



PRESS RELEASE

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Ministry of Equality Launches Short Story Competition - *Modern Fairy Tales*

The Ministry of Equality is pleased to announce the launch of a new short story competition. The theme of the competition is *Modern Fairy Tales*.

The aim of the competition is to encourage authors to challenge gender stereotypes which have traditionally been prevalent in children's literature. Classic children's books and even contemporary stories frequently portray men and women in terms of specific socially defined gender norms. The competition, therefore, aims to inspire authors to develop characters who exist as individuals and who explicitly challenge and defy stereotypes. In this way, the competition hopes to redress gender imbalances, such as the under-representation of female protagonists, which often exists in traditional fairy tales.

Fairy tales contribute to how children understand what is expected of women and men, and shape the way children will think about their own place in the world. Modern fairy tales can, therefore, play an important role in the dissemination of shared cultural values, meanings and expectations and can help create a more socially equitable world.

These types of stories are now developing as a genre in their own right and whilst there are successful books by international writers on the topic the competition is an opportunity for local writers to contribute to this growing genre.

Although the stories, being fairy tales, are aimed at young readers, the competition is open to everyone interested in writing such stories.

In order to support this initiative the Ministry for Equality has collaborated with the festival director of the Gibunco Gibraltar International Literary Festival and a workshop on the art of storytelling has been organized. It will be delivered by writer Sally Bayley on Saturday 16 November at 11am at the John Mackintosh Hall. Participants of the competition may apply for complimentary tickets for this interactive presentation via the Department of Equality at equality@gibraltar.gov.gi or Tel: 200 46253.



The Modern Fairy Tales competition will see a number of trophies and prizes awarded to winning entries. There will be three categories as follows:

- A. School Years 8 to 13
- B. Young Adults, 18 – 24 years
- C. Adults, 25 years and over

The short stories are to be of no more than 1500 words. Entry forms and full conditions are available from the Department of Equality, 14 Governor's Parade. Tel: 200 46253 or [email: equality@gibraltar.gov.gi](mailto:equality@gibraltar.gov.gi)

The closing date for entries is Monday 3rd February 2020. Entries may be submitted at the Department of Equality between 9.30am and 4.30pm.

Minister for Equality, the Hon. Samantha Sacramento, MP said, "Traditional fairy tales, written hundreds of years ago, often reflect certain outdated social and cultural values of their time. For example, they tend to convey men as the lead character and women as the helpless victim who needs to be rescued by a hero. This means that, subconsciously, roles for women and men are defined and communicated to children from an early age. These predetermined roles can hamper and prevent the full development of children who may feel that there are certain social and gender norms that they must follow. The ultimate aim of this competition is to challenge gender stereotypes which prevent children from reaching their full potential and which prevent them from self-realisation. I would like to encourage both established and budding writers to participate in this competition and to help create more equitable narratives locally and greater possibilities for the younger members of our community."