of running time, but not to be less than 20 minutes)—maximum of five actors, a minimal set with quick tear down possible (in the event two one acts are selected, so the winners can be performed in one evening)

**Full length plays** (not to exceed 2 hours of running time)—maximum of ten actors, minimal set (MCT uses various performance venues and may plan to perform the play in two or more venues as part of a single run, so simple sets are recommended)

Plays may be original or may be an adaptation of an existing public domain story. If the play is an adaptation, the play must identify the original author and original copyright date and publisher, and the submission must contain proof that the original is in the public domain.

Whether submitting an original play or an adaptation of an existing public domain story, the author must claim copyright on a title page according to the rules below. ***The author must also affirmatively state that the submission does not contain any copyrighted material that is not currently in the public domain. This includes the use of any music, whether recorded or performed as part of the production.***

## Submissions may not be

Musicals or any play based upon a writing which is currently protected by copyright. Submissions may not include any copyrighted commercial music or any other copyrighted material.

## Format

All submissions must be in PDF form, submitted to [mctplayfest@yahoo.com](mailto:mctplayfest@yahoo.com)

Submissions must consist of the following:

1. A paginated complete script with a title page which claims copyright for the author *but which does not name the author*. Judges will not be told the name of the author. If the author's name appears anywhere on the submitted script, the script will be disqualified.
2. A separate single page with the title, the author's name, the author's claim of copyright, and the author's contact information. As noted, judges will not be told the name of the author. All

judging is “blind”. The page which identifies the author will be maintained by the Marshalltown Community Theatre and will not be distributed to the judges with the script.

The “separate, single title page” must contain the following information:

TITLE

Identification of the submission as a one act or full length production  
The statement: “COPYRIGHT CLAIMED BY AUTHOR”

The following statement:

***“By submitting this script, I acknowledge that in the event this play is accepted as a prize winner, the Marshalltown Community Theatre may, but is not required to, produce the play without further payment to the author. Such a production may consist of no more than five performances. Following this production, the Marshalltown Community Theatre will release rights to production and the possibility of royalties to the author. Further, in the event this play is not accepted as a prize winner, the Marshalltown Community Theatre will have no right of production to this script except upon the express permission of the author. At the request of the author, the pdf scripts will be destroyed.***

***“I further acknowledge that this submission does not contain any writing or music currently protected by copyright. Any material which was originally copyrighted is now in the public domain. If requested, I will provide proof that the material is in the public domain.”***

NAME, ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER and EMAIL ADDRESS. (Unless a major problem arises, communication will be limited to emails.)

## **Judging**

Three judges (none of whom is currently associated with the Marshalltown Community Theatre) will read the plays and will select winners. No more than one play may be selected in the full length play category, and no more than two one act plays may be selected in the one act play category. Results will be announced in May, 2023.

## **Criteria for judging**

Judging will be based on the following criteria:

“Stageability”—whether, in the opinion of the judges, it is possible to physically stage the play in an unknown venue without need of any special technical effects

Is the play interesting? Is it believable? Does the plot hold together? Is it “stageworthy”—that is, would an audience enjoy the play and would a theatre company be proud to produce it?

## **Cautionary note**

Based on experience from past competitions, authors are advised that neither the judges nor the MCT Board is impressed with profanity. A script which includes profanity is not disqualified from consideration, but inclusion of profanity may, in some cases, lower a script in the eyes of the judges or Board members.

Judges are performing this task without compensation. They may (individually) choose to provide comments on plays, but are not required to. They will not be identified to the submitting authors, before, during or after the competition.

## **Performance of winning plays**

After selection of winners by the judges, the MCT Board and the MCT technical crews (including those involved with set design and construction as well as sound and lights) will have final say on whether the submission will be produced by MCT.

*In 2021 none of the three winning plays was selected for performance. Although the Board acknowledged the quality of the winning plays, approved of the judges' decisions, and awarded the cash prizes to the winners, the Board determined that the winning plays were not appropriate for MCT. In addition, neither of the two winning one act plays from 2022 was performed. The 2022 winning full length play, "County Line Road", will be performed in February and March, 2023. Please visit the MCT website for information about "County Line Road".*

## **Possible performance of non-winning plays**

*In the event the MCT Board determines that the winning plays are not appropriate for our stage, Board members may request permission to review plays which did not win the competition. In that event, authors of plays will be contacted to see if their play(s) may be considered for performance. Authors' anonymity will be preserved unless an author permits the Board to consider a non-winning play.*

## **QUESTIONS?**

Contact [mctplayfest@yahoo.com](mailto:mctplayfest@yahoo.com) This email address is checked regularly and inquiries will receive prompt attention.