

May, 2023

# Peasant Magazine

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The Bogatyr & the Cursed Inn

Issue #0

# Peasant Magazine

Issue Zero / May 1st 2023

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**Publisher: Charles Moffat / [fiction.charlesmoffat.com](http://fiction.charlesmoffat.com)**

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**Art Director: Charles Moffat**

All cover art & any interior illustrations are created using photoshop.

## **Acknowledgements**

*Peasant Magazine* would not be possible without the hard work of the authors and the volunteers.

The following people volunteered their time to help make this magazine happen:

Jonathan Deprey, Tricia Humphrey, and various authors who also promoted *Peasant Magazine*.

Our apologies to anyone we may have missed.

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\* We list the approximate word count so readers have an idea of what they are getting into when reading a story.

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**Visit [fiction.charlesmoffat.com/peasantmagazine/](http://fiction.charlesmoffat.com/peasantmagazine/)**

## A Word from the Publisher: What is an Issue Zero?

A proof of concept. A very short prototype. A glimpse of what is to come.

An Issue Zero is a chance for the publisher to fine tune what the look and feel of the magazine according to how they think it should be, determining such details as layout, font size, column spacing, how to handle illustrations, etc. It also allows the publisher to offer a secondary source of information regarding how to submit stories to the magazine, which writers and readers can easily share in PDF format.

As such the Issue Zero contains information on the following topics:

- *About Peasant Magazine*
- *The Magazine Covers*
- *Submission Guidelines*
- *When is the Deadline?*
- *Frequently Asked Questions*
- *Do's & Don'ts of Submitting to Literary Magazines*

Since this is effectively the pre-inaugural issue of *Peasant Magazine*, it also means we should include at least one story within it. Thus readers and writers can get a taste of the kind of stories that are available in *Peasant Magazine*. Our goal is to publish a free and non-profit magazine dedicated towards Fantasy and Historical Fiction stories that are set either in fantasy worlds or set on earth prior to 1750.

We welcome submissions from writers of all creeds, all ages, and we invite readers to browse and read what these writers have to offer.

Sincerely,  
Charles Moffat  
fiction.charlesmoffat.com

## ABOUT PEASANT MAGAZINE

*Peasant Magazine* is a free literary fantasy journal/magazine produced by fantasy author Charles Moffat with the help of volunteers. Hence the name 'Peasant'. We pay nothing, but we also charge nothing. This magazine is free\* and produced on a pauper's budget of zero. We don't even have a shoestring budget. We have a budget of nothingness. A complete void.

\* The PDF version of *Peasant Magazine* is free, but the paper version is not free due to the cost of printing.

People could in theory just print out the PDF and staple/glue/whatever it together, but if you want a nice looking version then just pay for the printed copy. For printing purposes we have opted for Amazon's print-on-demand because it is reasonably priced, doesn't require that we print thousands of copies, we can update the file if need be, and there's zero upfront cost. Oh and potentially free shipping.

We will (more or less) accept any well-written fantasy or historical fiction story between 1,000 and 40,000 words. We prefer stories to be in the 1,000 to 20,000 words range, but we will consider stories up to 40,000.

We prefer stories that are set in a medieval, ancient, or prehistoric setting. Any pre-industrial setting (pre-1750) will do. Stories set after 1750 will be automatically rejected. We do not accept fan fiction, poetry or adult fiction. Submissions must be your original work and either family friendly or PG (limit of one F-bomb per story).

In order to save time all we do is a little bit of editing, format the submissions, add some photoshopped

graphics, and produce the magazine using the least amount of time and effort that we can.

I suppose we could accept free art submissions from people, but reviewing and rejecting art submissions also takes time to do. It is faster to use that time to just use photoshop to create the needed art. Please do not submit art.

## THE MAGAZINE COVER

One of our first priorities is to create an amazing looking magazine cover that will draw in readers.

In order to facilitate that goal of having an amazing cover, but still stay on a budget of \$0, we have opted to use photoshop to create the magazine covers.

