

In an age bursting with “award winners” and “best sellers,” it’s easy to imagine all of our favorite stories being immortalized in leatherbound tomes for all future generations to enjoy. But in reality, very few tales stand the test of time. Most, no matter how impactful or relevant in the moment, eventually gather dust and fade quietly into forgotten history. But every so often, magic happens, and a certain combination of words conveys something so unforgettable that humanity has no choice but to preserve it. Maybe it’s a character so relatable that her struggles and victories span cultures and generations. Maybe it’s a place of immutable dreams—or nightmares. Maybe it’s a creature or an object that highlights a fundamental aspect of the human condition. Or maybe an event itself speaks to some aspect of our shared experience. Whatever it is, the rare stories that contain these transcendent elements deserve to be told and retold. And this season, Havok is giving *you* the chance to do just that! So, prepare to harness the most enduring elements throughout mankind’s literary tradition and create your own version of something truly LEGENDARY!

Note: This is a reference sheet for inspiration only; deadlines may change; check the Season Themes page on GoHavok.com to verify which months are open for submissions and which are closed. During this season, we will be acquiring stories for all six months during the five month submission period outlined below. Upon acceptance, you will be informed of the month of publication.

LEGENDARY CREATURES

Curious beings might be the greatest example of legendary inspiration throughout the ages. Not always quite fact, and never *completely* fiction, these elusive creatures have motivated and plagued the most adventurous storytellers throughout history. And some of them have such striking impacts on our history that they refuse to be buried by skeptics. So, if you fancy yourself a cryptozoologist or a hard-hitting historian with a story to tell, this theme is for you. Send us that essay recounting your water-skiing adventure in the Loch Ness. Inspire us with your uncle’s spring break run-in with Bigfoot. Share your prophetic dream regarding the fate of Santa’s last reindeer. Or send us stolen government documents proving a secret war with kaiju. Whether you’re writing about unicorns, basilisks, phoenixes, Moby Dick, or even Dolly the sheep, be sure to capture our hearts by embodying the essence of these legendary creatures.

LEGENDARY PEOPLE

History is a fickle mistress, and folklore often only reflects the culture in which it was created, but certain individuals seem so unique and unforgettable that nothing can knock them out of vogue. King Arthur will forever stand as a symbol of chivalry, justice, and rightful leadership. Amelia Earhart embodies the indomitable spirit of female courage and women’s equality in recent history while Valkyries fulfill that role in ancient legend. Noah is a classic symbol of unwavering piety in the face of human degeneracy, and Dorian Gray does a great job of living out that degeneracy. Wild Bill Hickok, Jack the Ripper, Cleopatra, Hercules, Genghis Khan, Sitting Bull, Frankenstein, William Wallace... the list is long and ripe with potential for your legendary retellings!

LEGENDARY LOCATIONS

For now, we all share one rock—Earth. We fight for our native country, protect priceless habitats, search for lost cities, and burn cursed lands to the ground. And so, at the heart of every legend is an unforgettable destination, a place to find, preserve, or escape from. Imagine if Atlantis had never been lost. Contemplate the existence of a literal Fountain of Youth in a dying society. What if LIDAR discovered the Garden of Eden or El Dorado? What if aliens have been hiding Shangri-La from us all this time? Oahu’s Haiku stairs, Elisha’s tomb, Tír na nÓg, Axis mundi, Neverland, Wonderland, and maybe even Disney Land. Explore anywhere from the top of Mount Olympus to the bottom of the Marianas Trench—or beyond—and write us a story worthy of legend.

LEGENDARY THINGS

Mine... my own... my... *things*! We all have them. We carry them around in our pockets and put them behind state-of-the-art security systems. We search our whole lives for the pot of gold at end of rainbow. We travel thousands of miles to see the Mona Lisa. We try with all our might to pull the sword from the stone or to lift Thor’s hammer. Long after we’re gone, sentient machines will still be looking for the philosopher’s stone, and until then—or at least until this month’s submission deadline— you have the opportunity to discover, use, abuse, and protect history’s most valuable objects. This is the ultimate show-and-tell. Don’t hold back!

LEGENDARY EVENTS

People, places, things... they’re all just set pieces for stories of legend. And this month we’re celebrating those events that have shaped history and carved out our future. Recall the true details of the first moon landing to our great, great-grandchildren. Relive the Great Flood from any culture’s perspective. Dig through the burned library of Alexandria. Escape the fall of Constantinople or the destruction of Pompeii. Climb Jack’s beanstalk or the Tower of Babel. But whatever you do, don’t open Pandora’s Box. Because, well, you should have done that last month with the Legendary Things theme. So don’t miss your chance to tell us about that one time we should never forget.

WE NEED ALL FIVE MAJOR GENRES

The Legendary season lends itself to all our genres, but you may wonder how to combine *your* favored genre with these themes. The tips below should help. Also, we generally receive fewer submissions for the mystery, thriller, and humor categories, so your story may have a better chance at publication if it fits those genres.

