

THE HOTTEST ISSUE YET, PACKED WITH THRILLS!

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**FABULOUS
FREE GIFTS!**

Meet the
marvellous
**MARLON
HAYES**

*The Great Clarendon House
Writing Challenge 2020:
THE GRAND FINAL INSIDE!*

PLUS the **FREE** *How Stories Really Work*
Special Workshop continues with possibly
the most important chapter you'll ever read
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CLARENDON HOUSE
PUBLICATIONS

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AUTHOR
PROGRAMME**

DREAMS CAN COME TRUE.

Welcome

Dear Reader,

I wanted to draw your attention — if it hasn't been drawn already — to THREE very special features this issue:

1. Of course you've already seen him on the cover, but this month we get to really meet the magnificent **Marlon Hayes** and I'm sure his story will impress and resonate

2. This month is the **GRAND FINAL** of the **Great Clarendon House Writing Challenge 2020** and in this issue you will get to read the final three stories, appearing anonymously, beginning on page 12. I will need **YOUR** votes to determine the winner!

3. On page 57 you can start the most important chapter in the serialisation of my book *How Stories Really Work*. It's only a few pages long — but it may change the way you see storytelling forever.

Naturally we have all the usual delights — articles to improve your writing, stories to delight you, poetry and *Macbeth* — and this month we begin a special **Master Author Showcase: Part One of A Scandal in Bohemia**, the famous Sherlock Holmes tale by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle!

Enjoy!

Grant P. Hudson

CONTRIBUTORS



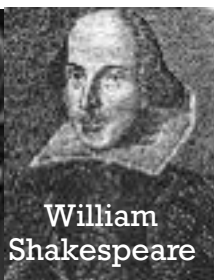
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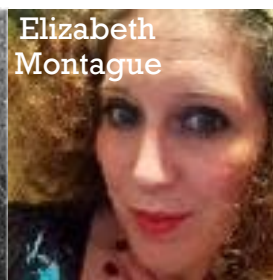
Marlon
Hayes



C.L.
Steele



William
Shakespeare



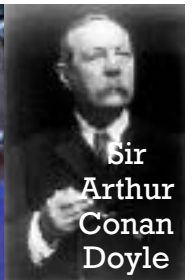
Elizabeth
Montague



Ruth Morgan



Stephen
Christie



Sir
Arthur
Conan
Doyle

with Julie C. Eger, Charlotte Langtree, Jim Bates, Elizabeth Brown, Susannah J. Bell, Tony J. Fyler, L. T. Waterson, and Richard Prime.

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WORD SEARCH by JULIE C. EGER

Can you find the names of twenty-two aspiring authors?

L A B C D E S M A S N Y L O R A C
A I K I M B E R L Y B E A S F G H
U H N A M I R R E M L E A H P A R
R J K D E B L E R E W L M E K N I
E O P Q A R S A M P H I L L I P S
T S H T U F V W X Y Z A B L R J T
T G A R Y C R A W F O R D Y S O I
A C N D E F G E H I J K L N T H N
K M N E D E N T U O R O S O Y N E
A V A L P E N N Y D N O P R F G T
P Q H R H S T U V W E X Y R E R A
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O P H Q E R S C A R M E N B A C A
T U V W W E N D Y J O N E S X L Y
L I Z H E D G E C O C K G L Y N S

CARMEN BACA
CAROLYN SAMS
CHRISTINE TABAKA
DEB LEREW
EDENTU OROSO
GARY CRAWFORD
GLYN S(alisbury)
GOPI ELTON

HANNAH RUTH
HEYE EWE
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LINDA
FREUDENTHAL
LIZ HEDGECK
RAFAEL MERRIMAN
SAM PHILLIPS
SHELLY NORRIS
VAL PENNY
WENDY JONES

YOUR WEEKLY OPPORTUNITIES FROM THE



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/innercirclewritersgroup/>

**MARKETING
MONDAY**

ADVERTISE books, services, blogs, anything...

UPDATE us on your triumphs and tragedies...

ICWG

NEWS



TELL us all about your current project...

DELVE DEEPER into the meaning and messages of your work...



DISPLAY your skills in 50 word short stories...



On the weekends? You can rest!

(You can add to any of the above threads at any time - you don't have to wait until that day comes around. Just 'Search the group' for that day and the threads will show up.)

Enjoy! Thrive! Prosper! Share!

**FREE GIFTS
FOR EVERY
READER**



Your Biggest Challenge as a Writer — and What To Do About It

I recently did a large survey of writers, asking them what their biggest challenge was in relation to their writing.

A few answered that they were struggling with marketing, or with story quality or self doubt or even grammar. Each of these categories amounted to 5% or 10% of the total answers.

But by far the largest proportion of writers - over 60% - revealed that their main difficulty was related to two connected things: Time and Procrastination.

These writers told me that they were frustrated because they either didn't have the time to write or, when they had it, found that

it was swallowed up with distractions and interruptions, most often self-generated.

This is big.

In fact, this is far more revealing than I think many of the authors who said it probably realise.

This free book blows apart these factors by giving you an understanding of what is going on, a grasp of why you procrastinate, an immediate programme to get more writing time AND a long-term programme to help you build your life around your writing.

Be the writer you were always meant to be!
Get your free copy now!

How to Blog Every Day Possibly Forever

Want to be able to generate volume blog content so that you can create a new blog post every day of the year - including weekends and holidays?

This short booklet gives you an approach that will work. It tells you how to choose a topic, what routine you'll need to adopt to overcome obstacles and sustain your output for years, and how creating a daily blog has tremendous spin-off benefits that you probably haven't thought of.



DOWNLOAD YOUR FREE GIFTS HERE!

(AND THERE'S ANOTHER SPECIAL GIFT FOR SUBSCRIBERS ON PAGE 131!)

CLARENDON HOUSE
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BEST SELLERS



GRANT P. HUDSON

How Stories Really Work

***Exploring
the Physics
of Fiction***



*'I'm reading through **How Stories Really Work**. I've studied writing books for years but I've never seen anything like this! This book is **REVOLUTIONARY**. Everything is made so simple and precise that other methods of writing seem clumsy by comparison. It's not just a way of writing, but a way of seeing.'*

-A. P. (Author)

THE INNER CIRCLE WRITERS' MAGAZINE SUBSCRIBER GAME!



In the run up to the first full year of the magazine, I wanted to point out how far the Inner Circle Writers' Magazine had come since its launch in February this year, and to introduce an interesting game to you.

Dozens of intriguing articles offering insights into the writing and publication processes have been released for your education and enlightenment.

Dozens of brand-new and enthralling stories have been printed for your delight.

Many new and established artists have had a chance to showcase their work.

And the title of 'The World's Most Exciting Writers' Magazine' has been well and truly earned around the globe, as each issue reaches avid readers from countries as far flung as Pakistan, Australia, the United States and Ireland, not to mention its home base in the UK.

In 2020, this is going to expand even further — and you can benefit from that in a very tangible way.

That's because of a new game: **The Inner Circle Writers' Magazine Subscriber Game.**

In a nutshell, for each and every person who subscribes to the magazine through you, I will pay you £2.00 (that's about \$2.64 in US dollars). That's subscribers — i.e. people who sign up for 12 issues for the ridiculously low price of £20.00.

How do you persuade people to subscribe?

Well, your target market is writers, just like you. You need to talk to people who are passionate about writing, whether or not they are actually writing anything themselves. Many of these people will be in the stages of thinking about becoming a writer; some will have set out down that road; while others may be established authors who have had some success with getting published. In each case, the magazine is perfect for them:

- it offers **insights** into what it means to be a writer, how to get started and how to maintain success
- it provides **submission opportunities** for short fiction as well as room to air one's own views and experiences in the field
- it present **examples** from the works of master authors so that anyone, whether they are a new writer or not, can learn techniques and skills which will improve their fiction both in terms of impact upon readers and in terms of commercial success
- it acts as a form of **community**, providing a network of people similar to the writer with whom he or she may feel like communicating — and this community tends to be a bit more substantial and less fleeting than any found on social media
- it **entertains, inspires** and **rejuvenates** writers wherever they are in their careers.



With that knowledge, you can approach a suitable person and talk to them about the magazine. Experience suggests that subscriptions come from personal recommendation, rather than social media 'shotgun' postings — i.e. sending out a post recommending the magazine to people in general tends to be less effective than having a private conversation with a particular person about it. So here's a suggested approach:

1. Find someone who fits the categories above, with whom you have had a conversation before — i.e. an existing friend or relative or contact.
2. Broach the subject of the magazine by sharing some insight or moments of pleasure you got from reading it. Go into some detail and explain the article or story until the person begins to picture it for themselves.
3. Ask the person what they would like to learn or experience from a magazine article or story. Narrow this down as much as you can.
4. Point out existing articles or stories that have appeared in the magazine that relate to that.
5. Indicate to the person that they can pick up a single issue of the current magazine for only £2.00, or a back issue for only £4.00 — OR subscribe for £20.00 and get an issue delivered to their email inbox every month for under £2.00 each — which has to be the most value ever seen in a writers' magazine anywhere.
6. Let me know if the person you've spoken to has committed

to subscribing — and as soon as their name appears on my subscriber list, I'll forward you your £2.00 reward by PayPal!

£2.00 for having a conversation may not seem like much, but it may have been a conversation you would have had anyway, for nothing. Also, if you wanted to get serious about this, you could have 100 such conversations in a month and make £200.00 (that's about \$US264.00) — there's no upper limit on the amount I'm willing to pay out! You could even make a career out of it — 500 people convinced to subscribe means £1,000 (\$US1,318.00) for you!

I'm laying out this game for a couple of reasons: firstly, I am confident that the magazine provides real value for money both in terms of information and entertainment that it contains, and because of its aesthetic value. I want the magazine to reach more people because it really is an exciting, useful and inspirational publication.

Secondly, I would also like to be able to provide you, the reader of this, with a way of making some money, perhaps in small amounts at first but, with some effort, enough cash to make a difference to your lifestyle.

Additionally, of course I would like the magazine to boom for personal reasons too — 500 more subscribers would mean that I could concentrate for a year on improving, elevating and expanding opportunities for writers everywhere. Running Clarendon House brings with it certain overheads which need to be maintained to keep things running.

So this is a way of opening everything up so that everyone wins — my favourite type of game!

I hope you like it — I hope you'll play it! And if you have any questions, please feel free to email me:

grant@clarendonhousebooks.com



*The
Great
Clarendon
House
Writing
Challenge
2020*

*The
Grand
Final*

Welcome to the Grand Final of one of the world's most challenging writers' competitions!

Some months ago, these authors began by having a 500 word piece of flash fiction accepted for anonymous publication as part of a group of **TEN** initial contestants.

FIVE were chosen by magazine readers and then had to complete a Technical Challenge, writing a 1,000 word short story in the genre of Science Fantasy.

The results appeared, again anonymously, and were voted on again by magazine readers. The **TOP THREE** contestants, as judged by **YOU**, were announced last month, along with their **FINAL CHALLENGE** in this year's competition, which was:

'Write a 1,500 word short story in ANY genre but using the style of a Dickensian novel, to be submitted for publication in the magazine.'

Their submissions are printed below, anonymously, for **YOU** to vote on *one last time*. I'm looking for the author who best captures the style of Charles Dickens, famous for using the English language poetically, with satire and humour with often idealised characters, incredible circumstances and coincidences and the approach that good will triumph over evil sometimes in very unexpected ways.

PLEASE VOTE BY SEPTEMBER 5th!

Send your vote to me at
grant@clarendonhousebooks.com

The **WINNER** of the **Great Clarendon House Writing Challenge 2020** will be entitled to:

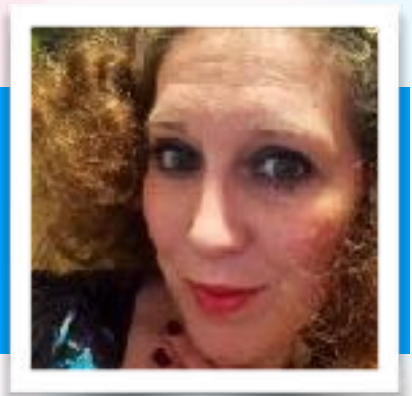
- the offer of a **book publishing contract** with Clarendon House Publications
- a **free webpage** on the Clarendon House website through which to feature their works (whether published by Clarendon House or not)
- a **free full-page ad** in the Inner Circle Writers' Magazine for a whole year
- **free marketing advice**, including cover design, blurb, author platform tips and so on
- a **free Lifestyle Consultancy** to address any issues that might be getting in the way of their success as a writer.

ENJOY!

The Three Finalists are:

1

ELIZABETH
MONTAGUE



Prior entries: 'Ghostlight' and 'Wandering Star'

2

RUTH
MORGAN



Prior entries: 'The Girl with the Red Hair' and 'The Watcher'

3

STEPHEN
CHRISTIE



Prior entries: 'The Letter' and 'Simple Folk'

Their three final entries appear below, **NOT** in the order of author above.

Please read and send me your vote by **September 5th!**

grant@clarendonhousebooks.com

THE WINNER IS ANNOUNCED!

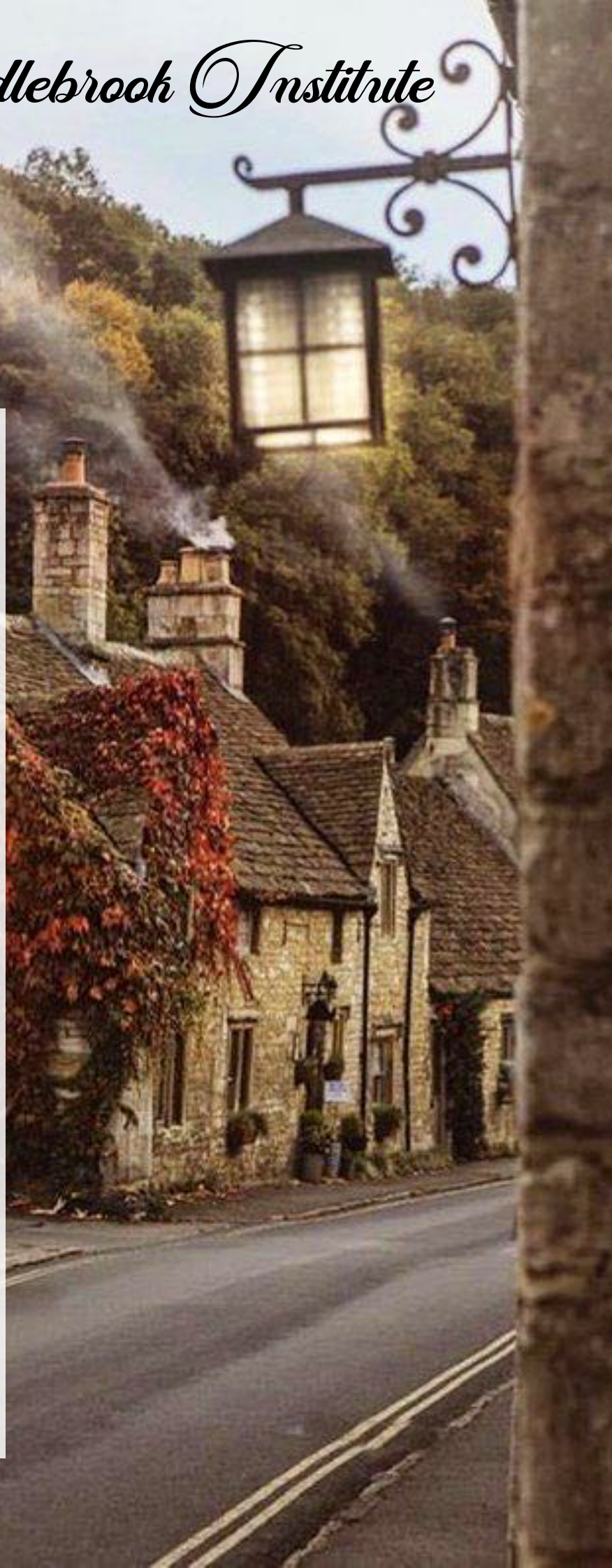
Subscribe now, so you don't miss the fun!

September

The Muddlebrook Institute

There once lived, in a town quite indistinct from many other English towns, a venerable spinster by the name of Millicent Muddlebrook. I am inclined to think that, in her younger days, she would have been something of a local beauty. As it was, Miss Muddlebrook, being somewhere in the region of forty with her red hair greying at the temples, had never taken a husband. It was the great tragedy of the town, or so the story was often told when travellers enquired as to the much-respected woman whose kindness to orphans was known far and wide.

The Muddlebrook Institute was an orphanage of such reputation that there were rumours some poorer families would claim one of their own children a foundling just to send them for the education and advantages Miss Muddlebrook offered. There was not an orphan who left her care that did not make their way in the world. I must mention here that, though success was indeed made, all the orphans that left her care had their lives cut short in the oddest of ways. There was John Johnson, who reached the age of twenty-five and had just taken over the tailor's shop ten miles from his childhood home, when he slipped over his dummy and pierced his own heart with his scissors. Then Timmy Waterman, who had just purchased his first ship and intended to sail to his fortune in the West Indies, only to find himself dangling from the rigging after a fall from the mast.



Miss Muddlebrook mourned her lost darlings, the hand of fate such a fickle one after they had achieved such good standing in the world. Still, no one could hold her responsible for the fates of those who had left her charge and she became quite the most popular of dinner guests at all the best soirées and could be persuaded, with a small donation, to travel a little further afield to attend on the most charitable of ladies and gentlemen who would ask many questions about her work in the presence of their guests.

It was one such evening when our esteemed Miss Muddlebrook found herself several towns over from her institution. She sat in the place of honour at the table beside her hostess, Lady Felicity Godwinson, whose fair face and meek demeanour had secured her the hand of Lord Godwinson and raised her from the ranks of her Cheapside relations to that of the gentry.

As always, the London fashions had soon found their way to the country estates and Lady Godwinson, who endeavoured to always be at the forefront of all the latest trends, had ensured that her evening would be reported back to others as being the most fashionable in the area. There had been talk of a young storyteller who travelled the country, peddling her stories in return for food and lodgings. There was nothing remarkable in the practice— many-a travelling troubadour had been called on over the years to entertain the gentry in return for some favour or another— but in the case of this latest sensation, all the stories she told were true.

It was with great show that Lady Godwinson ushered the storyteller before the lords, ladies and gentlemen who waited with bated breath to see if the young woman before them would reveal something of their history.

The storyteller pushed back the hood of her black cape, revealing a head of auburn hair and a pretty, pale face.

