

The Shaftesbury Tales

Short Story Competition Rules

In just 500 words...can you capture the characters and intrigue, fun and drama of Dorset in the Dark Ages?

'The Shaftesbury Tales' are a collection of short stories set around the time that King Edward the Martyr was murdered in Corfe aged just 16, and will be published as a booklet-programme, to accompany the touring theatre performance of the same name in July.

With "Edwards Tale" as the central story, we're looking for Tales which frame it - inspirational, strong characters who have a story to tell about their world, Edwards murder, and the people around them - voices from the Dark Ages which speak to us today.

'Edwards Tale', and a selection of the Short Story Competition winners, will be adapted for the stage and performed in July.

We particularly value:

- originality of thought and interpretation of theme
- entertaining content that is thought provoking, intriguing, moving, funny, enjoyable, memorable.
- stories which have modern-day resonance
- stories with a local perspective or setting or theme (which is the Corfe-Shaftesbury walking route (roughly, St Edwards Way)

The Story

- You must accept these Rules in order to enter the Competition.
- Your submission must be set around the time of King Edward the Martyr, and offer a perspective of his murder or event/s before/afterwards from the point of view of someone living at that time, fictional (eg a local peasant) or non-fictional (eg Edwards brother Aethelred)
- Your story must be in English, prose, written in first or third person, by a single author.
- As we are inspired by Chaucer, the title must include the word 'Tale'.
- It must be a maximum of 500 words (not including the title).
- Stories must not have been published, self-published, published on a website, broadcast or featured amongst the winners in another competition.
- All submissions should be the writer's original work. You should not submit the work of others, either in part or in translation. Due to the way AI uses existing work already published on the internet, the use of AI will also be considered plagiarism.
- Entries must not include photographs or illustrations.
- The winning entries will be published in a programme booklet aimed at all ages, therefore we cannot accept stories with vulgarity, obscenity or swearing.

Eligibility

- The competition is open to everyone living in Dorset.
- Entry is free but limited to one story per person.
- The categories are:
 - 1) Age 11 and under (school years R-6)
 - 2) Age 12-16 (school years 7-11)
 - 3) Age 17-18 (school years 12-13)
 - 4) Age 19-25
 - 5) Over 25
- Your age on 31st August 2024 determines the appropriate age category. Proof of age will be requested from the winners of categories 1-4 after judging has taken place and prior to the announcement of winners.

Submitting Your Story

- Entries must be received by midday (12 noon) on 18th March 2024.
- All entries are judged anonymously. The first part of your submission will be separated from your story before being passed to the judging panel.
- Your name MUST NOT appear in your story, even as a character.
- Stories will not be returned, so please retain a copy.
- Stories cannot be altered once entered.
- Entries can be submitted via our online entry form ONLY, which is on our website www.treehousetheatre.com/shaftesburytales or can be found at <https://01352.aidaform.com/writing-competition> or request a link by emailing louisa@treehousetheatre.com
- Please submit your entry in good time and preferably not on the last day, as we can't make exceptions for any technical/internet issues which prevent or delay submission.

Judging, Notification & Prizes

- The judges' decision is final in all matters and no correspondence can be entered into.
- Entries will be judged in 5 age categories, and considered anonymously by a panel of judges.
- Any plagiarised work will be disqualified, along with any entries which do not follow the rules laid out.
- Two winning entries in each category will be decided by the judges and the winners will be notified. The winners will be announced in April 2024.
- All 10 winning stories will be published in the booklet-programme. Authors will receive a cash prize of £50, a copy of the booklet-programme, and 2 tickets to the performance at Shaftesbury Abbey where the prizes will be presented.
- Some of the winning stories will be adapted into short performance pieces. There is no hierarchy between the 10 winners, and those chosen to be adapted for the show will be those most suitable for this purpose.
- Additionally, Judges reserve the right to choose up to 10 runners up, whose stories will also be published in the booklet-programme, and who will receive a copy.
- Judges reserve the right not to award a prize.
- Questions about the competition in general should be sent to louisa@treehousetheatre.com . We cannot answer questions about individual entries.

Data and Copyright

- Copyright remains with the author.
- Entrants to the competition must give permission as author of the submitted story for Treehouse Theatre to publish the work in the booklet-programme and online. You will always be credited by your first and surname alongside your published story.
- Treehouse Theatre will have the right to edit & publish the submitted story on its website, social media accounts, in the booklet-programme and subsequent eBook.
- Entrants to the competition must give permission as author of the submitted story for it to be adapted into a script for live performance, with edits and additions as required by our playwrights, and it for it be performed as part of 'The Shaftesbury Tales' in 2024 and in the future. You will always be credited by your first and surname in the programme, alongside the playwright.
- These rights are non-exclusive. Whether or not you are a winner or runner-up in our competition, you retain all other rights. For example, you may publish your work online or in print elsewhere, or enter it into other competitions.
- By entering the competition and providing your details, you are consenting to us contacting you by email, post or phone about the 2024 Shaftesbury Tales story writing competition and related events. We may do so to contact you if you are a winner or a runner up, or let you know about performances of the Tales in 2024 and in the future. Treehouse Theatre may contact you only in relation to your story and your data will not be used for any other purpose.
- We will not share the contact details of entrants with any other organisation without the consent of the entrant.