Here are some genre-specific ideas to spark your imagination:

- *Mystery*: Take a famous mystery from history or fiction and give it a speculative twist. If it is unsolved, show us what *really* happened. If it was resolved, give us an alternate explanation that you find more satisfying. Or base your story on a question that arises from a myth or legend: How did Loch Ness end up in that lake?
- *Science Fiction*: The scifi genre has its own legends (real or fictional). The day the earth stood still, the first moon landing, the discovery of electricity, faster than light travel, what happens when you enter a black hole, can robots be truly sentient, discovery of alien life, etc. Or you can write a science fiction take on a classic myth.
- *Humor*: Take a legendary story and mix it up in a hilarious way. Medusa hires an inventor to help her go on a date without turning everyone to stone. Robin Hood and Little John play a prank on Friar Tuck. Godzilla attacks Tokyo but turns out to be afraid of white rats. The world's strongest man is challenged to a baking competition and keeps breaking things.
- *Thriller*: Every legend has its life-threatening moments. Give us a countdown to doom, a thrilling chase, a suspenseful situation. Jack uses his latest invention to fly up the beanstalk and steal the giants' treasure, but his jetpack runs out of steam at the worst time. A pet sitter saves the five dogs she's out walking when King Kong goes on a rampage. If you combine danger with a speculative twist, your story has a better chance of selection by more than one of our genre teams.
- *Fantasy*: There are so many legendary things you can choose from, so pick your *favorite* and do it justice. What's the most dragonish dragon story you can imagine? What have all the other Beauty and the Beast tales missed? Who was the Lady of the Lake, and what was the *real* reason she chose Arthur?

TIP #1: Sometimes we get questions about our submission process. Here's a behind-the-scenes peek. Our submissions team routes your story to the genre team indicated on your submission form most of the time (Mystery Monday, Techno Tuesday, etc). If one genre team is low on submissions, stories that fit multiple genres may be shifted to fill that gap. Our teams coordinate together when needed to share stellar stories when one genre day is full and a story fits more than one genre. Bottom line: If your story can combine two genres, it may get an extra boost.

TIP #2: Sign up for our [author newsletter](#) to stay in the loop about opportunities for authors. We usually send a newsletter once a month, but there may be occasional announcements in addition to that schedule.

TIP #3: Follow [@havokauthornews](#) on Instagram for story prompts to spark ideas for our themes. We also post open and closed submission announcements and other author-centric news. On Facebook, follow the [Havok Publishing page](#) and join the [Flash Fiction Writers Guild](#) for the same info. Disclaimer: No guarantee of what info we'll post, or whether you'll see the posts when we do. Checking the Season Themes page on our website is the most reliable source for this info.

TIP #4: How to write a fantasy or science fiction story while targeting mystery, thriller, or humor: Take your fantasy (or futuristic) character and setting and center your story around a mystery, a question, an unknown. Or make the situation life-threatening and thrilling. Or give your characters a humorous personality or put them in a hilarious situation.

Using the season themes to inspire you, send us a story that fits any of the following daily flash genres:

MYSTERY MONDAY: From cozy to crime scene, start your week off with a bit of mystery. Creep through downtown foggy London Town, spy on secret agents at a midnight meeting, catch up with an old friend who may or may not be a cat burglar, or just figure out who stole your homework before the last bell rings. It doesn't have to be a classic mystery with detectives, clues, murder, or theft. If it's mysterious, uncertain, or unknown, take us on a journey through the dark and shine a bit of light on the hidden—and maybe even startling—truth.

Sub-genres: Amateur sleuth (*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*), cozy/whodunit (Agatha Christie), crime (*The Departed*), legal/medical (*A Few Good Men*), noir (*Blade Runner*), police procedural (*Silence of the Lambs*), professional sleuth (Sherlock Holmes), supernatural (*The Woman in Black*), psychological horror (*Sphere*)

TECHNO TUESDAY: As your week hits its stride, don't be afraid to ask, "What if..." What if NASA really is covering for the aliens? What if your new cell phone comes with a free brain implant? What if a radioactive spider gives you superpowers? What if time travel vacations are a thing of the past? With Havok, even the mysteries of the universe aren't too great to explore over your morning cup of coffee.

Sub-genres: Hard sci-fi (*The Martian*), soft sci-fi (*Spider-Man*), military (*Starship Troopers*), space opera (*Star Wars*, *Dune*), steampunk (*The Time Machine*), cyber/bio/nanopunk (*The Matrix*), voyages extraordinaire (Jules Verne), gothic (*Frankenstein's Monster*), dystopian (*The Hunger Games*)

WACKY WEDNESDAY: Halfway done, and who couldn't use a little humor over their lunch break? Well, embrace the lighter side of Havok as you laugh your stress away, 1,000 words at a time. Whether you're running alongside a hilariously unfortunate private eye, hitching a ride across the galaxy, helping a kid defend his home from Christmas burglars, enjoying a "sick day" with a high school adventurer, or going on an epic quest to find a holy grail, you can rest assured that your adventure will be anything but serious.

Sub-genres: Forget 'em! What would Wacky Wednesday be with a bunch of rules? If it's funny, lighthearted, and downright entertaining, you're hitting the mark.

THRILLER THURSDAY: As your week races to a close, get caught up in some heart-pumping excitement. Run down a terrorist before time runs out. Infiltrate a secret society before they collect the last relic. Untangle a sociopath's plot before he pins the whole thing on you. Take down a crime boss before he takes you down. And do it all before your kids wake up from their afternoon nap.

Sub-genres: Action (*James Bond*), adventure (*Indiana Jones*), conspiracy (*The Da Vinci Code*), crime (*Die Hard*), medical (*Outbreak*), man vs. nature (*Jaws*, *Twister*)

FANTASY FRIDAY: TGI fantasy! Now, sit back and drift into another world filled with high elves, amateur wizards, magic wardrobes, suave vampires, and gun-slinging monster hunters. With Havok, there's no limit to how far the story will take you as you kick your feet up and usher in another fantastic weekend.

Sub-genres: Fairy tales (*Cinderella*), horror (*Dracula*), high fantasy (*The Lord of the Rings*), low fantasy (*Harry Potter*), magical realism (*Midnight in Paris*), medieval (*A Game of Thrones*), portal (*The Chronicles of Narnia*), urban/paranormal (*The Dresden Files*)