'Listen close,' she said softly, 'and I will tell you a tale. Sixteen years ago, a baby was born. A girl child of dubious parentage. She was a sickly, desperate thing and the midwife that attended her unfortunate mother did not think she would live until the morning. The mother herself, a woman of some birth but little moral, bade her get rid of the babe in whatever manner she saw fit. Though the midwife did not

approve of the birth, she could not deny the child at least a few hours of warmth before God saw to it that she would rest with all the other little children born unready for Earth. She knew the clergyman was kindly and bore the child to the church. The mother was none the wiser to her daughter's fate and returned to the world; fables of travels in Europe feigned to preserve her modesty but there was an air around her that could never be shifted and she was shunned by every suitor.'



Such a scandalous tale in front of so many impressionable young people, but I have often witnessed the higher classes and their need for the grotesque. They revel in misery and like nothing more than to see a fall from grace, to let their daughters know what might become of them should they stray too far.

'But this story does not contain the past of the child. Instead it speaks of more unfortunate souls, the destitute youngsters that are often reliant upon a stranger's care. Such children may only ever see the workhouse but some are smiled upon and are raised up rather than trodden down. This night, let me speak of those children, the ones who were educated and treated as though they were family.'

'Like our fine Miss Muddlebrook!' exclaimed Lady Godwinson, clapping her hands with glee.

'But all that is seen is not always true,' continued the tale, 'for these children paid a price for their good fortune. Their profit and their position were merely tools to line the pockets of their benefactress, the woman who would claim any children she could not make useful had succumbed to the normal ailments that afflict the young, so many graves in the churchyard populated by those taken too soon. The benefit of education, though, is that the ignorant become the wise and learn to look for answers. Those answers were found fifteen miles away, in the ramblings of an old crone who had once been a midwife and the clergyman who had raised a foundling child, abandoned by her mother in pursuit of status. Status she could not get through marriage and therefore had to use other means. When these children learned the truth they told the others and, when they grew and their wealth was demanded in payment for their childhoods, they threatened to expose their matriarch to the world. What accidents befell them afterwards were spoken of as the tragedies, these children who promised so much, taken so cruelly by fate. Fate, or the hand of one who knew that they knew her secret, knew they were waiting until they were secure and free before they exposed her and the money, and the invitations would be stripped from her hands. They all died, knowing that the woman who had raised them was now their murderess, all for her reputation and their money, for what young person on the cusp of success would have thought to make a will and what magistrate would not see fit to award the woman who had done so much for her children with the small fortunes that she had been partly responsible for with her kind care. Is that not so, Miss Muddlebrook?'





The gasps that echoed around the room felt like a physical thing, followed by the twitter of voices that claimed it some elaborate joke, that this could not be the storyteller of recent fame with her true stories and deep insights. It was a jest gone horribly wrong, designed to be entertainment and taken too far. It could have been so easily laughed off were it not for the silence of Miss Muddlebrook, her face flushed the same colour as the remaining red of her hair.

Red as the girl sat beside the fire.

'I should have told them to drown you or left you on the hill to perish.'

The words, so cold and cruel from a woman who had been famed for her kindness — if you had been in that room that moment, I know you would have felt the second the realisation rushed through those gathered. The accidents, so many accidents, beginning to follow a pattern, the wealth of the institute having increased so much in recent years alongside the invitations to dinner.

What happened next would fill the pages of many a story book, the villain revealed and carried off to the gallows when the evidence was found. But what of the institution and the children therein?

I understand it is now in the hands of a Miss Matilda Muddlebrook, a young woman with fiery red hair and the ability to tell stories so fantastical they cannot be true and yet, they quite often are. A young woman who was abandoned as a babe and raised by a kindly clergyman who not only taught her the power of words but also just how well the local vicar knew all the gossip and the scandal that the general populace were none the wiser to.

The Rose

'Dirty Brian' Evans exhaled a cloud of thick smoke through the gaps between his blackened teeth. From his table in the Moon and Sixpence, where he sat alone, he watched Bethany, the landlady's daughter, as she collected glasses from the tables.

Evans was an odious leech, but it was not this that made him stand out in the tavern, as many of the patrons would let their hands wander as Bethany passed by their tables. It was the thick layer of filth that covered his skin. Many presumed he made his living as a chimney-sweep, and could be forgiven for doing so. Not only this, but a foul odour permeated the air in his immediate vicinity, and many chose to sit as far away as possible from Evans. In actual fact, Dirty Brian was a drayman, and once his round was done, he would spend the rest of the day in the Moon and Sixpence, nursing an ale or two, and leering at any poor women unfortunate enough to fall into his gaze.

Bethany caught sight of Brian staring at her and shuddered. Things were bad enough in the tavern as it was, without his unwanted advances. Saul Thickpenny, and his entourage of fans, bookmakers, and general villains, had come into the Moon and Sixpence to celebrate Thickpenny's latest bareknuckle victory, and there was bound to be trouble at some point. A mountain of a man, Saul Thickpenny did as he pleased, as nobody dared cross him. This day was no different. He had already pulled himself a pint of ale since he had arrived, though to Bethany's relief, he had voluntarily paid for it, leaving some of his recent winnings by the cask. Any excuse to get into a fight, Saul would take it. Bethany knew it was only a matter of time before some poor soul would face Thickpenny's wrath, and hoped there would not be too much damage to her mother's property this time.





Bethany longed for a life outside of the tavern. Away from these terrible men. Her mother would never allow her to leave, and she could certainly not afford to leave on her own, so she was forced to keep her job, and simply daydream of a better life.

She needed a miracle. The Moon and Sixpence was not an establishment known for miracles. Perhaps it was due one.

Timothy Cobb's mother would turf him out early in the morning, and only allow him in for supper if he had made a sufficient amount of coin, begging on the streets. He knew there were others in a similar position, street urchins who would make money picking pockets, but Timothy did not like the idea of stealing. Begging was hardly an ideal alternative, but was preferable to theft. He would offer to help the rich folk carry their abundant purchases, or the market traders packing up their wares, in the hope they would spare a few coins. These odd jobs would usually allow him to go to bed with a little food in his belly.

Timothy had barely been in the market district an hour, when he recognised the gentleman approaching him. In the man's hand was a single red rose. He remembered he had helped this particular gentleman only a week ago, to carry several bolts of fabric to his carriage.

"Excuse me, young man. I believe you assisted me a few days ago, with an order of materials I was collecting for my mother."

"Yes, sir!" replied Timothy. "You kindly rewarded me a penny."

"Please, call me Mr. Hart. Daniel Hart."

"So be it, Mr. Hart, sir. Timothy Cobb."

"Well met, young Master Cobb. I find myself in need of your assistance again if you are interested. There will be a shilling in it for you."

"A whole shilling! I'd do anything for that!"

"Then this is what I'd like you to do. I'd like you to take this rose to the Moon and Sixpence tavern. Working in the tavern is Bethany, the landlady's daughter. She is my heart's desire. Give Bethany the rose, and tell her it is from me. We bumped into one another at the flower stall yesterday, and I have fallen quite in love with her. I am certain she feels the same..."

"Not to look a horse in the mouth, Mr Hart, sir, but do you not think it would be better if you took it yourself?"

The rosy pink hue of Daniel's cheeks faded.

"Saul Thickpenny frequents the Moon and Sixpence. He is a terribly violent man, and I fear he may take exception to my being there, in his favourite tavern. I am no fighting man, I am simply a hopeless romantic. I'm sure he will have no qualms with you being there though."

"Then consider your rose as good as delivered, Mr Hart, sir."

"Splendid. Thank you, young Master Cobb. Here is the shilling I promised, and here is the rose. Tell her I shall be waiting in the Golden Fleece on Walker Street."

"Understood. Thank you, Mr. Hart, sir. I'll go right away."

And with that, Timothy Cobb ran down Market Street towards the Moon and Sixpence.

Dirty Brian Evans' eyes lit up as the young boy walked into the tavern carrying a single red rose. What better way to get Bethany's attention than a gifted rose?

"Come here, boy." Brian rifled around in his pocket as Timothy approached his table.

"Yes, Mister?"

"I'll give you a ha'penny for that old rose you've got there. What do you say?"

Timothy looked at the coin between the long, filthy fingernails, and shook his head.

"I'm afraid not, Mister. I'm to deliver this rose to Bethany the barmaid, and I've already been paid to do so."

"For who?"

"Mr. Daniel Hart."



Brian put the coin back in his pocket. "Tell you what. I know Mr. Hart very well. Why don't you let me deliver it for you? I'm about to buy another ale, and I could pass it on whilst I do so." In an attempt to turn on the charm, Brian grinned. Timothy backed away from the grill of rotten teeth before him.

"I'm not falling for that, Mister. Forget it."

Brian's grin fell into a scowl. He reached out and seized the stem of the rose.

"Give me that rose, you little..."

"Evans!" boomed a voice from the back of the tavern. "What the bloody hell is going on here?"

Brian turned to find Saul Thickpenny striding towards him. He let go of the rose.

"Nothing, Mr. Thickpenny. Nothing going on here."

Saul crossed his arms and frowned at Brian.

"Don't insult my intelligence, Evans. Looks to me like you're trying to steal that rose from this young lad."

Sweat was beading on Brian's forehead, and yet again, he forced a less than charming smile.

"No, Mr. Thickpenny. You've got it all wrong. I was giving the rose to the boy."

Saul raised an eyebrow.

"You were giving a flower to a young boy? Oh dear dear dear. This is not good news for you, Mr Evans."

"Wait! I meant..."

"Doesn't matter now, Evans. On your feet, and put your dukes up. You, my friend, are now in a fight."

"But..."

"Stand up, you dirty bastard." Saul lifted Dirty Brian off his chair, briefly setting him on his feet, before punching him on the chin, sending him hurtling unconscious onto a neighbouring table. The men sitting at the table, rather unhappy about their spilt drinks, jumped to their feet. Saul grinned.

"You boys want some as well, do you?"

Timothy took the opportunity to look for Bethany, as chaos erupted in the tavern. He found her almost immediately, as a cacophony of smashing glass, and splintering wood brought her running from the cellar.

"Excuse me, Miss. Are you Bethany?" Bethany turned her attention from the brawling men, to the young boy addressing her.

"Yes. Who's asking?"

"My name is Timothy Cobb. I'm here to deliver this rose to you, from a Mr. Daniel Hart."

"Daniel Hart? The gentleman from the flower stall?" Bethany blushed.

"Yes, Miss. He is quite in love with you, and said he would wait for you in the Golden Fleece on Walker Street."

"The Golden Fleece?" She looked back to the pandemonium throughout the tavern for a moment, then back to Timothy. She took his hand. "Come on. There's a back door. Let's get out of here!"

Daniel Hart and Bethany were wed two weeks later. As a romantic gesture, Daniel bought the flower stall, and even gave little Timothy Cobb a job as a delivery boy there.

Saul Thickpenny remained the bareknuckle boxing champion for many years, and continued to drink, and occasionally cause trouble, in the Moon and Sixpence.

Dirty Brian Evans also continued to drink there after his delivery round, and still lived up to his name, much to the disliking of the other patrons. After all, the Moon and Sixpence was not known for its miracles.



The Applethorpe Redemption

Another blazing argument tore apart the silence in the house attached to the small police station and echoed out over the flat red plains, disturbing the roosting pink and grey galahs in the gum tree and sending them skywards in a flurry of feathers and protesting squawks.

Senior Constable David Applethorpe slammed his office door, swearing fluently at the location, the isolation, and his wife, allocating equal vehemence to each but reserving special rancour for Claire. Their relationship had once been tender then it cooled, chilled, and in recent months fragmented into bitter arguments and acrimony, making it difficult for either to stay long in the presence of the other without resuming the quarrel.

As a loving, supportive wife, she'd accompanied him to a location he would never have chosen but to which he had been sent to get his life and career back on track after assaulting a fellow officer. He had used his fists when taunted repeatedly about his father's unexplained death; only his training prevented him from drawing his weapon as he so yearned to do. The hierarchy had reacted, giving him a choice — a three-year posting to Whitworth, the town where his father died, or dismissal. The local community had been tight-lipped about events of thirty-five years earlier, commenting only that the son was the spitting image of the old man and appeared to be possessed of the same temper. It wasn't until he settled into Whitworth that cracks began appearing in the image he had built up of his father. Rumours still circulated about his involvement in a suspicious death — determined by the subsequent inquest to have been an unfortunate accident. Three years ago, his mother had died in her sleep, leaving the questions he wanted to ask unspoken.

Applethorpe turned up the ceiling fan, distracting his train of thought by typing yet another of the innumerable reports that were required by his superior officers, but in the depths of his mind the darker streams of what he would do to his deceitful wife and her suspected lover continued to flow.

His mother's voice suddenly filled his mind. "You are very like your father," she had said, her hand resting on his cheek, her eyes sparkling with the sheen of unshed tears.





It was mid-afternoon, time to carry out his duties and patrol the streets. He reached into the cupboard for his holster and weapon. The leather webbing caught on a protruding nail, and as his temper rose again, he pulled it roughly, startled to find a concealed cavity in the wall, something he'd never noticed. He reached in and his fingers grabbed onto a leatherbound police officer's notebook in a style that had gone out of fashion decades earlier.

Lifting the front cover, he saw the name: *Sgt Martin Applethorpe*. David's mouth opened, and became wider still when he began to read the words on the age-spotted paper.

When the sun begins to sink in the western sky, and before the moon rises, I will have completed this self-imposed task and prepared myself to meet my maker.

It may be that some considerable period of time elapses before this report is found. There is penance in writing this laboriously in my own hand. It is certain that word of my actions and my shame will become widely known and I would wish, and fervently ask, that those who read these painfully written words treat them, and my memory, with compassion, kindness, and gentle understanding. These things I was never able to do well. I never learned the value of such tenderness at my mother's breast.

My name, Martin Applethorpe, is not of importance though perhaps necessary for you to know who tells this tale of sorrow.

I am in my middle years, stocky in stature and blessed with thick dark hair, though it is now streaked liberally in iron grey. My face is nothing remarkable and was never thought handsome; except by one. It is tanned brown by the harsh outback sun and generously endowed with crow's feet. They are called laughter lines, my dear Emma would say, amused. My stubby fingers are thickened by hard work and the beginnings of arthritis that makes this task the more agonising. I am dressed in navy blue trousers, though the crease is poorly executed. My shirtsleeves are tidily rolled up, finishing just above my elbows. The triple stripes of a sergeant are stitched neatly into place. I have one tattoo written in a cursive script that reads ...it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair. The spring of hope is long gone. Ahead the dreadful prospect of living my winter years alone with nothing but memories and guilt.

I remember with longing and loss my Emma's face. Her elegance, clothes carefully colour coordinated, her lipstick immaculate, and just a dab of her favourite perfume on the pulse point on her long white throat. Often I would tell her that she had no need of makeup, she was perfect as she was. She would laugh, gently kissing me on the cheek and telling me in her lilting voice that she was not so well suited to the harsh sun, having the sort of skin that went an unbecoming shade of red and later peeled in painful strips. When she ventured outside she would wear a long-sleeved blouse and a broad-brimmed straw hat trimmed with white daisies. Her flowing clothes seemed to have been made for a woman of an earlier age. Many times, I wondered how a burly policeman such as me, working in such isolated locations had attracted and married such a delicate flower. For five years we worked together in enviable harmony, the gruff police officer and his charming wife.

Then two years ago, Peter Tanglewood moved into town and the world I had created with love was torn apart. The cracks at first were hairline, only visible in bright light, but gradually and inevitably they became deeper and wider and the love between us fractured so she stood on one side of the dividing canyon, and lost, I stood on the other.

"You are late my darling," I had said when she walked into the kitchen.

"Is there enough water in the tank for a shower?" she asked, kissing me on the cheek, enveloped in the scent of another man.

I heard the water running before heading on my mission. She would have known and attempted to stop me, creating a double tragedy.





Tanglewood was a younger man; he stood virile and straight, meeting my eyes with composure. I had to try to make him understand and prevent the disaster about to unfold, pushed onwards by its own momentum. His softly spoken voice explained, shattering my world, "We have tried but we can fight it no longer."

My single shot was quickly absorbed by the vastness of the open country. As I drove away, I could see the red cloud of dust behind me, rising skywards before it descended hiding him from view, like a shroud.

His father's words reached across the decades punching David in the solar plexus, driving the breath from his body and the strength from his legs. He slid slowly down the wall and read again the message written in his father's distinctive hand. *You are just like your father.* The words his mother had so often spoken took on a different meaning. The story suggesting Peter Tanglewood had died as the result of an accident was a carefully constructed lie, for before him now, revealed in his father's own writing was his calculated decision to murder Emma's lover.

David broke out in a sweat, lines of perspiration running down his face and dripping onto the notebook held between shaking fingers.

His thoughts, the ideas, the red stream of anger would lead him to follow the same road as his father.

I returned to the house that was no longer a home. It was desolate, not even a trace of her perfume lingered. She had fled, afraid of my anger and the capacity for destruction she saw within me.

Now, there are only two things left to do, leave a letter for the gentle woman whom I love and have grievously wronged and complete this report.
Martin Applethorpe.

There was a knock on the door. "David?" asked Claire's voice. When he didn't answer the door slowly opened. He looked up at her, his cheeks tear-stained.

Silently he handed her the notebook, studying the expressions as they crossed her face. When she'd finished reading, she was quiet.