As implied on the cover shown here, we are aiming for an October 2023 release date. Maybe. That may end up changing. But for now we are setting that as a goal. Since the cover is Autumn Themed, if the first issue is ready during Summer or Winter (or whenever) then we may end up changing the appearance of the first cover. Indeed, we have already designed four possible covers, one for each season.

It would be nice to be able to release new issues every January, April, July and October, but let's not get ahead of ourselves here. Let's try to produce the first issue and then see what happens after that.



# SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

*Peasant Magazine* is a literary journal that aims to feature fantasy and historical fiction stories. The journal is run by volunteers, and we have no set timeline for the release of the next issue. (Although we are "hoping" to release the first issue on October 1st 2023.)

We are currently accepting works of short fiction that are between 1,000 to 40,000 words in length, with an end goal of releasing magazine issues that are 80k to 100k words in length. We also accept non-fiction articles on topics related to fantasy storytelling or historical fiction. Non-fiction articles should be between 500 to 7,500 words, but please send a query first to see if we're interested in the topic you have in mind.

We are focused on pre-industrial (pre-1750) settings such as the middle ages, ancient cultures, and the prehistoric era. Any pre-industrial setting (pre-1750) will do. Stories set after 1750 will be automatically rejected. We welcome original works or reprints and allow simultaneous submissions. However, if you decide to publish your work elsewhere prior to acceptance, please inform us.

We are not interested in contemporary urban fantasy, weird westerns, steampunk stories, royal romances, or court intrigue. Instead, we seek stories that focus on peasant/pauper fiction, with main characters who are poor or working-class. Please note that we are not interested in poetry, songs, flash fiction shorter than 1,000 words, novels longer than 40,000 words, or graphic novels at this time. We have a budget of zero and cannot pay contributors. We "buy" first world-wide publication rights or reprint rights upon acceptance.

To submit your work, send it to us by email at [peasantmagazine@gmail.com](mailto:peasantmagazine@gmail.com), along with a brief one-sentence tagline of your story and a short "About the Author" paragraph, as well as links to your website, Amazon author page, Instagram, or Twitter accounts. Attach the story as a DOCX, TXT, or RTF document.

If we do not respond within 60 days, please send a follow-up email to inquire about the status of your submission. We may need to make formatting changes to your work before publication, so please follow the guidelines we have provided.

Peasant Magazine is published in two formats: a free PDF version that is available on our website, and a magazine-sized paperback version that is available on Amazon print-on-demand. The price for the paperback version is set at the lowest possible price ending in 99, and any profit from sales goes to the volunteers who helped make the magazine a reality.

Please note that stories are expected to be pre-edited before submission. Our editors & proofreaders are volunteers so we have limited editing capacity. If your story is full of spelling and grammar errors, it will likely be rejected. However, if your original story is within our desired length and well-written, it will likely be accepted.

We may need to make formatting changes to your work before publication. To make this process easier please send documents using the following:

- Title of the work, no formatting.
- Author name or pseudonym, no formatting.
- Total word count.

- Font: Times New Roman.
- Font Size: 12 to 16.
- Paragraph indentation of 0.5-1 cm (5-10 mm).
- No spacing between lines or paragraphs.
- Left aligned and full justification.
- Pagination: Footer, Center.

## WHEN IS THE DEADLINE?

There isn't one. No deadlines. We are always open for new submissions for the next issue of the magazine.

But if you really want a deadline then try to send your work before the 30th of June or December. We are hoping to release our first issue for October 1st 2023 and a second issue for April 1st 2024, so we have 'relaxed deadlines' with respect to those possible release dates, but we will accept late submissions which will be considered for the first issue or later issues.

There's also no due date for when the next issue is coming out. It will be out when it is out. *Peasant Magazine* is produced with a budget of zero with the help of volunteers. By leaving the due date *laissez faire* it means that both our writers and publishing efforts have the freedom to publish issues as quickly or as slowly as needs be.

