



# The People's Friend

FICTION GUIDELINES



# Fiction

We publish around 769 stories every year. That's seven brand-new stories in every weekly issue, twenty in each Special, 25 in our little annual and nine in our 'Magic Of Christmas' bookazine.

- **SETTINGS** can be contemporary or historical, based in the UK or anywhere around the world.
- **GENRES** we accept are general, romance (young or mature), mystery, cosy crime, family, junior (from a young person's point of view), and very occasionally, spooky – although we can't have any direct contact with the supernatural.
- **WORD COUNTS** should be within 10% either way of 1000, 1200, 1500, 2000, 2500, 3000, 3500, and 4000 words.

We also print one 10,000-word Long Read in every second Special.

We don't use 'flash fiction' or stories of less than 1000 words.

- **PAYMENT** for short stories begins at £80 for the first six stories, rising to £95 on a seventh acceptance. Payment rises to our top rate of £110 on a further seventh acceptance.
- **COPYRIGHT** always remains with you.

**Only new, unpublished stories are accepted for consideration – please don't send in a story that's been published before.**

- The best way to get a feel for the stories we accept is to read the magazine regularly, and write for the readers.
- 'People's Friend' stories should feature engaging characters who will appeal to our readers. Appropriate language and tone is essential. Stories should reflect modern life whilst bearing in mind 'Friend' heritage and values. A 'feel-good' tone is welcome.
- Stories with a challenging theme are welcome, providing a 'Friend' tone is present throughout, and it has a positive, upbeat conclusion.
- Payment is on acceptance.

**Email address for new authors is [friendfiction@dcthomson.co.uk](mailto:friendfiction@dcthomson.co.uk)**

- Please include your name, pen name if appropriate, address, email address and a contact telephone number on the first page of your submission.
- No formatting required – so no headers, footers or page numbers, please, and no duplication of information.

**You'll find writing advice on our website. Our Writing Hour on X every Tuesday at 11am provides a supportive and welcoming space for all authors.**

## Serials

Every weekly issue of the 'Friend' features two serial instalments – one with a contemporary setting, the other historical.

- **INSTALMENTS** Serials usually run from between three to eight instalments, but we can feature two-part serials, and longer-length serials are also welcome.
- **CHARACTERS** Each serial features two or three main characters, through whose viewpoints the story is told. Our main character is nearly always female, and only rarely a child.
- **WE RECOMMEND** that only authors who've had stories published in the 'Friend' attempt a serial.
- **SEND** a brief synopsis plus character list in the first instance to your assigned editor.
- **PAYMENT** is £150 per instalment.

**Before trying a serial, we recommend that you read some of our already-published serials.**

'Friend' serials are not longer-length stories, they have a set structure to reflect the viewpoints of the main characters. For more information, please contact your assigned editor.

## Pocket Novels

We publish two 'People's Friend' pocket novels every month.

- **WORD COUNT** should be within 10% either way of 38,000 words.
- **GENRES** we accept include romance (any age range), general, family, cosy crime, mystery, and occasionally, spooky.
- **STORIES SET SEASONALLY** – e.g., Christmas, Easter – are welcome. Please send seasonal story synopses at least six months prior to the intended date of publication.
- **TONE AND CONTENT** must mirror the weekly magazine.
- **TIMEFRAMES** Historical and contemporary timeframes are welcome and the stories can be set anywhere in the world.
- **PAYMENT** for pocket novels is a flat fee of £300.

**Please send the first three chapters plus a synopsis to [tsteel@dcthomson.co.uk](mailto:tsteel@dcthomson.co.uk)**  
**Please do not send a complete novel.**

We retain the right to first publication, but once your pocket novel has been published, you're free to sell it on, and copyright always remains yours.

## Poetry

We publish poetry in the weekly magazine, in the first and third issue of every month.

- Poetry also appears in our Specials, on sale every three weeks.
- Poems should rhyme and scan. Suitable topics include family, friendship, faith, and fun. Seasonal poetry is welcome.
- Our most frequently used poetry lengths are 12 and 16 lines.
- We accept poetry for our Annual, and can be slightly more flexible on length here, with anything from eight to twenty lines being considered.
- Poetry in our Friendship Book is set to a template.
- Poems are paid at a flat rate of £15.

**Poetry from published 'Friend' poets should be sent to [tsteel@dcthomson.co.uk](mailto:tsteel@dcthomson.co.uk)**