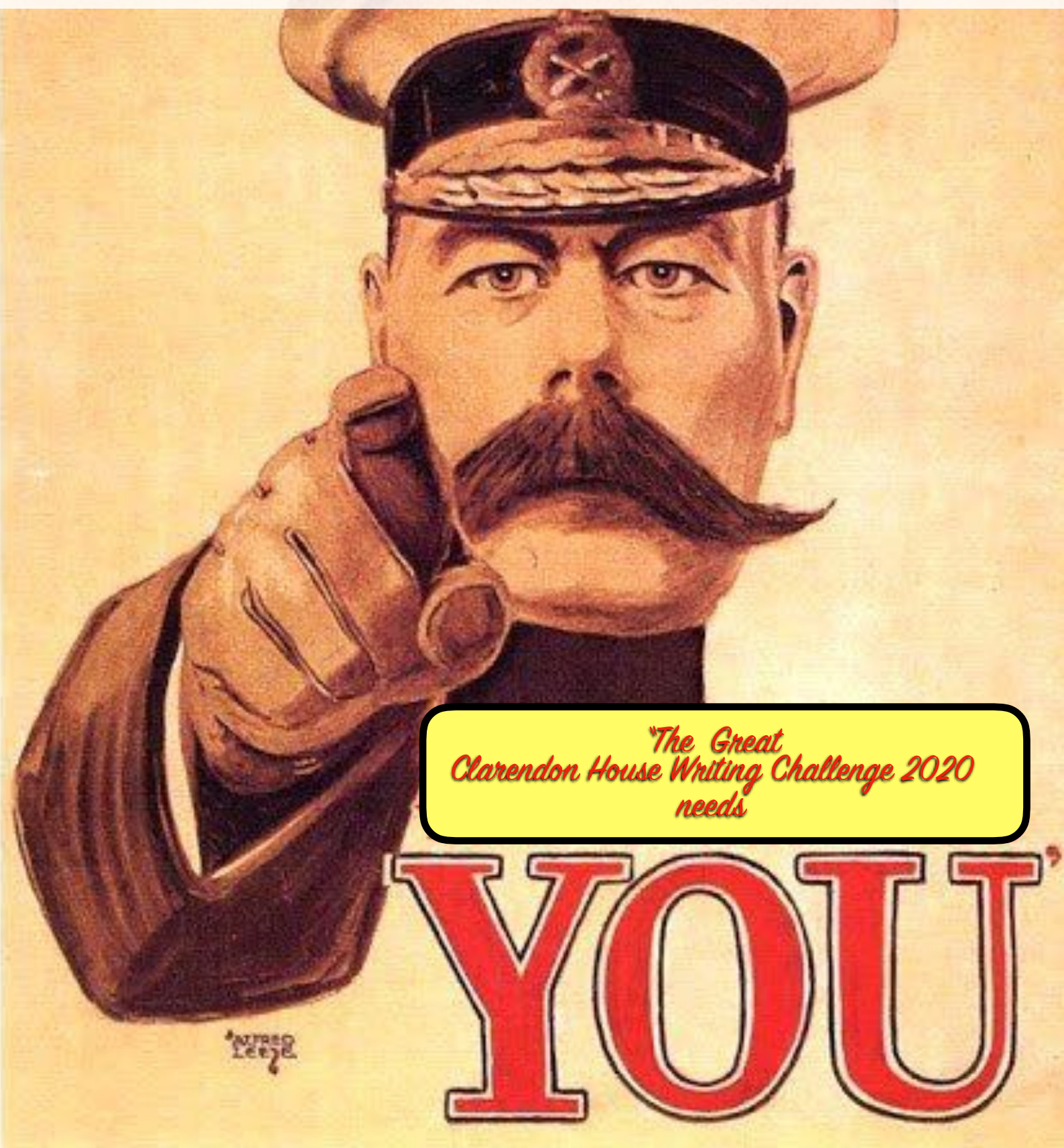
"I am my father's son," in his voice the winter of despair.

"You share a genetic legacy but you are not your father. You can make different choices."

The spring of hope began to blossom and lit his face from within. "I will do better." David reached out from the other side of the canyon that divided them. "Stay?"

Claire nodded, taking his hand in hers.

Not easy, is it? Which of the three finalists best accomplished the task set?



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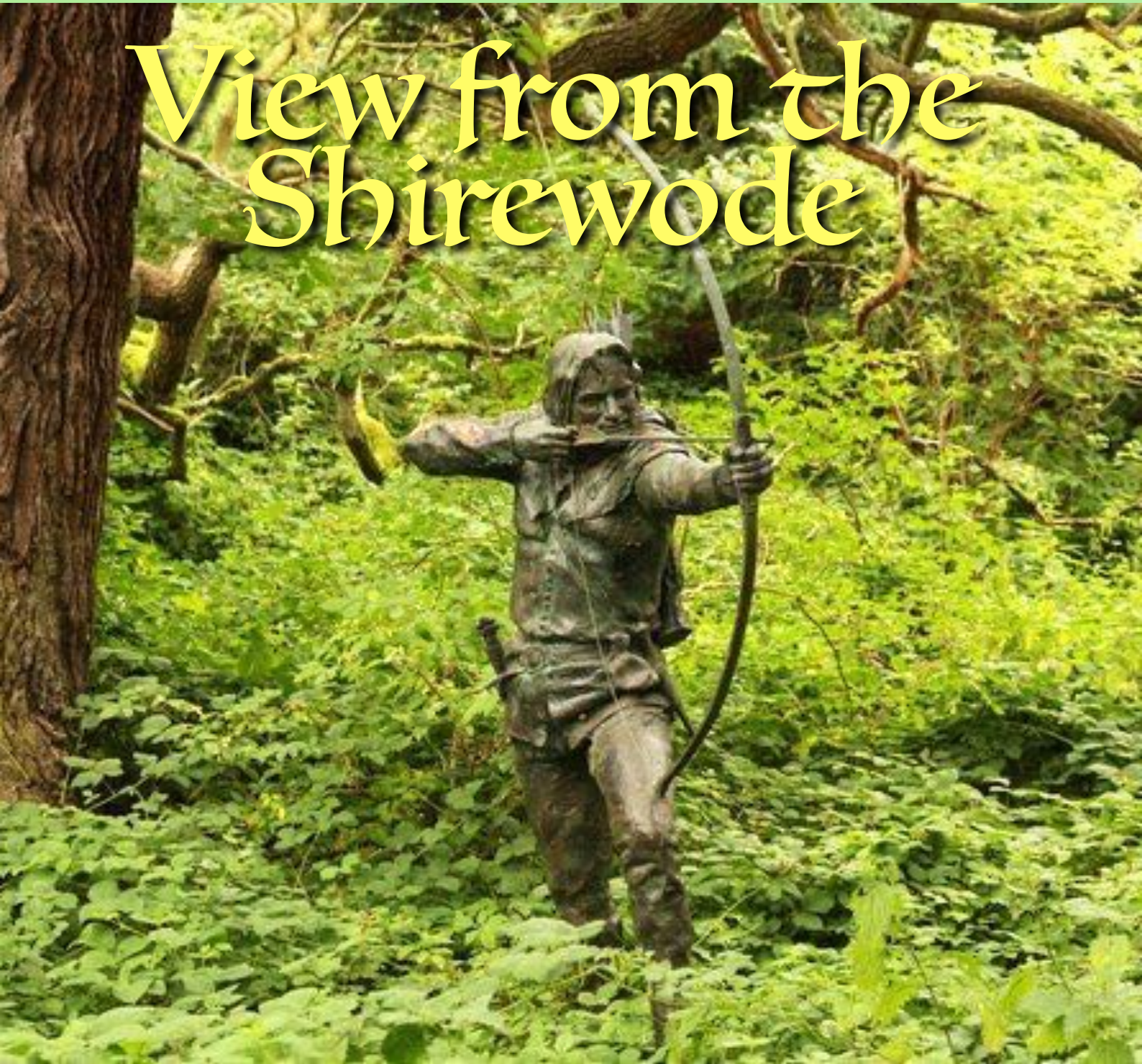
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View from the Shirewode



Robin Hood statue amongst the undergrowth at Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre

When I left school, at 16, I worked underground at a local coal mine. Living in a coal mining community, it was natural for a young lad, when leaving school, to go down the pit. All the men in

my family worked underground. My father, grand fathers, uncles and other male relatives worked at or for their local collieries. Nobody questioned it. It's what we did. This meant

tipping up to Mum – handing her my wage packet each week and living on hand-outs. I didn't mind.

It's what we did.

When I was born, my Dad was a carpenter – a cabinet maker, and owned his own shop. We lived in a two-storey flat above that shop. Sadly, it wasn't long before he realised he was a better carpenter than businessman, and leased the shop to a chemist, and took a job as an underground diesel locomotive driver at the pit. Mum had trained as a secretary, but was a home-maker, and raised myself and my two sister in our two-storey flat, which was a bit dire. The building was in a huge state of disrepair, being a grade-2 listed building, and was barely habitable: no indoor bathroom or toilet, no central heating. It took months for my Dad and uncles to renovate the flat. Despite this, I remember that home as a place full of love and laughter.

I performed three jobs underground: the first was raking rock and rubble from beneath conveyor belts; the second was as part of a haulage team, transporting materials to the coal face. The third was on the Bell Staff, for as a coal face cut forward, it left equipment, such as rails and sleepers of the haulage and conveyor belts behind. My job was to extend telephones and haulage signals to catch up with the coal face — an easy job compared to raking rock and rubble or transporting materials.



I left the pit after my friend was killed underground. He worked on a haulage team and was crushed by a mine car. That's 3 tons of metal on wheels. Not a nice way to go.

It was one day in January 1978 that I was extending the haulage signals on the High Hazel 7s district that I was called to the telephone. It was the Electrical Engineer.

"Have you been working on 8's supply today?" he asked.

"Nope, I'm on 7s."

"Okay," said, and the phone went dead.

It wasn't until the end of the shift that I was in the electrician's cabin at the pit bottom when someone asked if I knew Chris Pembleton. I replied that I did, he parked his motorbike near mine in the bike

sheds. Apparently he'd been crushed by a mine car that day and died. I didn't know him very well. Enough to talk to on our way to the pit head baths in the morning. Exchange hellos with as I ambled by his place of work. He lived too far away to socialise with. But still, he was a nice young lad. 21, but now dead suddenly.

Coal miners



In that moment, I decided it was time to get out of the pit. There are a million ways to die underground. I was 19 and had everything to live for. The following day, I phoned in sick and took a bus into the city, where I enlisted in the Royal Air Force.

After 3 years as a radio operator/telegraphist, I left the RAF and went to college, studying Computer Science. During that time, I volunteered as editor of the college newsletter which gave me a taste for writing, though I didn't make a career of it and, instead, worked as an analyst programmer for software houses in Cambridge UK for over 30 years.

Now retired, I've bought a laptop and turned my hand to writing and publishing, with some success, and in these columns I will tell you about where I live, the history of the region, the fickle foibles and idiosyncrasies of the people, and will mete advice that I found useful as an author and which, I hope, others will appreciate.

I live in what was once the tiny hamlet of Edwinstowe, deep in Sherwood Forest in the U.K. but which is now a thriving community and growing daily with new homes, new schools and doctor's surgeries. Sounds impressive, but not really. The spirit and culture of the village has changed many times. What was once a farming community became, in the 1920's, a coal mining town and, later, once the coal mine closed, now operates as a centre of East Midland tourism.

Sherwood Forest is world famous as the legendary home of Robin Hood. The outlaw hero whose adventures have enthralled generations, but whose true origins lie shrouded in the mists of time. Today, Sherwood Forest is much valued for its unique ecological importance. Broadleaf woodland was once very common in the British Isles, but is now a threatened habitat.

The Vicarage



Edwinstowe

Robin Hood



For centuries ancient oaks and the natural sandy heathland of the forest have evolved into a distinct and fascinating ecosystem. The natural decay of fallen timber means the woodland teems with insect life and fungi, which in turn provide food for varied species of birds and bats. Sherwood Forest National Nature Reserve contains some of the oldest trees in Europe, veteran oaks five centuries old and the world-famous Major Oak, still producing acorns after standing at the heart of the forest for an estimated 800 years.

According to the Domesday Book of 1086, Edwinstowe was then Edenestou (resting place of King Edwin) and populated by five households, in addition to a priest and his four bordars (persons ranking below villeins and above serfs in the social hierarchy of a manor, holding just enough land to feed a family).

The Edwin who is resting in Edwinstowe, was Edwin of Northumbria, King and Saint, and who was hurriedly buried in the church since he died at the Battle of Hatfield Chase in AD 633, which is now the village of Cuckney, about 5 miles through the forest. The battle was against King Penda of Mercia.

Other famous residents of Edwinstowe were Ebenezer Cobham Brewer, vicar of St. Mary's, and author of his Dictionary of Phrase and Fable. He is buried in the church graveyard. There is also Cecil Day Lewis, a later vicar of St. Mary's. He was an Anglo-Irish

poet and Poet Laureate, and father of the famed actor, Daniel Day Lewis.

And me.

Edwinstowe was, in fact, three hamlets: Edwinstowe, by the church; Hazel Grove, by the river and Lidgett, on the hill. The latter two have since been subsumed into Edwinstowe and the three areas are now known, colloquially as; colliery estate, council estate and the posh part.

Right: Edwin of Northumbria





Edwinstowe life carried on in its merry way until, in the 1920s, a coal mine was sunk and what was clean air and countryside soon became chimneys, smoke, grime, and an extensive colliery village built upon the lower wetlands. The mine closed in 2015 and has since been demolished. Edwinstowe is now populated by new comers, buying up the old colliery houses, and the major export of the village is no longer coal, but Robin Hood. Clean air is back, but a lot less countryside.

I examined the mythology of Robin Hood in a previous edition of the Inner Circle Writers' Magazine, concluding that the fabled outlaw never existed, and how he managed to marry Maid Marian at St. Mary's church in Edwinstowe

is mere fantasy. There is, however, a popular visitor's centre in the forest where shops sell literature about Robin Hood, extolling and perpetuating the mythology. It keeps folk happy and entertained, and quickly parts them from their money. In fact, there are so many sites in the forest named after the outlaw, even the most devout cynic, such as myself, is wont to wish it were true: Robin Hood's Pantry, Robin Hood's Cave, well, hiding place, route, path, road, lane, pub, hotel, airport (seriously!) There is even a statue of Robin proposing marriage to Marian outside the local library.

Other villages and towns, locally, such as; Ollerton, Cuckney, Budby, Walesby and Clipstone, form an area known

in latter days as the Dukeries, for in earlier ages, the Dukes of Norfolk, Portland, Kingston and Newcastle, built their mansion houses nearby in Worksop, Welbeck, Thoresby and Clumber. Ollerton, itself, is central to the main routes to Doncaster, Newark and Lincoln, Sheffield and Nottingham, and back in the day, coaches would stop there, either at the Hop Pole or the White Hart hotels, allowing passengers to rest relax, eat, drink, be merry, and visit the sites.

Naturally, there has been so much activity over the millennia that everywhere in the region is haunted, but I'll examine that in a later epistle.



Lythe and listin, gentilmen,
That be of frebore blode:
I shall you tel of a gode yeman,
His name was Robyn Hode.

Robyn was a prude outlaw,
Whyles he walked on grounde:
So curteyse an outlaw as he was one
Was never non yfounde.

—from The Gest of Robyn Hode

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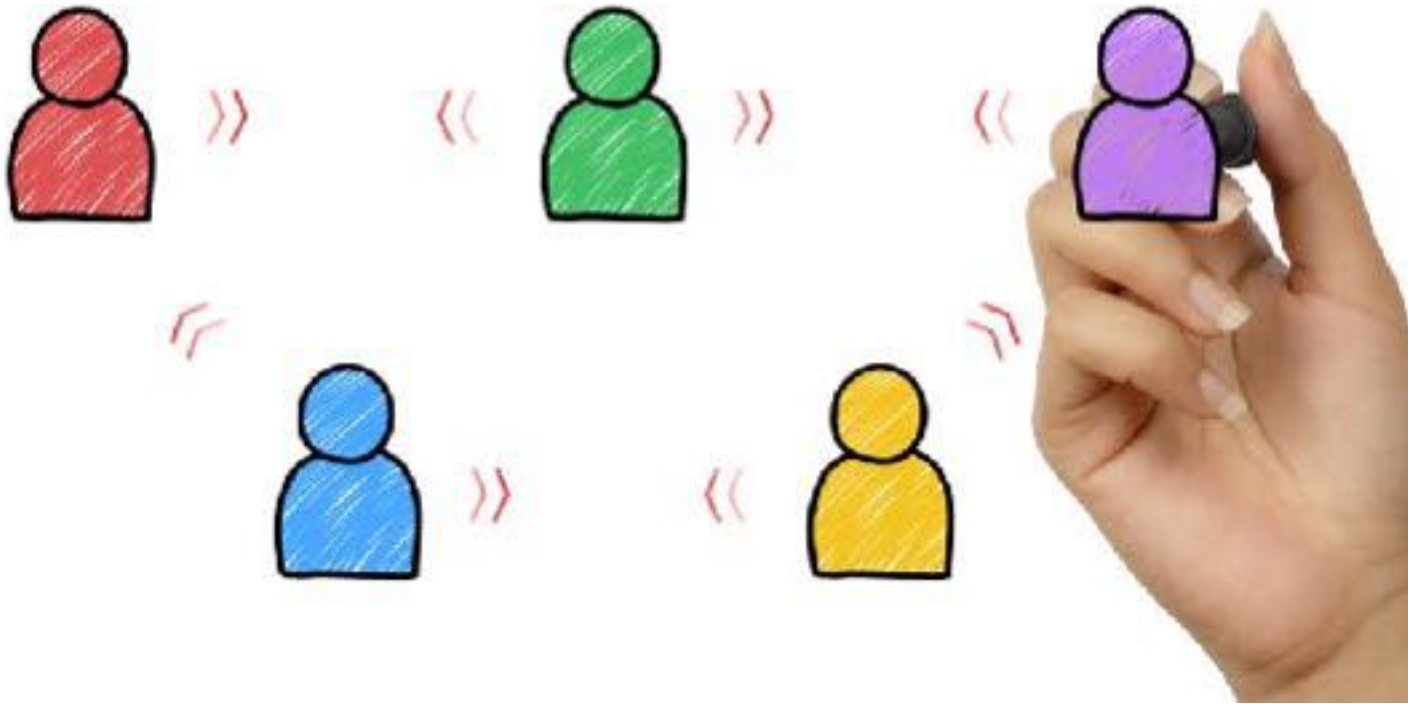


The Adventures of Robin Hood



FICTION by JIM BATES

SOCIAL DISTANCING



Social distancing brought us together. It was the seventh week of lockdown and the governor had eased back on state-imposed restrictions about being in public places so I took him up on it. My favorite coffee shop was open for walk-in traffic and take out and I decided to treat myself to a steaming latte.

It felt good to stroll the three blocks from my apartment and even better to open the door of Carl's Coffee and get smacked in the face with that roasted coffee bean aroma. Ah, it had been too long. Almost swooning, I moved into line.

"Hey, buddy!" A zealous manager suddenly appeared. "Six feet, remember?" He pointed to signs on the walls explaining the rule about not getting too close to anyone. In my excitement for being out in the world I'd forgotten and chastised myself for not remembering the drill. Should I

make a joke and play my septuagenarian age card with him? No, better not. Why push it?

He pointed to brightly colored orange circles on the floor with Six Feet written on them just to make his point, a picture being worth a thousand words, as they said. Point made. I got it.

"Sorry," I said, turning a little red. People were starting to stare. I stepped back quickly and bumped into a tiny woman who squeaked out an "Ouch" when I stepped on her foot. This was getting ridiculous. You'd think after being stuck inside for only seven weeks I'd at least remember how to act in public. But this was pandemic time and things were changing. Still...

I turned to her as I moved back to the required distance, "I'm so sorry. I don't know what's come over me."

Gray hair fluffed out over the collar of a jean jacket put her in the vicinity of my age. I could tell she was smiling because her eyes were twinkling behind her floral mask. "That's okay," she said, then quickly, and, as far as I was concerned, thankfully, changed the subject. "Do you live around here?" she asked. I was immediately impressed that she didn't get on my case for not wearing a face covering, or berate me for clumsily invading her space, not to mention potentially injuring her foot.

"I do. I live just a few blocks over," I said, pointing arbitrarily behind me.

"That's nice," she said. "I'm in town staying with my daughter."

We chatted as the line moved forward, keeping our distance, of course. She told me she was from New York City.

"Oh, my goodness, did you fly?" I was shocked. Getting on a plane at a time like this with Covid-19 running rampant seemed like an insane thing to do.