We recommend keeping a record of your submissions to various literary magazines so you can remember which ones you have already submitted to. This in turn will help you to send reminders to them asking "Hey, have you read my story yet?" And you will be less likely to submit the same story to multiple sources and forget that you did that because you can just look at your records and realize you already submitted it to multiple places.

## FAQ

*Why bother making a free non-profit literary magazine?*

Because it is needed and necessary. Authors need publications like literary magazines in order to promote their work. In this era in which many authors are being forced to choose between traditional publishing and self-publishing there aren't really any good options for publishing short fiction. The industry needs more literary magazines/journals, especially those that are open to publishing the work of authors who have never published before. The big "successful" literary magazines only publish the works of professional authors, and the smaller (usually unsuccessful) literary magazines often run into money problems and go defunct. Which means that indie authors don't really get the same opportunities because they're trapped in a Catch-22 of how to become successful/professional.

*Do you accept stories about Dungeons and Dragons characters?*

If they're original characters (not fanfiction or plagiarized) and the story is well-written, sure. But... Be



careful what monsters you use. Certain monsters from D&D (eg. Beholders) are copyrighted. Try to stick to either monsters that are based on folklore or mythology, or create your own monsters.

*Do you accept stories about LGBTQ+ characters?*

Sure. We also would like to see more characters that have physical or mental disadvantages. Equal opportunity for everyone.

*Is it okay to include an "author's note" at the end of a story?*

Sure. But we do recommend keeping it brief. A paragraph or two at most. We reserve the option to not include it in the publication.

*Do you accept advertising?*

Nope. Peasant Magazine is advertising free. This way the focus stays on the authors.

It has been suggested to us that we should accept advertising, particularly from authors who want to advertise their books. However at this time we have decided to not bother with this extra time requirement. We don't even know what to charge for such a service.

Authors who really want to promote their writing in Peasant Magazine should just submit a short story that is suitable and mention their other work in their author biography. This way they get to promote their writing for free.

*Do you accept retellings of fairy tales or fables?*

Yes, but isn't every story just a retelling of other stories? For example there's an old Lancelot story that is just a retelling of an even older Siegfried/Sigurd story. Retellings happen all the time. Even Romeo and Juliet is a retelling of a much older Greek tragedy.

*Do you accept time travel stories from the present (or a contemporary time period) to the past?*

No, we require that the story take place in a pre-industrial (pre-1750s) culture, and this includes time travel from any point that is post-1750. So if the time traveller was from 1749 that would be okay, but if they're from 1751 then no. That is the cutoff point.

*Do you accept stories that involve someone from our world (Earth) travelling to another world where magic and monsters exist?*

Yes and No. If the person is travelling from a historical period prior to 1750, yes. If they are travelling from a time period that is post-1750, then no.

*Do you accept excerpts from novels?*

We will consider excerpts from novels if, and only if, the excerpted chapter can also stand alone as a short story. So no cliffhangers tempting people to buy the book. You can have unanswered questions, but we draw

the line at cliffhangers. We want standalone stories, or possibly Episodic Stories (see further below).

*Do you accept prequel stories for novels?*

Sure, why not! But again the story had better be standalone and not include a cliffhanger.

*Do you accept Episodic Stories or serials?*

Serial / Episodic stories will be considered, but the series needs to be already finished and you must submit all of them together. So if your plan is a five part series of short stories then we want to see all five stories completed before we agreed to publish them. We don't want you to pull a George R. R. Martin where you write the first five books of a seven book series and then never finish books six and seven.

*Can we submit multiple stories at once?*

You can submit multiple stories if you want to, but we have a few rules.

1. If the stories are Episodic then you need to make a note of that in your submission and submit them together.
2. If the stories are Standalone then please only send a maximum of 2 submissions per month.
3. To avoid confusion please submit Standalone stories separately.

