

The Island Prize

“As African writers, we are often faced with a double dose of challenges. Firstly, getting published within African countries can be incredibly difficult because local publishers are often constrained by finances. Secondly, for many writers getting published overseas is almost impossible because the rest of the world has certain ideas of what an African story should be. Having experienced these challenges first-hand – being told that a novel is ‘too African’ or ‘not African enough’ – I know how important it is that stories from Africa be given a wide variety of platforms so that they can be shared at home and abroad without the need to fit certain moulds. I am proud to be part of The Island Prize for a Debut Novel from Africa. This is one step towards bridging the gap between here and there, us and them. In fact, it is through prizes like these that authors across the continent can gain the confidence to tell stories as they wish. The hope is that, with time, such stories will become appreciated across the globe, without first being labelled as an exception or a surprise.”

Karen Jennings

The Island Prize for a Debut Novel from Africa

From the submitted entries, no more than TEN and no fewer than FIVE authors will be invited to submit their full manuscript. These authors will be provided with optional feedback. From this shortlist the winning three entries will be chosen, with prize money of £500 for first, and £200 for each runner-up. The winning three manuscripts will all be considered for publication and be read by an agent.

Eligibility

The Island Prize is open to African writers aged 18 and over regardless of place of residence.

For the purposes of the competition, we define “African writers” as writers born in or having citizenship of any African country.

1. You must not be represented by a literary agent or currently under contract with a publisher. If you receive an offer of representation while your novel is under consideration, you must inform us and withdraw.
2. Non-fiction, poetry and short story collections, as well as fiction for children are NOT eligible.
3. There is no restriction as to specific genre – anything from literary fiction to crime thriller is welcome.
4. The complete novel should be between 35,000 words and 100,000 words. Please make sure to work within those parameters.
5. Entrants must not have previously published a novel; this includes self-published or eBook-only editions. To clarify: authors may have previously published poetry collections, short story collections and non-fiction.
6. Submissions open on 1st October 2023 and close at midnight CAT on 1st January 2024.

7. Authors with manuscripts that we would like to see in full will be contacted by 1 February 2024 – though this date might have to be extended slightly, depending on the volume of entries received.
8. Authors MUST have a full manuscript to submit within 3 days of this date, otherwise they will be disqualified and removed from the longlist.
9. The winner will be announced in the first week of June 2024.

Please ensure you read the rules carefully before entering the competition.

To enter:

Send the following through the form below:

1. The first three chapters or 10,000 words of the novel;
2. A covering statement giving EACH of the following (please make sure you have included them all):
 - the word count
 - name
 - address
 - nationality
 - preferred pronouns of the author
 - the title
 - a brief, two-sentence description of the main subjects and themes of the novel
 - a one-page synopsis setting out the basic story
3. Format:
 - Entries should be in a simple font, size 12 – Times New Roman, Garamond, Arial, Calibri are all fine.
 - Please ensure entries are double or 1.5 spaced.
 - All entries should be in Word doc or docx.
 - Please note that the literary quality of 1b and 1c is not taken into account in judging, so please keep them clear and informative.

<https://www.hhousebooks.com/the-island-prize/>

If you have any queries, do email: contact@hhousebooks.com