She smiled. "No. Well, yes," she laughed, understanding where I was coming from. "I flew

in a few months ago, before the troubles" (as she put it) "began."

When we got to the counter I turned to her, "What are you having?" After a brief back-and-forth semi argument, she said, "Well, thank you. I'll have a latte."

Hmm. Same as me. "Two lattes, please." While the coffees were being made, I had an idea. "Say, would you like to join me?" I pointed outside. "It's a nice day. For Minnesota in the springtime, anyway. They've got their tables set up."

"Sure," she said, "that would be lovely."

I paid for our lattes and we took them outdoors. The morning sun was shining brightly warming the day and it felt good to be in the fresh air. We found two tables so we could sit six feet apart and continued chatting away and getting to get to know one another. It turned out we had a lot in common: we both liked to read, go for walks, cook and spend time with our grandchildren.





During a lull in our conversation, I said, "I don't mean to be too forward, but I'm having a wonderful time." She looked at me, raised her mask and took a sip of her latte, then replaced it. She seemed to be waiting for me to continue, so I did. "I was wondering if you'd like to meet again tomorrow." Her non-committal look worried me. I was enjoying being with her and hoped she felt the same way. "Right here. For coffee," I added, just to be clear. Was she interested? She was witty and charming and it had been years since I'll felt so comfortable with a woman. "I'll even pop for a scone."

She eyes crinkled as she laughed. "Well, if that's the case, how could I refuse?"

Whew! Relief flooded over me. "That's great," I grinned. Suddenly, the pandemic was starting to feel not quite so brutal.

"There's only one thing, though," she said, as her daughter pulled up to the curb and beeped her horn.

"What's that?" I asked, standing along with her, wondering if I'd missed something and offended her somehow.

"Could you please wear a mask tomorrow when we get together? I'd appreciate it." She pointed. All around everyone was masked up.

"Absolutely," I said, embarrassed. "I should have known better."

"Good," she said. "I'll see you tomorrow then, same time, same place."

She smiled, her lower face still covered. I waved good bye as she drove off with her daughter.

One of these days, hopefully, soon, I'll be able to see that smile of hers. In fact, as I began walking back to my apartment I found myself looking forward more and more to spending time with her. Her name was Sue. Maybe we'll be able to ride out the pandemic together and eventually not have to worry about masks and social distancing. One of these days the restrictions will be lifted and she'll be able to take her mask off. I'd love to be there when she does. I'll bet her smile is beautiful.

CLARENDON HOUSE AUTHOR

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SPECIAL FEATURE

**Meet the
marvellous**

MARLON HAYES

The Mystery, the Magic, the Man

Where are you from? Tell us a bit about your life and background.

It seems as if reading and writing have always been the foundations upon which I built my life. I am from Chicago, Illinois, located in the Great Lakes region of America. Chicago is one of the largest cities in the country, and the people who live here come from many different cultural backgrounds, and the different cultures have made us Chicagoans pretty unique in our traditions, tastes, and general outlook on life.

The foods that Chicago is known for are the lifeblood which unites us. I can rave about the different foods, the best restaurants to get them from, and the various neighborhoods which make up the city I love. I don't know many Chicagoans who will eat pizza or hot dogs or pierogis or tacos (yes, tacos!), outside of Chicagoland. When I visit other cities, I tend to eat the foods that I can't find in the city, or rather whatever that region or country might be famous for. Clam chowder from New England, gumbo from New Orleans, fish and chips from London, but never, ever pizza... not even in Rome.

I grew up on the South Side, raised by my single mother, along with my older brother, Brian. My mother made us aware of the cultural richness of the city by taking us places, and immersing us in things that our friends weren't experiencing. A perfect summer's day for me when I was a small boy would be to have lunch at the Five and Dime (Woolworth's), then be taken to a bookstore downtown, Kroch's and Brentano's, where I

was allowed to buy one book. The winter version of a perfect day would be to walk along State Street, holding my mother's hand while drinking hot chocolate, and gazing at the Christmas displays in the windows of the department stores.

My mother told me later on in life that we were poor back then, but I have always argued that we couldn't have been poor. We

went to the movies, played Little League baseball, were constantly at the library or book stores, and we took road trips to family reunions every other summer. Also, my Aunt Phyllis and my Uncle Donnie took us to plays and to the lakefront, and Buckingham Fountain, and dozens of other places. If we were poor, then that reality was downplayed by the richness of our experiences.



I said that when I grew up, I wanted to travel, and that eventually, I wanted to be a writer. But life doesn't always go the way we planned. I was kicked out of high school as a senior, and I didn't return. I passed the test for a General Equivalency Degree (GED), which allowed me to go to college. My Aunt Phyllis got me a full-time job for the City Colleges of Chicago, which allowed me to go to school for free. When I was nineteen, I became a father to a beautiful little girl, Amari, and I had to curtail my college career. Sigh. So I guess that makes me a two-time dropout, which makes me sort of an anomaly. Those types of curveballs usually can't be overcome. Here I am, thirty years later, and even though I want to finish college, I really don't have the time.

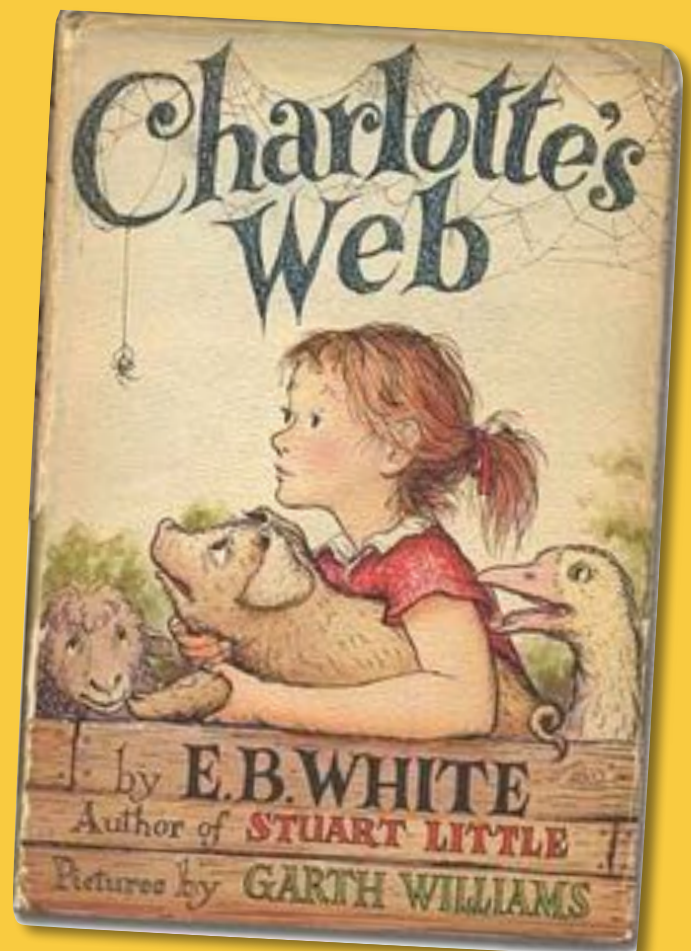
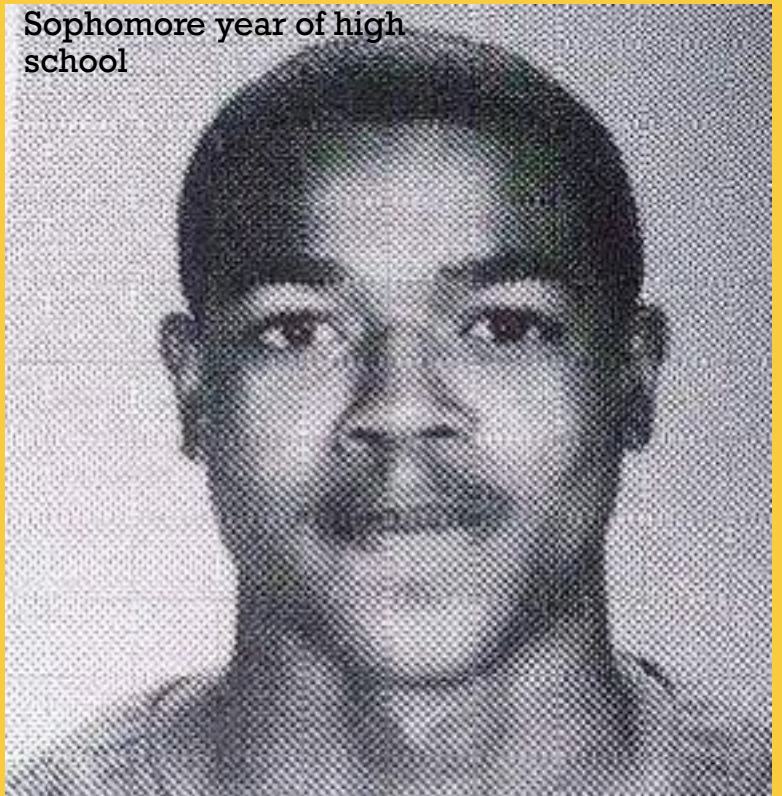
I became a truck driver twenty-two years ago, and I grew to love my profession. I'm married to a sweet and wonderful, yet outspoken woman named Traci, who keeps me grounded, while still cheering me on in all of my endeavors. I have two amazing daughters, Amari and Kymberlee, and my grandson William shows me that infinity is possible.

What's your earliest memory of fiction?

The first book I read beyond the Dr. Seuss stage was *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White, and afterwards, I couldn't understand why I loved the book. I didn't have anything in common with Fern, or any of the other characters. I remember being stunned that Wilbur should have been destined to be bacon, and that all of my favorite foods came from animals. Creepy, right?

My mother would let us bring books to the dinner table, and the three of us would read while we ate. She explained to me the power of fiction, and how it could take one away from their everyday existence. It made Fern and Wilbur's story that much more powerful for me because it took me to a place I'd never been. I was five when I read that book, and from then on, I probably averaged at least two books a week for the rest of my childhood. I was never without a book.

Sophomore year of high school



Did you want to be a writer from an early age? Tell us about your first attempts.

I wrote my first poem when I was four or five, a Mother's Day card for my momma, which she still has in her memory box. I liked poetry more than fiction as an outlet for me because poems were short and simple, but they conveyed so much meaning. My grandmother, Lee Ellen, used to read the poetry of Langston Hughes to me as a child, and it resonated with me. Through the poetry of Mr. Hughes, Maya Angelou, and other Black poets, I understood that life in America was different for Black Americans. By the way, the poem 'Harlem' by Langston Hughes taught me that a dream deferred may never come to fruition. That's why I try to make my dreams a reality.

I only had two professions that I wanted to pursue, a baseball player, or a writer. I was avid in my pursuits, but as time went on, I found that I was a better writer than anything else. When I was in sixth grade, I wrote a short story about a man's hat blowing off, and I got an 'A' on the story. However, the story created a buzz around me, and was passed along. I was offered a place in the Gifted Writing program of the Chicago Public Schools, and of course, I accepted. One day each week for the next three years, I went to a different school, where I learned iambic pentameter, how to write Haiku, short stories, and I formed friendships that have endured with the handful of other students in the program. I always knew I wanted to be some kind of writer.

My first poem

You can wear this
flower in your hair
Let the whole world know
that I care.
Mother's day is once a year
but everyday I wish you cheer!
Love
Marlon

Me and Santa



What kept you hooked on fiction as you grew older?

As I grew, so too did my appetite for books. I read the Newberry Award winners, and whatever books my mother and brother were reading. Classics, romance, adventures, and historical fiction. The different places and cultures described made me want to travel to new places, physically and spiritually. D'Artagnan, Francie Nolan, Ponyboy Curtis, Scout Finch, and Pip, were characters who made me want to see the places they lived, and funnily enough, I've visited all of them. Paris, New York City, Oklahoma, Alabama, and England, amongst a whole bunch of other places. Isn't that something?

Stephen King, Larry McMurtry, and Nora Roberts, became my mainstays, and their writings led me to other authors whom I grew fond of. The good stories never go away, which is why I am still a voracious reader. During our quarantine, I've re-read the 'Dark Tower' series by King, and the entire Easy Rawlins series by Walter Mosley.

What do you consider to be a 'good book' and why?

I would recommend *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle-Stop Café* by Fannie Flagg to anyone, regardless of their background and reading appetites. It's full of laughter, love, wisdom, tears, and it offers perspectives from different points of view, which makes a person think about their own reflections about life.



Performing poetry



In my backyard, one of my preferred writing stations

Was there ever a point where you said to yourself 'I'm a writer'? Tell us about that.

I whispered to myself "I'm a writer" after I wrote my first, completed short story 'A Night at Lucky's' back in 2007. I had notebooks full of poems and ideas, but until the idea for that story was transposed onto paper, I'd just thought of it as a hobby that one day I might be able to pursue in some fashion. Looking back, I can see the steps I should have taken during that time to make myself a better writer, but I didn't know any writers, especially not professional ones. I guess every journey

begins with the simple step of wanting to discover the possibilities which lie ahead.

Tell us about your adventures on your way to being published, and what it was like seeing your name in a proper print book.

My wife Traci got fed up with me writing on the family computer because the computer slowed down to a crawl. She told me I needed to find something to do with all of my work, because it was just languishing there.

I looked at the stories and poems I had on the computer,

and an idea formed about putting everything together in a collage of poetry and short stories. I re-read everything I'd written, and I separated each piece into a color based on human emotion. 'Red' for passion, 'black' for depression, and 'white' for pure love, and a different color for each emotion. I thought the idea was brilliant, and I put it together. Unfortunately, the execution wasn't as professional as it would be now, but I'm still proud of my first book, *The Colors of My Mind*. I haven't removed it and revised it, because it stands as a testament to how far I've come since 2013, when

A collage of some of my published work



it was published. It was a dream fulfilled when I saw my name, Marlon S. Hayes, in print for the first time, but I will admit (sheepishly), that I thirsted for more.

I started writing on a daily basis, or as my schedule permitted. I joined writing groups on social media, and I became a student once again, not in pursuit of a degree, but as an apprentice on the road to becoming a polished, professional writer. My second book, *View from the Sidelines* was a book of poetry, and I was pleased with it, not realizing at the time that folks don't particularly buy books of poetry, unless the author is already famous for something

else, or no longer a resident of this world. Another lesson learned.

I grew as a writer, and my ambitions expanded as well, so much so, that I began writing my first novel *Eleven Fifty-Nine* in the winter of 2014. I knew how I wanted it to begin, and where I wanted it to end. The middle was fuzzy, but I was excited about my new project. It was going along pretty well until June of 2015, when it seemed like my creative faucet turned completely off. Everything I wrote sounded stale, or reeked of the typical. I was pretty sure that I had writer's block, and I thought my fledgling career as

a writer might have come to a premature finish. I was stuck.

A friend on social media suggested to me that I should try and write erotica. My soul recoiled at the idea at first, because even though I liked to read erotica on occasion, I'd only written a few erotic poems up until that point. I pondered the idea for days, and a story came to my mind about two lonely people discovering their attraction and their sexuality together. The story 'I Like to Watch' was pretty good, and it did the trick. It completely unlocked my creative side, and the summer of 2015 became legendary in my mind for the number of projects I finished.



A collage of Binamu Media's latest releases.

I wrote about sixty short stories that summer, about four hundred poems, and I got back on track with writing *Eleven Fifty-Nine*, which I didn't finish until early 2016. Those short stories became the collections *Watching for Potholes*, *Sippin' Life at Lucky's Bar and Grill*, and *Spicy Nights Under the Milky Way* (under contract and due to be released in late 2020/ early 2021). It was that summer that my goals changed, somewhat, making me look at possibilities I hadn't thought of at the time. I was empowered by that summer to think that I could write anything...

So I did. I received my first publishing contract in 2016 for my short story 'Daddy's Boy.' It put me on the radar, and I kept on grinding, writing in all genres, and constantly learning and improving as a writer. I learned how to shrug off rejections, and I gave myself deadlines to finish projects. I became more focused, and the results began to speak for themselves.

In 2018, I set a personal goal of submitting at least one hundred completed projects to publishers, agents, anthologies, and magazines. I think the final total submitted was about 117, with maybe twenty acceptances and contracts. One of the contracts was for my novel *Eleven Fifty-Nine* and its follow-up *Singing to Butterflies*. The first one is slated for release later this year by Oghma Creative Media, and the second will be released next year.

With my mother, Sheila at the Muhammad Ali museum in Louisville



A Saddlebag Dispatches cover with my story, 'Four Wolves becomes a Man.'

Has being published changed what you do as a writer? i.e. habits, types of thing you write, expectations etc.

My habits have changed in that I make sure to write something every day, whether a few paragraphs or a few thousand words. I make a weekly list of things I want to accomplish during that week, and I'm pretty good about knocking my goals out.

I write fiction of all genres, and the occasional essay or travel piece, which I submit to magazines. I write Westerns, erotica, sci-fi, historical stuff, romance, coming-of-age stories, and anything else which crosses my mind.

My only expectations of myself are to always give my best effort, and to not rush at all, because hastily written works are not always my best.

What's a really profound thing that has happened to you (related to writing or not)?

I was in London last year, and we were visiting Westminster Abbey. It was a 'Bucket List' item, and I felt blessed I'd been able to check it off of my list. I stood in 'Poet's Corner' where Dickens, Kipling, Tennyson, Chaucer, and other famous writers are entombed. I looked at where I stood, and I whispered to all of them, "I'm a writer, too, just like all of you." It was a defining moment.

Me and Dennis Doty



Who or what has helped you the most as a writer?

There have been quite a few people who have made a difference in my career, some of whom know me, and others who have no clue of my existence. Elmore Leonard taught me the importance of dialogue; may he rest in peace. A writer named Kari Holloway taught me the importance of viewing my writing as a career, and not a hobby, and I took that advice to heart. Another writer, Dennis Doty, became a mentor, encouraging me, and showing me the opportunities which I could take advantage of, as long as I put in the work.

My mother, Sheila, and my wife Traci, provide encouragement, support, and unbeknownst to them, inspiration.

I also find inspiration for stories in everyday situations, snippets of overheard conversations, and all sorts of other events. It seems to come from everywhere.

Describe your writing space and routines.

I prided myself on being a mobile writer, able to write in bars, restaurants, parks, my backyard, in airports, and anywhere else that I could either open my laptop or type away on my phone. Since the pandemic/quarantine, I've been using my kitchen as a writing space while we put the finishing touches on a basement office with a writing desk, sofa, stereo, paintings, and a file cabinet. It's just about finished.

Tell us about the books you've written so far. How did they evolve, what did you enjoy/not enjoy, etc.