*Do you have any advice for writers who have never submitted to a magazine before?*

We do! Please read: Do's and Don'ts of Submitting to Literary Magazines further below.

*Do you accept volunteers?*

Yes, we need volunteers to help out. We need proofreaders and people who can give us free marketing. Just send us an email to volunteer.

*What if we have more questions?*

Just email [peasantmagazine@gmail.com](mailto:peasantmagazine@gmail.com) and we shall try to answer your question (and possibly add it to our FAQ section).

## **Do's & Don'ts of Submitting to Literary Magazines**

Submitting to literary magazines can be a great way to get your work published and build your writing career. However, there are certain do's and don'ts that writers should keep in mind when submitting their stories. Here are some detailed tips to help you increase your chances of getting published:

## **DO's:**

*Research the publication:* Before submitting to a literary magazine, it's important to do your research. Take some time to read the publication and familiarize yourself with the type of work they publish. Make sure your work fits their style and tone.

*Follow submission guidelines:* Every literary magazine has its own submission guidelines. Follow these guidelines carefully and make sure to submit your work in the correct format. Some publications may require a specific font or formatting, so be sure to double-check before submitting.

*Proofread and polish your work:* Take the time to carefully proofread your work before submitting it. Make sure there are no typos, grammatical errors, or formatting issues. A well-polished piece of writing will make a better impression on the editor.

*Be professional:* When submitting your work, be professional and courteous. Address the editor by name, and make sure to thank them for considering your submission.

*Be patient:* It can take time for editors to review submissions and make decisions. Be patient and wait for a response. If the publication has a stated response time, make sure to wait until that time has passed before following up.

*Do submit again:* If they ask you to submit again, possibly something else, do so. Maybe not immediately if you don't have anything that is polished, but do so eventually with something that will perhaps be more suitable for their publication. Also if the publisher rejects your work, but suggests changes that is an open invitation for you to re-submit the same work with a number of changes to better fulfill their requirements.

*Withdraw your submission if accepted elsewhere:* If someone else has agreed to publish your work, and the magazine in question doesn't accept reprints, then you should withdraw your submission immediately. Magazines that accept simultaneous submissions won't care, but they will be upset and possibly blacklist you if they clearly delineated that they don't allow simultaneous submissions and you went ahead and did it anyway.

*Keep track of all your submissions:* Especially if you are doing simultaneous submissions, you should try to keep track of everything you submit, where you submitted them, and when. We recommend making a list/chart of everything you submit, where, whether they were accepted, rejected, or still waiting for a response.

## **DON'Ts:**

*Don't submit work that doesn't fit the publication:* Make sure that your work fits the style and tone of the publication you are submitting to. Don't waste your time (or the editor's time) by submitting work that clearly doesn't fit.

*Don't ignore submission guidelines:* Submission guidelines are there for a reason. Ignoring them will likely result in your work being rejected without even being read.

*Don't be overly familiar:* While it's important to be courteous, don't be overly familiar in your submission email. Keep your tone professional and respectful. Don't be cocky.

*Don't submit work that isn't your best:* Only submit your best work. If you're not confident in a piece, don't submit it. Wait until you have something you're truly proud of.

*Don't ignore word count requirements:* Respect the word count quota. Don't submit something that is over the word limit for the publication. The editor/publisher won't even read it if it is clearly over the limit. So if a publication has a rule that says they only accept works that are 10,000 words or less, they submitting something that is 12,000 is going to get a rejection. They *might* accept something that is 10,050 words... But if your work is that close to the quota you should just go through it and remove exactly 50 words by removing some unnecessary lines or maybe getting rid of a few adjectives or adverbs.

*Don't follow up:* While it is normal to follow up when pitching story ideas to regular magazines, literary magazines are different. They are often run by people who are volunteering their time and are likely overwhelmed by submissions from writers. They will get back to you when they have made a decision. It will take longer than you want it to. Nagging them won't speed up the process and is more likely to trigger a rejection. If that upsets you, magazines that accept simultaneous submissions are your friends.

