

There are some storylines and concepts that hook us every time. When done right, they transcend the label stereotype or the dreaded “cliché” and enter the realm of treasured trope and become the formula for a blockbuster hit. Havok’s third season is all about the stories that we watch, re-watch, and stay up all night to binge watch. Remember: This is a reference sheet only; check the Season Themes page on GoHavok.com to verify which months are open for submissions and which are closed.

Dynamic Duos

Batman and Robin. Mulder and Scully. Spock and McCoy. Sherlock and Watson. Arthur and Merlin. Legolas and Gimli. Artoo and C-3PO. Tom and Jerry. Scooby Doo and Shaggy. And the list goes on. Whether they go together like peanut butter and jelly or oil and water, two heads are more entertaining than one. And that's why we're kicking off Season Three with a double-shot of awesome. Give us your partners in crime, your whimsical magical familiars, your plucky comic relief robots, your villainous pets, and your legendary heroes. Because this month, we're seeing double.

Answering the Call

Every great hero's journey starts with a choice. Whether faced with an ancient prophecy or a secret admirer, the best characters are always faced with an important question: "Do I step up to the challenge or not?" What if Harry Potter had stayed under the Dursley's stairs? What if Walter White had remained a law-abiding chemistry teacher? What if Neo had taken the blue pill? What if Bill and Ted had decided to fail their history class so they could focus on music? What if Luke Skywalker had never left Tatooine? What if Elle Woods had decided to become a hairdresser because Harvard Law was too hard? Every decision comes with consequences, and this month, you get to decide the fate of the world, or at least the fate of the high school dance. Whether your hero answers the call or not is up to you. But don't make your choice lightly, because ultimately, it's the fate of your story that hangs in the balance.

Strange New Worlds

The best stories transport us. They captivate us. They keep us awake late into the night, caught somewhere between our own world and somewhere... else. Without a magical wardrobe filled with talking animals, Narnia would have been dreadfully bland. Without an animated bunny, Who Framed Roger Rabbit would have died on the cutting room floor. Without a color-changing horse and an ill-tempered witch, The Wizard of Oz would have remained dreadfully black and white. And without a desolate red planet, The Martian would have failed to launch. So let your imagination run wild this month. From the ocean's uncharted depths to the ancient realm's oldest forests, wow us with stories filled with fresh, thought-provoking settings and exotic beings. Because nothing's stranger than fiction.

The End of the World As We Know It

Nothing's more exciting than impending disaster, right? And there's no greater disaster than the end of everything we know and love. So this month, put us through the ringer. Take us to the brink of survival, and it's up to you whether you bring us back. But beware of tired tropes. Wouldn't a zombie apocalypse be better if it happened in Middle Earth, or if the undead were actually smarter than humans? Wouldn't a Russian submarine be more intriguing if, instead of threatening the United States with a nuclear warhead, it did so with a captive fallen angel? Wouldn't a giant meteor be scarier if it were made of ice filled with an alien virus? Wouldn't an evil wizard make more waves if he threatened to turn the entire realm into codfish? But whatever creative twist you decide to put on the end of the world, be sure it captures the essence of approaching doom. If we're not racing toward the big finish, we're likely to wish our existence had never been threatened in the first place.

Super Duper

Heroes and villains don't need to be from Krypton to have super powers (but it helps). A movie buff can solve the case of the copycat murderer. A reindeer with a glowing nose can save Christmas. A father with a "special set of skills" can save his daughter from kidnappers. A sentient android can broker peace between humans and robots. And, yes, a nearly omnipotent Kryptonian can rescue humanity countless times. So fill this month with the widest variety of super-powers the world has ever seen. Turn the smallest skill into something lifesaving. Take an evildoer's negative traits and make them positive. Wow us with new perspectives on what it means to be extraordinary, because, as Uncle Ben said, "With great power comes great responsibility."

The One Thing

The MacGuffin isn't just a ridiculous word. It's a plot trigger capable of sprouting an entire story. The crystal skull, the Maltese falcon, the Infinity Stones, the raven, the Holy Grail, the Death Star plans, Private Ryan—whether it's a person, a place, or a ring, the MacGuffin will inspire stories worthy to round out our binge-worthy season. As always, get creative. Tilt your head and squint a little. Find those things in everyday life that could unfold into a timeless tale. Dig up unfamiliar objects capable of capturing the attention of your characters and your readers. And then, in 1,000 words or less, allow the MacGuffin to inspire a story that we'll never forget.

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 super powers? 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*)