I mentioned *The Colors of My Mind*, *View from the Sidelines*, *Eleven Fifty-Nine*, *Singing to Butterflies*, *Watching for Potholes*, and *Sippin' Life at Lucky's Bar and Grill*. I've also written two Western novels, *Over the Horizon*, and *The Ascension of El Padron* (under contract). I wrote an erotic collection *Spicy Nights Under the Milky Way* (under contract), and I recently submitted an erotic novel *The Delicious Escape*. Fingers crossed that it will soon be under contract as well.

Each novel begins with the simplest of questions, "What if?" and they evolve from there. *Sippin' Life at Lucky's Bar and Grill* came from the idea of an idealized bar and its patrons, and the stories

evolved from there. The problem is that stories about Lucky's keep being written by me, and that book came out three years ago.

The sticking point with me has been the rejections based on the premise that what I submitted was "not what they were looking for." It seems to me that too many publishers are looking for copycat manuscripts of the latest, trending novel. I think a lot of unique projects slip through the cracks. Thank God for self-publishing.

What are you working on? What are your plans?

I'm working on a Western novel, as part of a series under contract. Also working on a Vietnam-era story about Black veterans, and a love story about two strangers that meet in Lucky's Bar and Grill. I also started a company, Binamu Media Group, with three of my uber-talented cousins. We'll produce, develop, and create books, short films, scripts, and other creative ventures. It's pretty exciting.

I took on a position as Executive Editor for County Down Press, an erotic publisher, and that, along with my other projects, will ensure that I remain busy and fulfilled for the foreseeable future.



Me and my grandson, William



With my mother and my brother, Brian

At the Colosseum in Rome, contemplating life as a gladiator... with a pen



Poet's Corner, Westminster Abbey. Snapped before I knew that picture taking wasn't allowed

Poets' Corner

In Poets' Corner many of the nation's greatest writers are buried or commemorated. The tradition began with Geoffrey Chaucer (1343-1400), who was buried here because he was Clerk of the Works at the Palace of Westminster. When the poet Edmund Spenser (1553-99) was also buried nearby, a tradition was established which continues to the present day.



Me and my oldest daughter, Amari

At Blarney Castle, Ireland, preparing to receive the 'gift of gab!'



With my youngest daughter, Kymberlee



With my wife Traci





The cover page for my Facebook author page

take a trip every month, and my summers would be spent in rented lodging around the world. It's looking quite attainable these days...

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Remembered Arts
 Garden Spices
 Saddlebag Dispatches
 Inner Circle Writers' Magazine

Collections by Marlon S. Hayes
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Watching for Potholes
Sippin' Life at Lucky's Bar and Grill

Social Media

www.facebook.com/VoicesBleachers
www.instagram.com/voicesbleachers
www.twitter.com/voicesbleachers
https://www.amazon.com/Marlon-S-Hayes/e/B01CQCR8RC?ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_8&qid=1592322532&sr=8-8

Do you have favourite characters of your own? A favourite story that you've written? Anything you'd love to see made into a movie/Netflix series?

One of my favorite characters is Rosa, from two erotic stories I've written, 'Nights of Wine and Rosa' and 'Make-Up Oil.' She's feisty, fierce, and beautiful, and creating her was fun.

Another favorite character is Flora Jean, from *Singing to Butterflies* and *Eleven Fifty-Nine*. She's a gifted young woman, strong in ways that she couldn't have imagined, and she makes me cry with her longings and experiences.

Pete is the bartender at Lucky's, who is overflowing with hard-earned wisdom, empathy, and

love. He's probably why I keep returning to Lucky's.

My favorite story is probably *Singing to Butterflies*. It's rich with dialogue and characters, and it evokes every emotion known.

I think *Sippin' Life at Lucky's Bar and Grill* might make an excellent Netflix or cable series. It has plenty of story arcs and a multitude of possibilities. We'll see.

Describe your ideal life from your point of view.

My ideal life would be to wake up in the morning, prepare coffee and breakfast for my family, then retreat to my office for hours where I could write, answer e-mails, and converse with my business partners until mid-afternoon, where I would stop for the day, and spend the afternoon on my front porch swing reading or napping. I'd



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Almost five years ago, I wrote a book summarising over forty years of research into the field of literature, a book my students had begged me to write. Since its publication, it has garnered many rave reviews, and never less than five stars. Now, exclusively, I'm presenting a series of illustrated articles drawn from that book.

Here's perhaps the most important chapter — Chapter Three:

Vacuum Power



What motivates people?
Goals? Targets? Money?

No.

Nothing.

Literally, 'nothing'.

By 'nothing' is meant a *gap*, something *missing*, an *emptiness*. This could also be termed a *mystery*, an *absence*, a *loss*, a *lack*, a *want*, an *unavailability*, a *deficiency*, an *omission*, an *exclusion*, or a *need*.

Yes, of course we can set goals and of course they have to be desirable. But what is it that actually starts someone moving, physically or mentally, towards that goal?

The vacuum between where they are now and the goal.

That's what pulls people forward.
You need a goal, a mountain top, something to aim for, certainly. But that target, whatever it is, *is defined by its absence*. Right now, you don't have it; right now, there's nothing there; right now, there's a *vacuum*.

It can be simply stated — so simply, that at first your mind may reject it.

Set a goal - any goal - and you immediately activate the pulling power of its absence.

Why is this such a secret?

Because an emptiness, a nothing, is almost by definition, *invisible*. When we think of something we want to achieve, we picture it perhaps, or write it down, or discuss it with someone. But none of those things have much power to move us, despite what all the books on visualisation say.

What moves us is the vacuum power of the goal or target that is not yet there.

Just as a vehicle is sucked into the slipstream of a juggernaut on the motorway, or a boiled egg is sucked into the emptiness of a heated bottle, or an astronaut is sucked out into the vacuum of space through a broken hatch, so we are moved by the power of emptiness.

Desire creates emptiness. Emptiness moves us.

You have a goal. You can write it down, picture it, mock it up in a stage and hang it on your wall. You can do any number of things with it. But what pulls you into actually moving towards that goal is *the emptiness between you and it*.

Everyone has these emptinesses. They are needs. We have small needs like the need for a snack or a cup of tea; we have larger needs like the need for a rest or companionship; and we have huge needs like the need for water, health and life itself. The best term to describe them is 'vacuums' because we are all familiar with the basic idea of the power of vacuums in one way or another either from school or because we've used a vacuum cleaner.

*Desire creates
emptiness.*

*Emptiness moves
us.*

A vacuum, if it's strong enough, can make anyone do anything.

This is such a simple idea that it is easy to dismiss. But simplicity is power.

Understand this one and the world is yours to command.

This should change your ideas of what a writing goal is. Or even what a goal is generally.

What are some usual goals?

Wealth?
Property?
Love?
Happiness?
What lies between a person and these goals?



The bigger or more intense the vacuum, or lack, or absence, the more powerful the pull.

Setting a Goal

The usual advice that you can read in a thousand other books about achieving goals is to set the goal and then break that goal down into achievable targets and plan how to achieve those. That's all very well and can work — *but what drives this is the emptiness between the starting point and the goal.*

Actually sometimes breaking the goal down into smaller, do-able parts works to *reduce* its vacuum power. Larger goals and challenges can often possess more vacuum power.

To put it even more simply will reduce it to an almost absurd tautology. But here goes:

If I want a new kitchen table and a new kitchen table exactly like the one I want suddenly appears in front of me, what happens to my want? It vanishes. I have no need to go to the furniture shop. I have no need to move at all.

If I want a new kitchen table, what is it that makes me get up and go and get one? The *absence* of that table, the fact that it is *missing*, the *vacuum* created by its absence.

It would be as though there is a vacuum, shaped exactly like the table I want, sitting in the middle of the room. What will it take to fill it? Something will have to happen; things will have to occur in the universe; action will have to take place. Is this action caused by the table?

No, quite the reverse. If the table appears, there is no need for action. The action is caused by the *absence of the table.*

People motivated to achieve wealth are motivated by the absence of wealth.

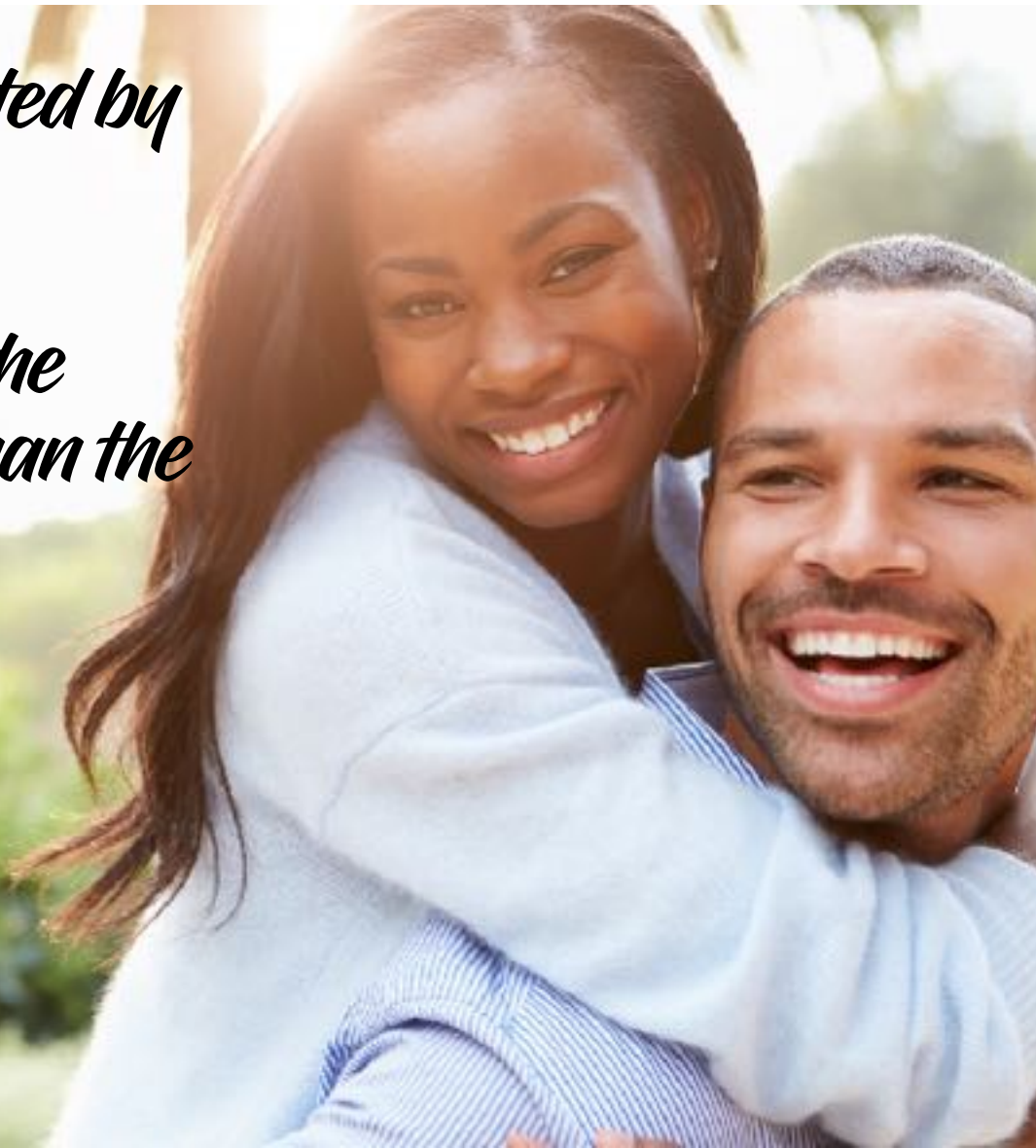
People motivated to acquire property are motivated by the absence of property.

People motivated by achieve love are motivated by the absence of love.

People motivated by a desire for happiness are motivated by the desire more than the happiness.

It's such a simple principle, but the world of fiction writing will open up to its full richness if you can apply this principle completely.

*People motivated by a desire for happiness are motivated by the **desire** more than the happiness.*



Why isn't this more widely known?

It sort of is. It's the principle behind every successful novel, every movie deal, every closed sale, every satisfied reader or viewer.

People are motivated by emptinesses, lacks, missing things, absences.

For the purposes of this book, we are going to call these things *vacuums* because what we know about vacuums in the physical universe will help us to understand how they work.

Here's some text book definitions of a 'vacuum':

vacuum: *'A space entirely devoid of matter; a space or*

container from which the air has been completely or partly removed; a gap left by the loss, death, or departure of someone or something formerly playing a significant part in a situation or activity.'

Of course, as we know 'Nature abhors a vacuum' and vacuums tend to suck things into them or to have an attractive power with regard to their surroundings.

We can slightly re-define this for our purposes based on what we know about the properties of vacuums.

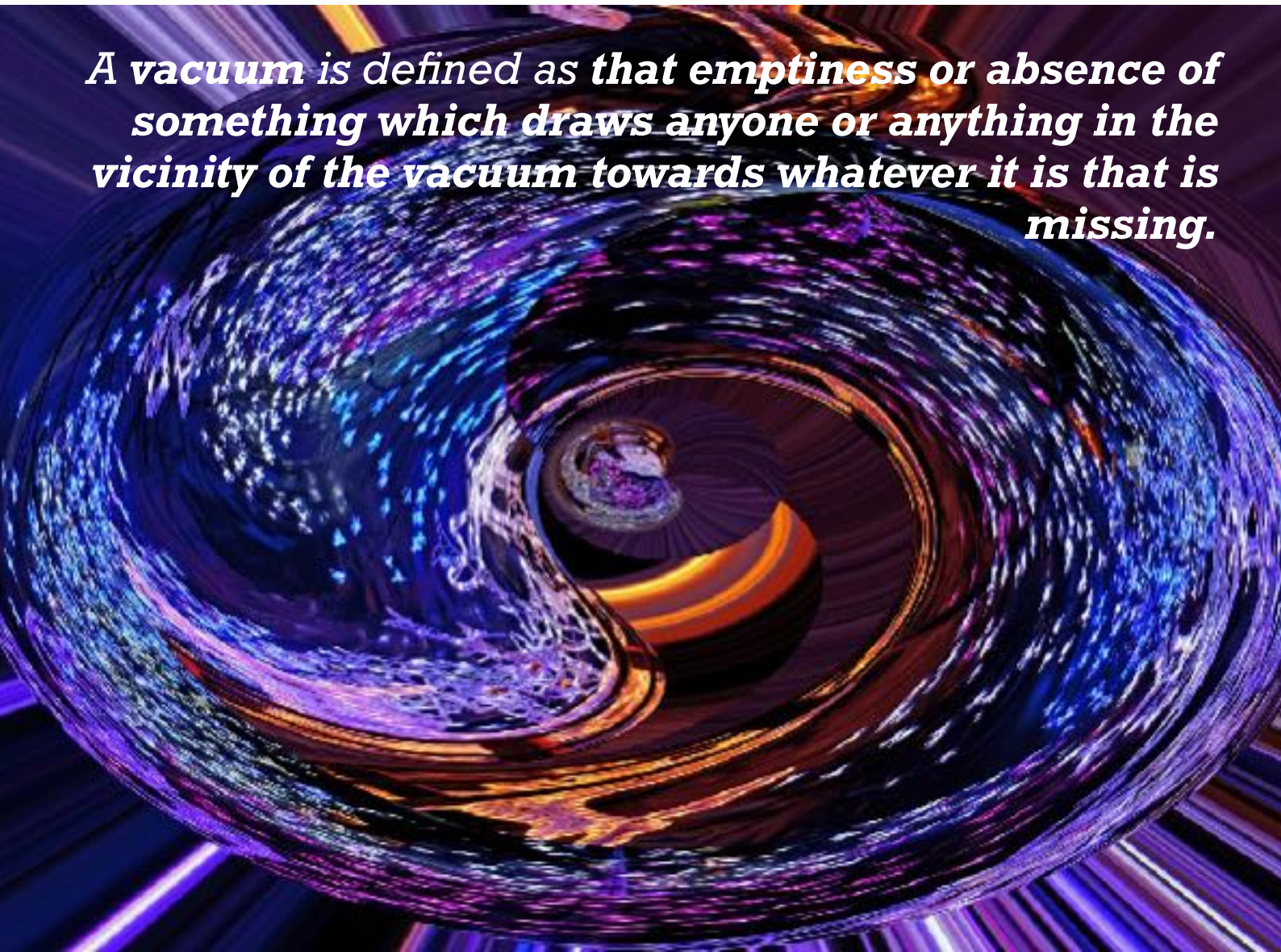
A vacuum is defined as that emptiness or absence of something which draws anyone or anything

in the vicinity of the vacuum towards whatever it is that is missing.

Thus a need, a desire, a yearning, a longing, has the power to draw the person who has it towards the object of that need, desire, yearning or longing.

This is the primary force which underlies how human transactions work, including transactions between a reader and a piece of fiction.

If you need further convincing, let's step back for a moment and look at what happens in fiction today.



A vacuum is defined as that emptiness or absence of something which draws anyone or anything in the vicinity of the vacuum towards whatever it is that is missing.

Vacuum Power in Fiction

The word fiction is usually defined along these lines:

fiction: literature in the form of prose, especially novels, that describes imaginary events and people.

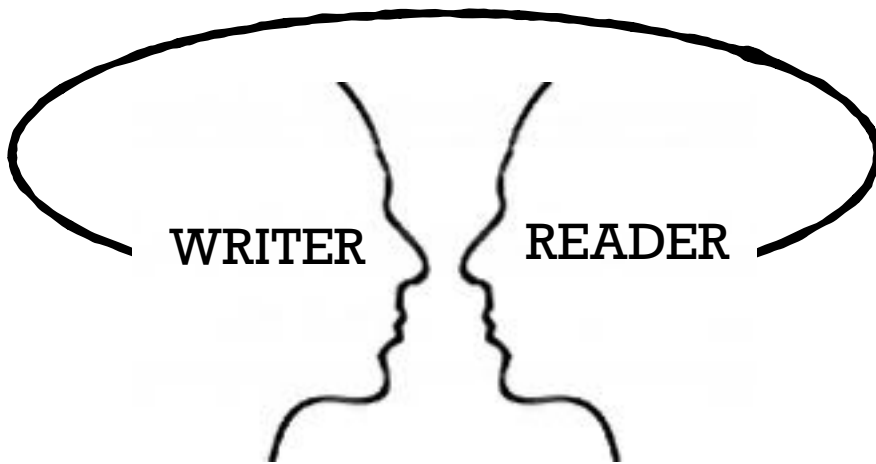
It comes from late Middle English (in the sense 'invented statement') via Old French from Latin *factio(n-)*, from *ingere* 'form, contrive'. The whole idea behind the idea is that it is to do with *things that are made up*.

And so it starts from a 'writer-centric' perspective:

whatever a writer wants, thinks or feels should happen next is 'right'. And so fiction writers sit at their desks or in the chairs and write whatever they imagine. And that's fiction.