*Don't use the wrong name:* Don't use the wrong name of the magazine, the editor or the publisher. It is fine to write "Dear Editor", because you don't necessarily know who will be reading your work, but what is not okay is getting their name wrong.

*Don't email the editor directly:* Unless you are invited to do so, don't email or contact the editor directly via social media. Not only is that annoying (and borderline stalking), but you're just increasing the chances of getting a rejection. If you already know the editor via social media they might be okay with it, but otherwise you should avoid doing this.

*Don't submit twice in the same period:* Unless the magazine accepts multiple submissions (and states thus) then you shouldn't be submitting more than one work during the same period. Note, that sending an updated version would be the exception to this rule if the editor requested some changes.

*Don't send out mass emails to multiple publications:* Big no no. Automatic rejection.

*Don't give up:* It can be discouraging to receive rejection after rejection, but don't give up. Keep writing,

keep submitting, and eventually, you'll find the right publication for your work.

*Don't send an angry response:* Being angry or upset won't endear you to them. All you are doing is burning bridges.

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

**Charles Moffat** is a Canadian fantasy author, artist and archery instructor. He primarily writes heroic fantasy, epic fantasy, dark fantasy, and sword & sorcery. He lives in Toronto with his wife and two sons. When he is not writing he enjoys archery, fishing, woodworking and bow making.



### The Bogatyr & the Cursed Inn

By Charles Moffat

The gypsy started plucking at his violin, a few plucks at a time before transitioning to playing a melody with his bow. As he did so another gypsy joined in with the sitar, seamlessly blending both instruments with masterful talent. Sprightly girls began to dance around the campfire, to the delight of old fat merchants who made their trade on the roads south of the Holy City of Kost.

The trade route was in one of the safest regions in the kingdom of Korovia. Knights from the Holy City patrolled the roads, keeping the peace and ridding the region of bandits and monsters. There were towns and cities further to the south, mostly populated by Habbels, where the wee halflings who were often no more than the size of three foot tall toddlers plied their knowledge of farming and animals, and were suitably peace-loving.

The merchant caravans and gypsies were camped at a fork in the road. Next to their campsite were old crumbling stone ruins that marked the site of an inn which had been burnt to the ground centuries ago by dragonfire and never rebuilt. Some claimed it was haunted by the ghosts of those the dragon had slain, which is why the inn was never rebuilt. No one wanted to stay in a haunted inn.

Off to the east side of the camp was a lone Bogatyr, a sort of title-less knight who dabbled in magic. Tall and strong he was, a warrior without a doubt, and huddled under his furs to conserve the warmth from his tiny fire. He could have added more firewood, but he was loath to

In summary, the key to submitting to literary magazines is to do your research, follow submission guidelines, proofread your work, be professional and patient, and only submit your best work. By avoiding common mistakes and following these tips, you'll increase your chances of getting published and building your writing career.

do so.

He kept one hand on his sword hilt, his eyes on the ruins of the old inn. Every now and then he caught a glimpse of something in the snow covered ruins. Something translucent that shone with a dim white light.

He stood and paced slowly towards the ruins, right hand on his sword hilt as he approached. His horse nickered loudly as he passed out of the firelight and beneath the shadow of a dead elm tree.

Most of the inn was gone, but the parts of it made of stone still stood. He passed through the charred remains of what must have once been a grand foyer and into the great hall beyond, its recesses shrouded in snowdrifts.

He drew his sword and held it aloft like a torch. "Illumina!" As he spoke the last syllable of magic the sword gave off a white glow, akin to the moonlight of the silver moon Metrequia. The light penetrated the darkness and upon a tall burnt throne at the far end of the hall the ghostly apparition of a young woman, cloaked in fine clothes, shifted her gaze and regarded him.

"Who are you?" she asked, her voice sounding distant and yet pleasant. "Are you some kind of ghost?"