The Writer-Reader Connection is NOT guaranteed



*It must be created using certain
techniques*

The biggest problem with all that is that *there is absolutely no guarantee that anything that emerges from a writer's mind will be of any interest whatsoever to a reader.*

90% of writers, whether they are young or old, new or have been attempting to write a book for years, experience this:

They write and write and write and then don't know where the thing is going and end up running out of steam and abandoning the story.

Page after page, chapter after chapter, draft after draft, manuscript after manuscript. This is why writers give up. Or, if they persist, why they are still failures even years down the line.

After all, the aim of every writer should be to just write, right? Commitment from readers will eventually come, right? It's all a numbers game and, with a bit of luck and a fortunate encounter with a positive publisher, success will come, right?

Wrong.

Writing for its own sake as an aim of fiction is based on a completely inaccurate understanding of what successful fiction is. If you think that simply by putting words on a page or screen straight from your head you will eventually end up 'striking it rich' in terms of reader commitment, then by all means continue to pour out your imagination onto the page or screen. Less than 1% of successful writers succeed that way *and they eventually succeed because they hit by accident upon some of the principles described in this book.*



Reader Commitment

If you more correctly see that reader commitment is something that is generated and passed on as the result of *something else*, then suddenly you can appreciate that just generating volume writing for its own sake produces a lot of wasted paper. Writing page

after page after page without consulting the needs of readers produces in the writer a deep sense of alienation, self-deception and a mounting feeling that the universe is unfair and doesn't recognise genius.

Do you recognise those thoughts and feelings?

Let's not be misunderstood here: there's nothing wrong with writing straight from your head or with producing lots of it. But if you set 'just writing' as the uppermost goal of a writing life, *it will ultimately lead to the downfall of yourself as a writer.*



What should the uppermost goal of a fiction writer be, then?

Everyone has goals, and everyone, therefore, is surrounded by emptinesses which precede or cluster around these goals: needs, or as we are going to call them, *vacuums*. These vacuums draw a person towards anything which looks as though it might fill the vacuum. Thus a person might need a new watch or be desperately searching for a cure for migraines or be looking to order a pizza for a large family, or be seeking a lost friend or fleeing a war in search of sanctuary. Each of these things is a vacuum of a particular kind. There are lots of kinds and sizes of vacuums, as you will learn, but for now it's the basic principle that we have to take in.

Everyone has vacuums.

If everyone is walking around driven by their needs, what are

they looking for? Something that will *fulfil* their needs. What should your fiction be in that case?

Works of fiction are vacuum-fillers.

If your writing is built around that datum, all shall be well.

But the idea of vacuum power opens the world up to new possibilities. The first thing to do, obviously, is to establish what exactly your readers needs are and then work to fulfil them. But how do you generate interest and energy and movement and forward progress?

How do you attract hordes of readers and guarantee that they will be happy?

You can see that setting goals is one thing — harnessing the vacuum power around those goals is something else. To be truly and spectacularly effective, goals should harness the

maximum number and size of vacuums of everyone involved. And if you look at any goal that anyone has ever achieved, it's usually by tapping into the goals and vacuum power of those around them too.

A writer who has these all aligned and active would harness enough power to take over the world. A writer who even bothers to ask what the vacuums of his or her readers are, let alone activates or aligns them, will ignite attractive power and become effective.

Fiction is an operation of ideas built around vacuums.

That looks like a re-definition of fiction itself.

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ARTICLE by JULIE C. EGER

Julie C. Eger writes under the names Julie Eger, A.J. Lawdring and Copper Rose, perforates the edges of the page while writing, believes anything is possible for those who believe anything is possible, and lives in Wisconsin with her husband and a black Golden Doodle, has raised two sons and has been accused of playing well with others. Credits include nine anthologies at [Clarendon House Publications](http://ClarendonHousePublications.com) and numerous online journals and other anthologies. She also understands there really is something about pie. You can connect with her at <https://julieeger.wordpress.com/>



Writing in the known Direction — Knowing When to Switch Gears

I stumbled on a submission call where the publisher was looking for stories about women in the woods. An idea immediately jumped into my head. It was like the whole story unfolded in my mind in a matter of minutes. That doesn't always happen for me, so you can imagine my excitement at having a complete story all ready to write.

Now, I just had to find the time to fill in the empty spots to meet the word count according to the guidelines. And wouldn't you know it, everybody and their brother decided to interrupt my writing time. If it wasn't one thing, it was another. Bills to pay, household obligations which included exploring the back of my refrigerator before things started taking on a life of their own (there is definitely

a story in regard to that situation), to a storm that hit, a financial disaster to divert, to my mom being sick.

This submission call had a deadline to meet that was two weeks away from when I first stumbled upon it. Two weeks certainly seemed to be enough time to crank out a story that was at least 2000 words, but even though the whole story had unfolded in my mind, even when I finally did find the time to write, I couldn't get the words to come out right on the page. I was literally the proverbial author in the empty motel room, alone with my typewriter and a stack of paper, wadding up the half typed-out sheets and using the trash can as a basketball hoop. I had the story, but what I had missed was the *angle*.

I kept trying to force what I thought was the main character. First I had her arriving in the hearse, ready to be buried in the cemetery, and I figured the back story would fill in the rest. Then I had her niece sitting on the porch and telling the story of what happened to the two men. I fiddled with the story this way and that way, wrote and rewrote. I let the story sit by itself for a while in a sort of time out. I became edgy and cranky when my husband tried talking to me. When I kept giving him the sideways glance he knew one of my characters was being a butt head and I was taking it out on him instead. Thank goodness my husband has come to understand those kinds of things or one of us would have to move out of the house.



Sometimes when this happens to me, when the story is there but the idea behind it won't unfold, I start to play solitaire. Not the online version, but the good old-fashioned way, with a real deck of cards, the way I watched my grandfather play when he was diagnosed with emphysema and spent part of his life tied to an oxygen tank in the house in between 911 calls to summon the ambulance to take him the hospital, where he spent the other part of his life. I remember Grandpa telling me, "Solitaire has a way of clearing my mind so I don't dwell on all this real life stuff. Just enough to take the edge off so I can get through the day and go to sleep at night."

So, when the initial idea won't come together, and with a deadline looming, against all logic, I sat down to play solitaire as fast as I could, to see if it would lead to an insight about the story I hadn't thought of before. The one difference in the way Grandpa played and the way I play is speed. He played slow. I play like a rocket that has just launched, with my story sitting right on the edge of the stratosphere.

I kept a notebook by my side, just in case a relevant thought came to me in the midst of slapping those cards on the table. Before too long I began to realize what the problem was—I didn't want to forsake my initial characters. I'm funny that way. Even if someone in real life is mean to me I still give them a second (or third or fourth or fifth) chance to prove themselves. I didn't want to strike my MC from her lead role.

I knew I'd already clocked at least twenty hours of actually *'sitting at my computer and typing something on the page'* hours, not even counting how many hours I'd thought about the story while I was doing laundry, vacuuming, driving, eating or petting the dog. If I totaled all those hours at \$10 per hour (cheap at today's going rate!) that story should have garnered at least \$3000.

But according to logic, was I wasting my time playing solitaire?

No, I convinced myself—because I was *working*. It had worked before and it could work again.

Grandpa said playing solitaire cleared the mind so you could choose what you wanted to think about instead of having something like emphysema take over your thoughts. Anticipating the next card that might show up gave a person something to look forward to instead of feeling like they were stuck.

And sure enough, while playing, it happened that there was an empty space between the king and the ace and suddenly it hit me. Jimmy was the MC in the story! I abandoned my cards on the table and hurried to my computer, forsaking my notebook and pen, because this

was a BIG idea. I set a timer and began to type. In thirty minutes the story was done, complete with two story arcs, a beginning and an ending that led to me clasp my hand to my chest, overwhelmed and overjoyed at the surprise ending, saying to myself, "My goodness!"

Once I switched the story's point of view, the story completely unfolded on the page, almost by itself. The rocket had landed in the right spot. If I would have only switched gears sooner, I wouldn't have spent all those hours writing in the wrong direction.



HOLLOW CREEK

DESIGNS



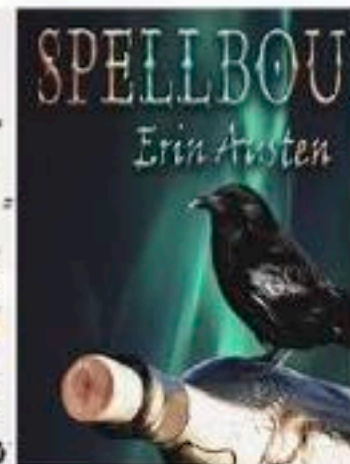
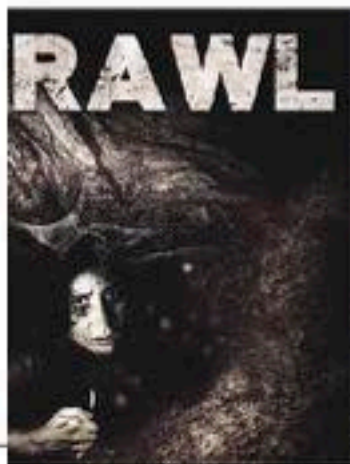
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The Inner Circle Writers' Magazine needs your feedback!



We've been out there now for over fifteen months! That's over 2,000 pages of fun, excitement and enlightenment! it's time to get reader responses in an effort to take the magazine to new heights and make it even more exciting. Please take a moment to ponder these questions and email me your answers:

grant@clarendonhousebooks.com

1. What features do you like best in the magazine?
2. What do you most look forward to reading each month?
3. What bits of the magazine do you tend to 'skip over', if any?
4. What would you like to see more of in the magazine?
5. Is there anything that you'd like to see less of?
6. On a scale of 1 to 10, how entertaining do you find the magazine — where 10 is 'stay-up-all-night-to-read' entertaining?
7. On a scale of 1 to 10, how informative do you find the magazine — where 10 is 'I-never-knew-that-before' informative?
8. On a scale of 1 to 10, how attractive do you find the magazine — where 10 is 'I-want-to-make-posters-from-these-pages' attractive?
9. Would you recommend this magazine to others? If so, what would you say, and to whom?
10. Is there anything else that you'd like to say about the magazine?

Thank you! Your contribution is invaluable! With this feedback I hope to be able to create an even better magazine!

And if you haven't subscribed yet, you can do so [here](#).



Poetry Corner

Poetry this month from Charlotte Langtree and Elizabeth Brown

I Light a Candle for You

There's a moment after loss
Where you wonder,
How do I do this?
How do I walk through this storm
And not cower from the thunder?
Will I drown in the rain?
There is always pain.
It sits, statue-still, in your heart
And gathers moss.

Time does not heal.
You simply learn
To carry the weight
Like Atlas 'neath the endless sky;
Each world in turn.
We burn in a fiery sea
Of diamond stars that flare and fade, and cease to be.
These lives, these loves, they leave a hole
All too real.

The worst; that first bleak dawn
Of moving on
Without the little pieces
Of love-shaped heartbreak.
There is a silence now they are gone,
Blanketing those in-between spaces,
Blurring their faces.
Hope lies in the newborn blooms;
No rose without thorn.
We love, and we mourn.

© Charlotte Langtree



Broken Dreams

**A shadowed half moon in the sky,
Grey clouds drift past her face,
A ghostly light is all she gives
Upon this bleak forgotten place.
This lonely place, barren and cold,
Lit up by dark moonbeams
Which play upon the shaded land
This silent land of broken dreams.
Dreams that we've woven through the years,
Are scattered all around,
Abandoned dreams of eager youth
Lie shattered on the ground.
But after night there follows day,
As soft dawn light peeps through,
Then we will mend those broken dreams
Together, me and you.**

© Elizabeth Brown





YOU AND ME.

**How will I find you when we are both dust?
How shall I call your name?
When we are merely specks of light,
An everlasting burning flame.**

**I will find you and I know
That you will search for me
Beyond the stars and through all time
For all eternity.**

© Elizabeth Brown.

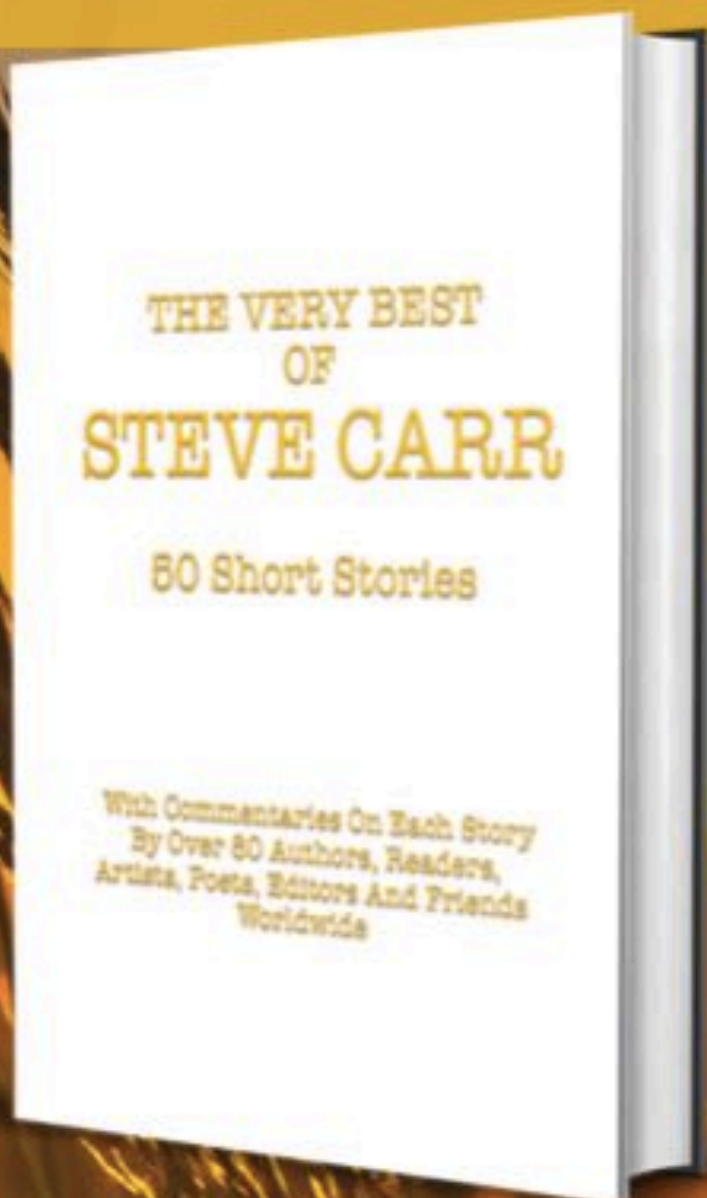
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BEST-SELLING AUTHOR



STEVE CARR

'You're in the hands of a Master of the Abyss, by which I mean an author who can apparently without effort bring into being chasms, gulfs and pits into which you will fall, sometimes almost forever; you're entering the many worlds engendered by an imagination that defies easy parameters. I can hope you're prepared — I doubt you will be.'



www.clarendonhousebooks.com/steve-carr

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Children's Anthology 2019



Tempest

The Inner Circle Writers' Group
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WHAT YOU SEE HERE IS JUST A TINY FRACTION OF WHAT IS AVAILABLE ON THE G. P. HUDSON ART STUDIO PAGE AT REDBUBBLE! VISIT TODAY AND EXPLORE A WHOLE NEW WORLD!



WHAT SUBMISSIONS ARE NEEDED?

As an ongoing monthly magazine, a great deal of space is available for anyone who wants to submit their own work, fiction and non-fiction. No charges are made for submitting artwork, articles, stories or other items.

What's needed?

Main articles covering the following:

- Top writing tips
- Advice on how to make more time for writing
- How to stop procrastinating
- Advice on dealing with self-doubt
- Detailed analyses of successful writing
- Detailed analyses of successful marketing
- Behind-the-scenes glimpses of the whole industry connected with writing and publishing
- A range of your personal experiences and successes as a writer in your daily battle to write and/or to market your work
- Some favourite reading of yours and how it has helped you
- Your best advice for new writers starting out
- A specialist topic that you have researched and which you want to share with others as an article
- Studies of particular books or genres
- ...and books or films that you would recommend, particular experiences that you have had, how you solved various problems with your work in progress, tips you have picked up on formatting or editing, or anything to do with writing...and so on, covering just about anything to do with our field.

Topics are virtually limitless, as you can see. And there is almost limitless space in the magazine - being electronic, the only restrictions in size are to do with how much I think readers will want to read each month. So you can really get creative with this.

Short stories of any genre.

- Flash fiction
- Stories of about 2,000 words in length (new stories are encouraged, though previously published stories are also considered)
- Excerpts of no more than 1,000 words, with an outline explaining the context of the excerpt. Writers of such excerpts will need to be open to feedback from readers.

Artwork

Images will need to be the highest resolution you can manage, in order not to lose impact once they reach the pages of the magazine. Anything will be considered, other than pornographic or violent content. This includes comics and comic strips.

Interviews

Have you been interviewed? Have you interviewed someone else? If you would like the resulting interview to be more widely read, please submit it, along with a professional image of the interviewee. I will be looking to interview certain authors throughout the year. The magazine presents the opportunity to explore writers' lives and work in a great deal more depth

HOW TO SUBMIT • HOW TO GET PAID • HOW TO ADVERTISE AND MORE

than is possible on social media.

If you are interested in being interviewed, don't be afraid! The questions will always be sympathetic and aimed at encouraging readers to delve into your work. If you would like to be the subject of one of these in-depth interviews, please let me know.

grant@clarendonhousebooks.com

Technical Requirements

All submissions need to be emailed as attachments to grant@clarendonhousebooks.com.

Word doc, font size 12, Times New Roman for written submissions; jpegs for images.

Information on Where to Submit Your Fiction

The magazine contains some of the latest hard information on where to submit stories, updated with what's new, what's trending, what's not and so on. It is intended to provide a 'one-stop shop' for writers looking to build a career from their work. If you have any hot links to places willing to publish fiction, please send them in.

Analysis

Articles in the magazine look closely at the writing of master authors and tell you what is working and why, in enough detail for you to learn from it. You'll get mini-classes in the methodology described in my book [How Stories Really Work](#), as well as advice based on the work of top writers.

But you can submit your own analyses of others' work too!

Tips, Advice, Hints

The magazine is loaded with snippets of advice for you, whether you are a new writer or an established author: things to do with submitting stories, developing characters, formatting manuscripts, marketing your work - you name it and you'll probably find something about it in each copy of the magazine.

You can also submit your own advice to other writers.

Quizzes, Competitions, Jokes

There are opportunities to win things, to gain recognition, and to have fun.

Please submit anything which you feel may be entertaining for readers.

News

The magazine includes the latest news from the world of writing, which of course can be just about anything - latest releases, forthcoming books and films, interesting info about authors and much more. You are encouraged to send in your own news: book signings, breakthroughs with your writing, acceptances, new publications and everything else, accompanied by images where possible. Should you start sending in submissions right away? Yes!

As it is an ongoing magazine, the deadline for submissions is ongoing - anything not accepted for one issue may well be considered for the next, and so on. I very much look forward to hearing from you.

You have something special to offer the world through your writing. Yes, you. And I consider it my task and my pleasure to provide you with as many opportunities to do so as I can.

HOW DO CONTRIBUTORS GET PAID?

At first, as the magazine gets established, it won't be able to afford to pay cash for any contributions. Building up numbers of subscribers is going to take time. But if you get your writing friends to subscribe, perhaps a few each month, especially once you see the mighty value that each will receive for an extremely low £2.00 a month, you can contribute to creating a paid avenue for your own work in the future. Because once the magazine gets to a stable 1,000 subscribers, I will offer cash rates, described below.

Until that 1,000 target is reached, what I can offer you is awards. Anyone whose submission for a major article or featured short story is accepted will receive a free copy of my [How To Write Stories That Work - and Get Them Published e-course](#), currently available from Lulu at only £117.96 + VAT (Sales tax). That's about \$155.00 + Tax in American currency. The course is based on my book [How Stories Really Work](#) and is all about the physics that makes 'hero's journeys', three-act structures, character development and all those other things work in fiction. It contains the principles that lie behind almost all other writing advice you'll ever read about. It doesn't just tell you

about getting published, it walks you through the entire process - at a fraction of the cost. It teaches you how to become an independent publisher empowered to print and distribute your own work from the moment you complete it. The course includes personal feedback from me on your work at key points. You can read more about the course [here](#).

Accepted authors will also receive a free e-copy of my book [How Stories Really Work](#). Lesser contributions will earn free professional beta reading commensurate with the size of their contribution, or a hand-drawn portrait based on a photograph of their choice. Samples of my artwork can be seen [here](#).

The magazine will expand so that it reaches more and more writers because it is packed full of value. But I want everyone who contributes to it to flourish too.

And - and here's the game - if I can get it up to 1,000 subscribers, the magazine will pay for submissions after that point.

I'll pay £100.00 for a lead story or article.

I'll pay £50.00 for a designated secondary story or article.

And I'll pay £10.00 for a huge slice of other contributions.

What's more, if I can get to 2,000 subscribers, I will double all of the above and possibly go further than that.

YOU can help get more subscribers, and thus have some kind of control over how far this goes. Talking about the magazine in other groups and with friends, inviting a few interested people, will result in numbers rapidly rising -

and the magic threshold being crossed all that much sooner! And of course you can ask me any questions, anytime, by dropping me a line at grant@clarendonhousebooks.com

HOW DOES ADVERTISING IN THE MAGAZINE WORK?

The magazine is open to advertisers of all kinds. The audience is people aged from approximately 18 to 80, men and women, internationally based, with at least one big thing in common: a total passion about fiction. Many are established writers, many more are new writers striving to get published, but all of them are readers - they are consumers of books with voracious appetites, many genres, many lengths, many styles.

In many ways, they are like you. Hopefully they will include you, once you subscribe.

Consequently, they are an audience of great interest to writers.

I'm offering space in the magazine for anyone to advertise their work - or their services, if you happen to be an editor, a designer, or offer some other services useful to writers.

Because it is an electronic magazine, it's possible to include links that lead readers directly to websites, blogs, book selling points and so forth.

Ads are able to be in colour.

As part of the magazine's launch, advertising space is available at special introductory rates as follows:

1/8 page (classified ad) = £5.00

1/4 page = £10.00

1/2 page = £25.00

Full page = £50.00

Inside Front Cover = £100

Inside Back Cover & Back Cover options = £75.00

That's all for one issue. If you want to take advantage of block bookings for a year's ad space, prices fall considerably further:

12 issues X 1/8 page (classified ad) = £30.00

12 issues X 1/4 page = £60.00

12 issues X 1/2 page = £150.00

12 issues X Full page = £300.00

12 issues X Inside Front Cover = £600

12 issues X Inside Back Cover & Back Cover options = £450.00.

I can only offer these rates because I feel that this is a 'hot audience' for your merchandise.

As any of you who have read my marketing materials will know, block advertising is like 'shouting from the rooftops' unless your audience is already at least 'warm' - and in this magazine's public, we have a gathering of people already interested to some degree in what you have to offer.

All advertising copy will be subject to editing review. I will even help with suggestions of how to improve your copy, where needed.

How do you do this?

Send your ad copy and images to grant@clarendonhousebooks.com

Payments will be required by PayPal to fulfil the arrangements. I'll give you the correct PayPal address once you have expressed an interest in advertising. Remember, the idea is to create the world's most exciting writers' magazine. Be part of it.

CLARENDON HOUSE
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ANTHOLOGIES 2019

*'...wisdom and wit, elegance and
exquisiteness, power and passion...'*



Poetica:
The Inner Circle Writers'
Group
Poetry Anthology 2019

ARTICLE by C. L. STEELE

C. L. Steele, an internationally published speculative fiction author enjoys creating new and future worlds. In addition to numerous publications, Steele has been a contributor to three literary journals/magazines and finished fifth in the Great Clarendon House Writing Challenge 2019. Poetry continues to call, earning a few published pieces and a daily practice Facebook page. New this year is a blog for both fiction and non-fiction writing. And a proud new journey of self-publishing as founder of Say It Publishing. C. L. Steele writes many hours a day as the cats, Magic and Eclipse, watch, play, and distract.



Shall We Dance?

The comment I would always receive from editors and betas was to smooth out my writing. Everything else was fine or fixable. But what did “smooth out my writing” mean? It seemed vague to me as a new writer. Today, as I read new writers' work to help them improve, I see exactly what I was missing then. The rhythm. That was the secret I was missing in my early writing.

Many new writers are missing flow, which is created through rhythm.

But how does one get that smooth flow and rhythm possessed by the legendary writers? Let's first consider a powerful source of flow and rhythm. Music. Even instrumental music, creates a feeling, a mood. Dancers find that mood through the rhythm of the music. They interpret

their feel for the music's mood as a form of visual art—dance. We've all experienced the mood provoking power music can create and how inspiring dance can be in its interpretation of the music. Readers are the dancers of the writer's words. Readers dance to the music we as writers create using the cadence of our sentences.



Writers, create a rhythm, and create a mood through words that whisper to the reader a style or mood as they read. The words flow smoothly like skaters on ice allowing the reader's eyes and minds to see without even realizing they are reading. They are absorbed in the rhythm of the words. And moreover, that rhythm can change and become moody, or happy, or stutter to a shaky halt. That is how an author conducts each line, each paragraph enticing each word to portray a specific message, through feel, and tone. Voice, tone, and rhythm create a smoothness to your writing.

Many tricks can help, but let's experience writing flow and rhythm first.

Perhaps the classic for rhythm is the children's writer Dr. Suess. I've bolded words so you can better see the rhythm, but it is unmistakable.

*"I'm Yertle the **Turtle!**
Oh, **Marvelous me!**
For I am the **ruler**
Of **all** that I see!"*

Hear the rhythm? Now let's try *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac:

"I first met Dean not long after my wife and I split up. I had just gotten over a serious illness

that I won't bother to talk about, except that it had something to with the miserably weary split-up and my feeling that everything was dead. With the coming of Dean Moriarty began the part of my life you could call my life on the road."

See how Kerouac creates a 'Helter Skelter' song as compared to the nursery rhyme rhythm of Dr. Suess? Different—but the fast flow fits the scattered thinking necessary for the character. (Yes, he breaks a lot of rules. Never believe too strongly in the rules. Know them, then break them.)



*'You feel like you
are hearing the
ocean.'*

Let's try a few more from the greats so we can get a feel for what flow and rhythm do for our writing. This is J.K. Rowling and Harry Potter:

"Mr and Mrs Dursley, of number four, Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much. They were the last people you'd expect to be involved in anything strange or mysterious, because they just didn't hold with such nonsense."

Definitely prudish, isn't it? All those commas and prepositional phrases add to the snooty rhythm and create this feeling, this tone or mood. She could have just said, Harry's foster parents lived at four Privet Drive and didn't believe in magic. However, using rhythm and carefully chosen words tell us far more than the words say. Right?

Rhythm creates a mood. You can rush or slow or mix it up to change a mood. Here is *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr. He is talking

about a place that ebbs and flows, and so his writing does too. Brilliant. You feel like you are hearing the ocean.

"When she opens the bedroom window, the noise of the airplanes becomes louder. Otherwise, the night is dreadfully silent: no engines, no voices, no clatter. No sirens. No footfalls on the cobbles. Not even gulls. Just a high tide, one block away and six stories below, lapping at the base of the city walls."

'Pick up your favorite book and type a passage. Just a page or two. Feel the rhythm the words flow back into your fingers and mind.'



Hear the ocean waves rise with no engines, no voices, no clatter. Then stop with No sirens. Then retreat with No footfalls on the cobbles. Not even the gulls. Oh, to write this well.

Writing well means incorporating rhythm and using that to create a mood. But how do we do what the greats have done? Well, to reference an old joke... we practice. Reading prized books through your

author's eyes will teach you a lot. But some have suggested taking it further by creating some muscle memory. Stuck and unable to write? Pick up your favorite book and type a passage. Just a page or two. Feel the rhythm the words flow back into your fingers and mind. Don't laugh. This is how athletes learn. They watch videos and mimic techniques. Just typing the quotes above taught me a few things about

my writing. Internalize rhythm through reading, and yes, through mimicking the technique.

However, you will need to do more than just internalize good writing. Next month, we will go into detail regarding transitioning for better flow throughout the work. Today, let me leave you with a simple tip to practice that will make all your sentences stronger.

Keep the reader engaged



by correctly packing each sentence. Balance your sentences. Dancers and musicians understand the importance of the intro, the chorus, and the bridge. They know the pattern. For writers, each sentence builds into a paragraph, then a scene, a chapter, and finally a novel. All have a pattern and it starts with a sentence. The pattern to the basic sentence is placing your most important words upfront and then again at the end. Let the middle hold the uninteresting stuff.

Here is an example: To ensure your personal safety during removal of the shipping strap please make sure the treadmill is positioned flat on

the ground. Upfront is something important, (ensure personal safety) and at the end something important (positioned flat on the ground). The middle (during removal of the shipping strap...) is of less importance. A more poetic sentence does the same function.

Here is an example: Each shovel stabbed the red earth. Not one shovel, but each shovel is important. Did what? Stabbed. And then more important information red earth (not rich black soil or muck or sea salt, right?) Feel the rhythm? Try changing the sentence around. Which would you choose—They stabbed the red earth with the shovels or

Each shovel stabbed the red earth. Subject, strong verb, then direct object is the basic beat.

Having the basic beat first allows us to make more impact when the pattern changes. Think about the verse versus the chorus or the change-up versus the repeated pattern. We can mix up that beat with variety in our sentences to create a mood or tone. Read aloud and keyboard other writers' words to improve your rhythm and smooth out your writing. Balanced sentences create the standard rhythm. Play with the mood by changing the standard beat. Fingers on home row? Shall we dance?

The Tragedy of
MACBETH

by William Shakespeare

Adapted by Grant P Hudson

Part 18

MACBETH, WHO HAS
BECOME KING
THROUGH THE
BRUTAL
ASSASSINATION OF
OTHERS, VISITS THE
WEIRD SISTERS WHO
FORETOLD IT ALL...
THEY SHOW HIM
SINISTER VISIONS,
THE LAST THE
WORST OF ALL...



Show his eyes, and grieve his heart;
Come like shadows, so depart!

EIGHT KINGS APPEAR, THE LAST WITH A GLASS IN HIS HAND; BANQUO'S GHOST FOLLOWS.

Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo: down!

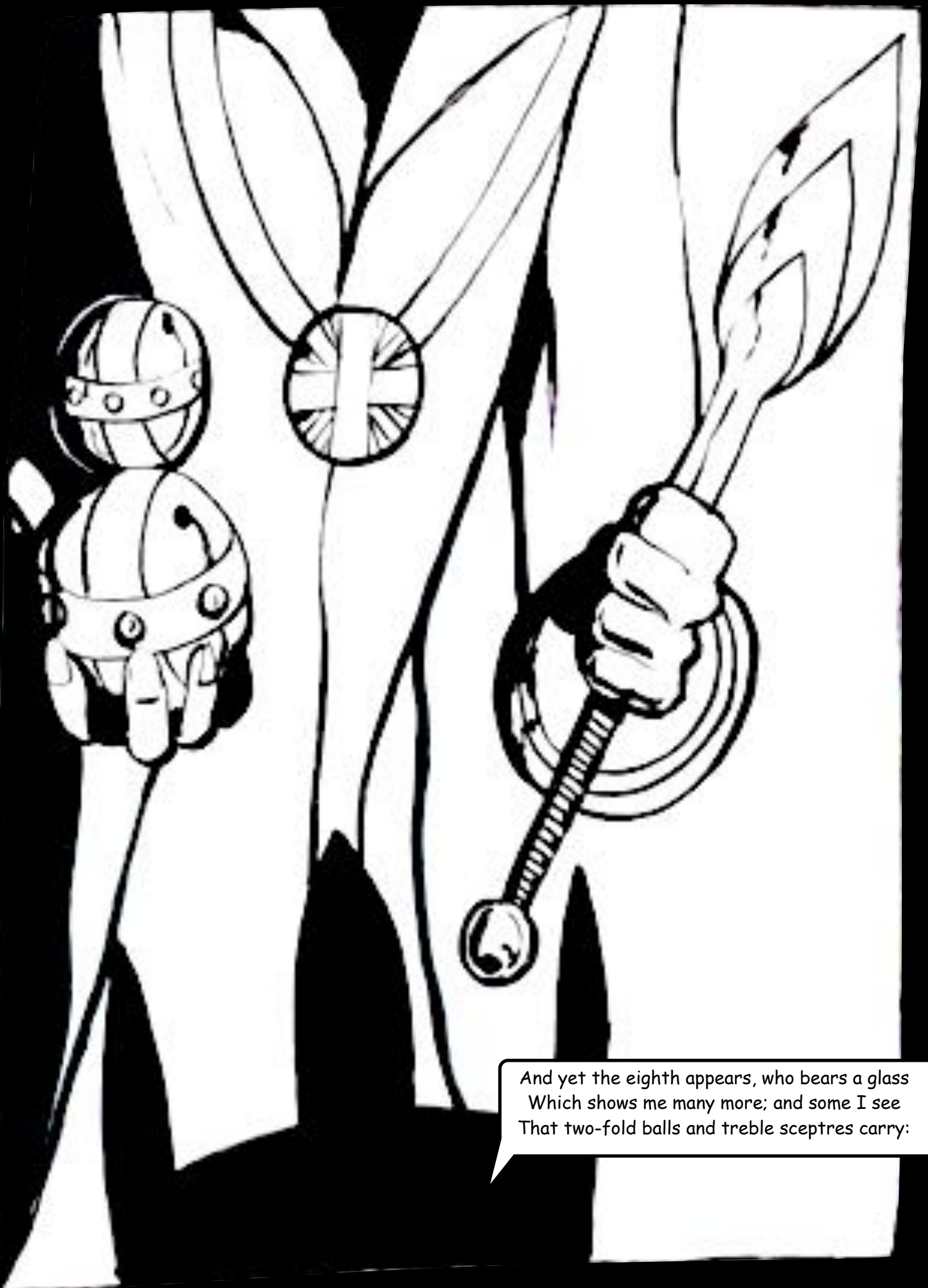


Thy crown does sear mine eye-balls. And thy hair, Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first, A third is like the former.


Filthy hags! Why do you show me this?

A fourth! Start, eyes! What, will the line stretch out to the crack of doom? Another yet! A seventh! I'll see no more:






And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass
Which shows me many more; and some I see
That two-fold balls and treble sceptres carry:



A Horrible sight! Now I see 'tis true;
For the blood-bolter'd Banquo smiles upon me,
And points at them for his.



What, is this so?

Ay, sir, all this is so: but why
Stands Macbeth thus amazedly?
Come, sisters, cheer we up his sprites,
And show the best of our delights:
I'll charm the air to give a sound,
While you perform your antic round,
That this great king may kindly say
Our duties did his welcome pay.



WITCHES VANISH.

Where are they? *Gone?* Let
this pernicious hour
Stand aye accursed in the
calendar!
Come in, without there!

ENTER LENNOX.

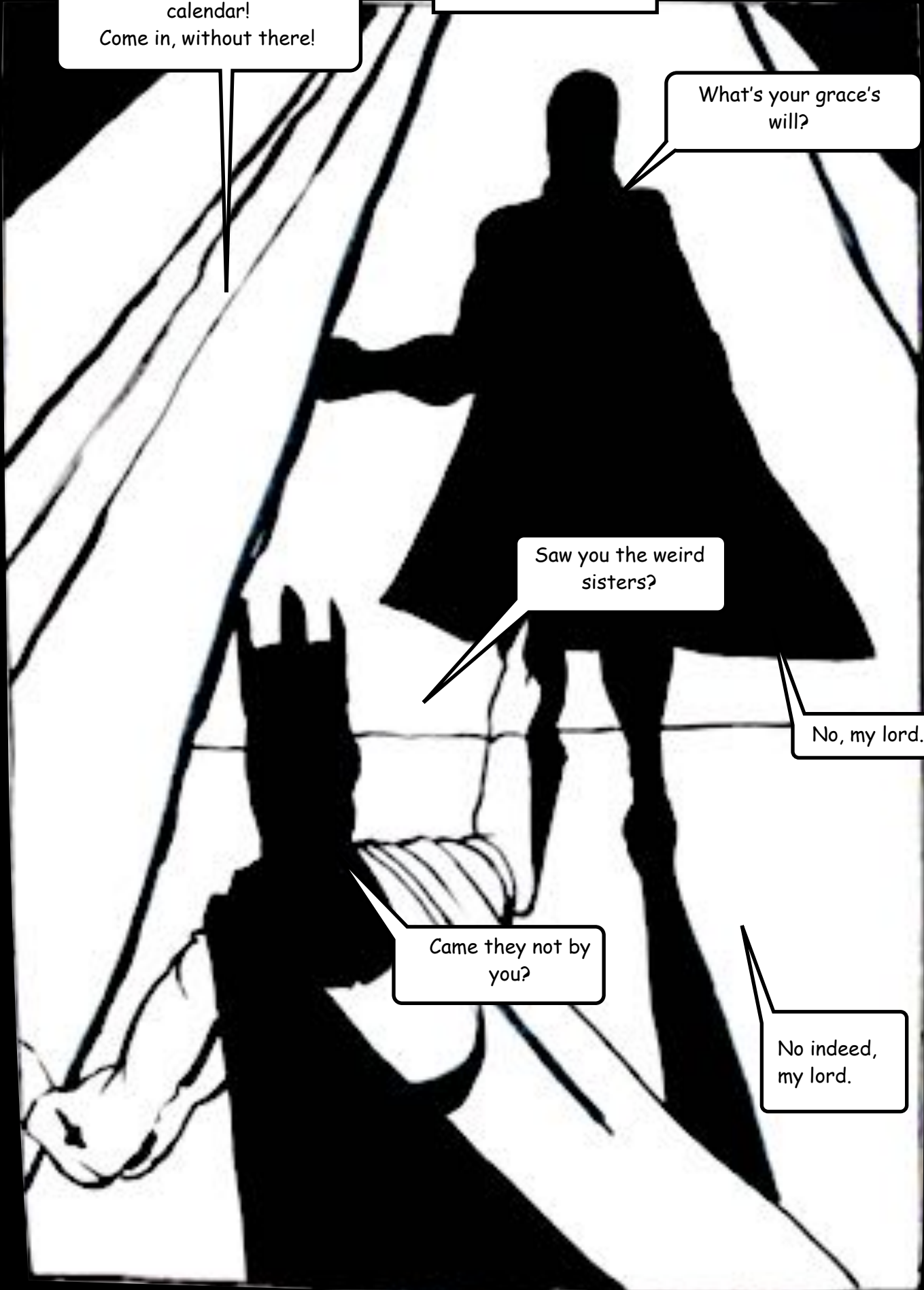
What's your grace's
will?