The Bogatyr nearly laughed. "No, I only see one ghost here, and that is you. Why do you still haunt this place, fair spirit?"

She did laugh at this. "Me? I am no ghost. I live here. This is my family's inn, as it has been for centuries. But you must be a ghost, for why else would you be transparent?"

The Bogatyr blinked. "You think I am a ghost? Is that truly what you see?"

She nodded.

"And what else do you see?" he asked, waving his sword at their ruined surroundings.

"My home," she said proudly - defiantly. "The grandest inn on the southern highway," she boasted.

"I see a burnt wreck of an inn. This place burnt down centuries ago, destroyed by a dragon, so the legends say," said the Bogatyr.

She frowned. "There are no dragons here, spirit, just you. A demented ghost who cannot see with his own eyes. Where did you come from?" She stood and went to the western wall, a ghostly translucent torch appearing in her hand from where an iron sconce still clung to the stone wall.

She turned towards him, holding the torch like it was a club. "Leave here spirit, you are not wanted in my home!" she declared.

The Bogatyr snorted. "I don't take orders from ghosts," he answered, holding his sword at the ready. "If I best you, will you finally see the light and move on to the afterlife?"

"I should say the same about you, spirit. What makes



you so certain that you are not the ghost in this fight?"

The Bogatyr smiled gently. "As surely as I know that there are gypsies and merchants camped outside who dare not go near the burnt inn, for they say it is haunted. You say this inn is your family's, and has been for centuries? Yet this inn has been empty for centuries, a burnt ruin forevermore. You must be the spirit in this because I am in your future and your spirit is from centuries past."

"Nonsense!" she shouted, swinging her torch at him.

He dared not let any part of her, or her ghostly torch, touch his flesh. He parried her torch easily and deflected it to the side.

She swung again and again he deflected, driving her to the side. She bumped into something and a ghostly cask came into existence and rolled across the floor, spilling a bright translucent liquid across the floor where the stonework was cracked and charred.

"Begone foul spirit!" she shouted. She backed off a few steps and charged at him, seeking to strike him with her torch with an overhand swing. She slipped in the ghostly oil and fell, her torch falling into the liquid.

Bright white flames engulfed the young woman, ghostly and without any heat. She screamed and tried to roll to smother the flames, but only made it worse as she covered herself with the burning liquid.

To the Bogatyr's eyes, she must have rolled in lamp oil and was now burning from head to toe. He backed away from her, uncertain of what to do. Whatever supernatural fire this was, he didn't want any of it burning him. He didn't know what it might do.

The fire spread quickly, burning and illuminating parts of a building that no longer stood and scorching the stonework of the ruins that remained. He couldn't stay and fled the building, seeking refuge near the dead elm tree outside.

Supernatural flames spread through the structure that was no longer there, illuminating the night sky and the grey clouds above. The merchants and gypsies ceased their music, some backing away in superstitious fear and others drawing near with an insatiable curiosity.

The Bogatyr knew now what was happening. He was witnessing the past. 'Twas no dragon that destroyed this fine inn. 'Twas a common fire, and somehow, through some fluke of time and destiny, he had been the catalyst for the fire. Perhaps he had even been destined to do this.

He sheathed his sword as he walked back to his camp, turning his back on the fire that shone through a rift in time. He dared not go near it. Ghosts he could handle, but a fire from centuries past might pull him backwards in time... Thinking about the time paradoxes that might occur, the very idea, hurt to contemplate and he didn't relish the headache.

He kicked snow onto his campfire and untied his horse from the nearby elm tree. He mounted the gelding and turned it towards the south. If he made good time he could reach a Hab village south of here where an inn he knew of served tall pints of creamy golden ale.

He needed a drink. Perhaps then he could put this memory behind him.

The End.

## IS THAT IT?

Basically. Yes.

An Issue Zero of a new magazine isn't expected to be that long. It is over pretty quickly.

We invite you to return when Issue One of *Peasant Magazine* is available in both PDF and paper formats.

Happy Reading!