Saw you the weird
sisters?

No, my lord.

Came they not by
you?


No indeed,
my lord.





Infected be the air whereon they ride,
And damned all those that trust them!

I did hear
The galloping of horse: who
was 't came by?



'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you word
Macduff is fled to England.

Fled to England!

Ay, my good lord.



Time, thou anticipatest my dread exploits:
The flighty purpose never is o'ertook
Unless the deed go with it.

From this moment
The very firstlings of my heart shall be
The firstlings of my hand.

And even now,
To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done:
The castle of Macduff I will surprise;
Seize upon Fife; give to the edge o' the sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
That trace him in his line.

No boasting like a fool;
This deed I'll do before this purpose cool:
But no more sights! -Where are these gentlemen?
Come, bring me where they are.

WATCH OUT, MACDUFFS! SUBSCRIBE NOW SO THAT YOU
DON'T MISS THE NEXT BLOODTHIRSTY EPISODE!

CLARENDON HOUSE AUTHOR



CARMEN BACA

Viajes con Fantasma

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CARMEN BACA



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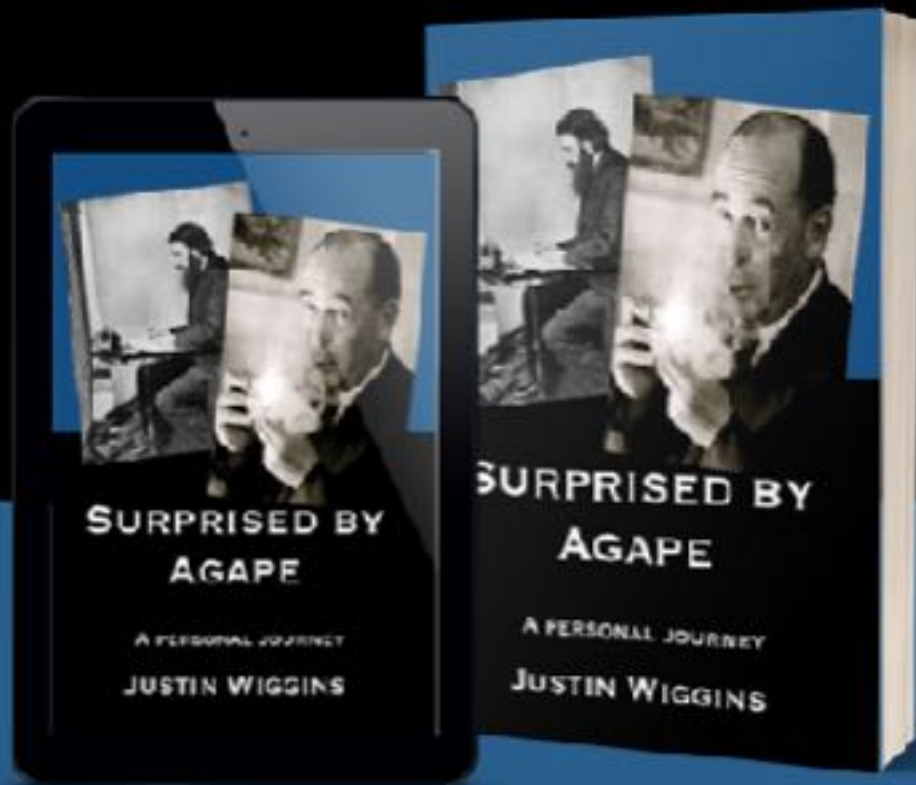


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REVIEW by G. P. HUDSON

A Masterful Gem of a Story



Featuring an article which previously appeared in the [Clarendon House blog](#) reviewing the story 'Nun or Not?' by **Gabriella Balcom**.

In the course of my career as a publisher I have to read thousands of short stories, some of which I then select to publish in my monthly magazine or in Clarendon House anthologies because I have determined that there is something worthy about them, something which has earned them a chance to find more readers.

Occasionally, I come across a story which I consider to be a true work of art, by which I mean a piece of fiction which can be read again and again with pleasure, each time resonating for the reader in a slightly new way. These pieces

are quite rare, and are to be treasured. And though it could be folly to attempt to do so, it might be worthwhile to try to 'deconstruct' one of them to see if we can learn exactly what it is about such an artefact that works so well. Real art can be examined in this way without fear that unearthing its 'secrets' will dispel its magic, because a real artwork has tapped into something larger than itself and echoes with voices and musics perhaps far beyond those intended by the author.

Such a piece is 'Nun or Not?' by Gabriella Balcom. It was first submitted to me for inclusion in the Clarendon House anthology

Rapture, but I was so impressed by it that I not only included it there but republished it a few months later in *Gold: The Best of Clarendon House Anthologies 2017/18*. It appears again now in Gabriella's new collection *On the Wings of Ideas*.

Why do I think it's so good? I'll try to break it down as it happens to a reader picking up the story for the first time. But in so doing, I have to point out that the only real way to appreciate it is to read it and re-read it — inevitably in such a short discourse about it, I'm going to miss many of its delights.

Setting

The brief glossary at the beginning of the story sets the scene. We know that we are in a foreign land, Slovenia, but also sense that the author is in command of her material as she introduces us to her chief characters, Marijeta, her son Jakob and later Sister Aloizija. Slovenia is ever-present in the tale: we get brief glimpses of a war-torn history, and a rural geography, populated with ancient churches and rustic villages — but never for a moment do we feel that this landscape has been artificially ‘researched’: it is totally convincing. The reader can almost smell the stony, musty atmosphere of the churches, the faint scent of incense from rituals, the farmyard aromas in the villages. And all this is just a backdrop for the drama.

Characters

Characters form the real strength of this tale. In just a few words, a vibrant picture is painted of the dedicated and loving Marijeta and her hard, aloof but deeply loving son Jakob. Tiny observations of human behaviour convict us immediately that this is going to be a tale worth reading:

"My time is limited, so I must speak while I can." Seeing him tighten his lips and shake his head, she knew he rejected the idea of her dying. "From the time I carried you inside me, I knew a great destiny awaited you."

*"I know. You've told me before."
Dipping a cloth in a basin of cool water, he wrung out the excess and gently wiped her sweaty forehead.*

Jakob is one of the most interesting characters I've come across in short fiction: he is at once cold and stern, made harsh and strong by a lifetime of hardship and struggle, a man to be feared and respected; he is honourable and dedicated without question; but he is also intensely vulnerable and naive.

Photographs of the author's ancestors on whom the story's main characters are based.





Jakob relaxed his rigid stance and knelt at his mother's bedside, taking her trembling hands in his. Wrinkled and spotted with age, her veins stood out from years of labor. She'd deteriorated and regained her strength repeatedly, but not this time. He studied her deeply-lined face. Considered the most beautiful woman in Trnávka once, she'd aged beyond her sixty-four years but remained beautiful to him. She was the only true love he'd ever known. She'd never let him down. Always been proud. He could lose her any moment, so how could he deny her anything?

Though the reader only discovers a little way into the tale that he has had to promise his dying mother that he will find a wife, by that point there is never any doubt that he will hold to that oath. By that point also, though, readers have become sympathetic to this icy soldier with a heart of gold.

It's hard to break down how his character is developed because almost every sentence in the story is a little gem: as readers, we are privileged to glimpse Jakob's sensitive and compassionate inner self by the omniscient author, when all the outer world sees is the almost frighteningly severe outer warrior:

He had no desire to be here, but a promise was a promise, and he'd never break one to Mamica. He felt as hollow now as when he'd watched her casket being lowered into the cold ground. Remembering she'd always felt chilled in winter, he'd refused to let her casket be closed until he'd wrapped her favorite shawl around her shoulders. She'd knitted both it and the handkerchief in his pocket.

We are then told of his efficiency in addressing matters after his mother dies, and get glimpses of his past, sketching his nature to be one of almost superhuman achievements — multi-lingual, a war hero, a qualified doctor of mathematics and business, and acquainted with the Imperial court:

Waiting now for his presence to be acknowledged, Jakob read the Ursuline Creed from a wall plaque. "Every call from God ... an invitation to set foot on a journey ... last a lifetime..." Another script addressed the length of time involved in becoming a nun — two years for the postulancy, two for the novitiate, and five for the temporary vows.

He impatiently tapped his left foot and counted in Slovene, "Ena, dva, tri, stiri..." in French, "Un,

deux, trois, quatre..." He switched to German. "Eins, zwei, drei, vier..." then Italian, "Uno, due, tre, quattro —."

Footsteps sounded. A nun approached in the traditional black habit worn by those who'd taken their final vows, wimple tight around her face, and hooded veil falling down her shoulders. "Mr. Jakob Kovac?"

"Doctor." He'd double-majored in mathematics and business.

"I'm sorry, Dr. Kovac. Mother Superior is ready, if you'll follow me —"

"Of course." He regretted his brittle tone, but wouldn't have come if he could have avoided it.

Mother Superior Mary Magdalena stood for her visitor. A military hero deserved respect. A good man did as well, and he was both. He managed a bank in Maribor and was rumored to be on

a first-name basis with Emperor Franz Joseph.

His vulnerability becomes especially pertinent when he fails to notice the presence of someone else in the room during his first interview with the Mother Superior, a someone who turns out to be particularly significant. Sister Aloizija is introduced to us as an equally formidable figure — she can hold her own with him, berate him without discomfort, and her departure from the room peculiarly irks him. Attentive readers, knowing this to be a romance tale, will detect the beginnings of a central relationship here, but nothing is obvious or plainly told: the obstacles to an easy connection are daunting:



Mother Superior volunteered, "Sister Aloizija knew what she wanted to do from a young age and came here after finishing school at fifteen. I urged her to be sure she wanted to devote the rest of her life to God, so she spent three years in college before returning. She excelled at everything."

Though eminently qualified in many areas of life it becomes quickly apparent that Jakob is completely out of his depth in choosing a wife. Part of the charm of the tale is the sequence of interviews he has with various candidates, each delicately painted as unsuitable, each subtly reaffirming Jakob's prejudices and dislike of having to choose, but each also navigating him towards the unspoken choice, Aloizija, who is keeping (very accurate) notes as the interviews proceed. Aloizija is strong, witty, precise and self-confident, but her traits are hinted at through dialogue and small indications:

Sister Aloizija's face lit up as though with an inward fire. Jakob had thought she was lovely unsmiling, but saw he'd been wrong. She was beautiful. Strangely, the jest had eased his tension and unlocked a tightly-secured area inside him. He said, "I'm a bit thirsty after all."

"Sister Aloizija," Mother Superior directed, "would you get Dr. Kovac a cup?"

"Jakob," he corrected. As the younger woman left, he thought her fluid movements similar to those of someone who'd studied self-defense. No doubt that was from studying dance and deportment. Curious about someone with her looks choosing to become a nun, he asked, "She doesn't seek marriage?"

As things progress, Jakob discovers that Aloizija is also a fighter, scarred from brutal encounters in war — his mounting respect and admiration for her is never directly voiced but hinted at:

Watching her walk away, he still felt the heat of her hand and her heartbeat. She was small, but that slender body held great strength.



having Aloizija accompany Jakob on his mission to sort out accounting discrepancies in one of his offices in the country. We get to see the characters in motion, and further depths are revealed:

A shuffling sound came from their right, where a short, beady-eyed man stood in the doorway. Mirko Bonic seethed, despite voicing a polite greeting. That woman received a higher raise in one day than he'd gotten in the past two years combined.

An hour later, while Dr. Kovac was in a meeting, Mirko neared the woman copying entries from one ledger to another.

He tried to spill water on them and fumed when she swiftly whisked the books away. Droplets only hit the desk.

Resenting her more because she'd thwarted him, he tossed ribald comments to another clerk. "I've always wondered what nuns had under their skirts." Ignoring the other man's efforts to shush him, he raised his voice.

Jakob heard as he exited his office. Seeing Aloizija's pale face, he felt steam rising.

"Enough! In my office now!"

Mirko blanched and obeyed.

Towering over the man, Jakob roared. Mirko cringed. When Jakob realized Aloizija had followed them, horror filled him, and he tried to lower his voice. "I apologize, Sister Aloizija." Was she disgusted with him now?

The sign of a master author is when action plays out around theme, not as some unconnected side-piece. Jakob's dealings with Mirko, including his final physical ejection of him from the office, are not written simply for entertainment purposes, but directly relate to

the central thread of the relationship between the two lead characters:

Jakob grabbed Mirko by his back of his jacket and waist band, and threw him out the front door. As Mirko gaped, the other employees applauded. He fled when Jakob started toward him. Still contemplating violence, Jakob spoke to Aloizija grimly. "That I won't apologize for."

"No need."

He didn't expect her grin.

Having displayed his strength, Jakob is now confronted about his weakness. Aloizija observes Jakob getting dizzy after working too long and too hard without refreshment. The interplay between them shows a growing maturity in their relationship:

Aloizija was at his side immediately. "Sit down."

"I'm fine."

"You're anything but fine."

"I have too much to do!" he snapped.

"Growl at me again, and I'll bite you." But she smiled.

Snickering despite himself, Jakob sat.

"My head hurts."

"No wonder. You're living on coffee, not eating."

"I don't have —"

"Pfft! I'm tired of hearing you say don't have time. Are you in a hurry to join your mother?"

Furious, he stood but swayed and sat again.

When he submits to her guidance and eats, things are taken subtly further:

"My head still aches but it's better."

"Aches? Here?" Touching his temples with her fingertips, Aloizija massaged lightly.

Structure

Given that much of the story consists of the intense and part-comic interviews that Jakob must endure with the presented prospects for his wife, all beautifully understated and delicately managed, the reader's main attention is understandably focused on one room and the dialogue and nuances that occur within it — but with masterful aplomb, Balcom then introduces action,



Aloizija is going ahead with her ceremony to become a full nun and bursts into the church, disrupting everything and effectively kidnapping her in front of her family. But the power and strength of the tale are such that by this time the reader finds this not only appropriate but desperately required if these two characters are to find happiness and if the threads of the tale are to be woven together adequately. Jakob's solitary defiance melts into a deeply felt passion and the reader is left awash with a mixture of emotions, not only satisfaction that the romance which has been slowly brooding and building through the tale will be validated — that these two characters who have had to deal with so much harshness and brutality in their lives, leaving them aching and hollow, will now find requited love — but also with a sense of justice and rightness: a beautifully crafted masterpiece of a story has come to its proper and measured end.

I cannot recommend this tale more highly: setting, character and structure work like a piece of music to produce a mini-symphony that reverberates with beauty with each reading.

Get a copy of Gabriella Balcom's new collection *On the Wings of Ideas*, [here](#).

The pain subsided. Warmth spread outward from her fingers. When she removed them, he reached for her hands. She retreated but he stood swiftly, took her arm, and turned her around to face him. Gazing down into her blue-grey eyes — the blue darkening — he felt a new dizziness. He moved closer, careful to allow her space, and saw her cheeks flush. Her eyes widened, lush lips parting. Jakob lowered his mouth to hers and thought he smelled roses.

Action then builds rapidly to a climax: Jakob finds that

CLARENDON HOUSE AUTHOR

GABRIELLA BALCOM

'Some authors have a range so wide and a scope so varied that it's difficult to 'pin them down' in a few words. Best-selling author Gabriella Balcom can write science fiction, fantasy, children's literature, literary fiction, poetry, horror, humour, romance and more – and you'll find all of the above in this eclectic collection of tales...'



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Hunting Down That Elusive

ENDING To Your Story



If you can't find an ending to your WIP, there is only ever one reason for it: something hasn't worked earlier on.

I've reached the end of novels, novellas and short stories in a variety of different ways:

1. I knew the ending first and have been leading up to it confidently from the beginning.

2. I had a vague idea of what should happen but had to work on it once I got there.

3. I knew what was supposed to happen but

couldn't figure out how to get there.

4. I had no idea where the story was going.

5. I had no idea how to end once I ran out of story.

Every story is different. No one way of writing is better than another. For all my novels, I plan my endings to avoid waffling on endlessly. I want to lead the reader confidently towards an ending that will either surprise them, please them, or leave them thoughtful (better still —

wanting to read more if it's a series). This is something that works for me. I like to know where I'm going. I want to know what's going to happen to my characters. This way I can work on nuances and hints and ironies while I write. Sometimes the ending can go flat when I get there, having held it in my head for too long but a bit of rewriting, rethinking and reworking soon rekindles the original fire.

My short story writing is more experimental so I'm ready to expect the unexpected. There can also be something quite delightful about not knowing the ending to a story. It's like embarking on an adventure and discovering things as you go along. Not knowing your ending doesn't mean you're going to get stuck. In a wild creative urge (and with your muse on top form), a brilliant ending can occur to you just when you need it.

While I'm definitely NOT going to advocate that you MUST know your ending before you start, there are going to be times when you just can't find an ending — even if you planned one! It's awful if a planned ending doesn't work but it's worse if

you just can't think of a way to end a piece. I don't suffer from writer's block but I come close to it when I hit a total blank at what I realise must be the end of the story. How do you even know if you've reached the end of the story? Has the plot run out? Are all the characters dead?! Or are you just sick of it?

Whatever the problem, my Big Writing Tip should work. Before I get to it, let me take you through some writing experiences I've had:

Knowing the ending

All my novels were carefully constructed. I didn't necessarily know them scene-by-scene and interesting things often occurred along the way, with some characters

proving more alive than others, but I knew where I was going. My Fleet Quintet novels were immensely complex with a plot that spanned hundreds of years (actually millions!) and some wild leaps in time. I carried the plot of five novels around in my head for years and it was a great relief when I finally finished the fourth one. The fifth novel in the Quintet is yet to be written but I have all the notes: I know exactly what it is going to happen because I know exactly where all the plot holes are that need to be filled, the dangling threads that need to be tied up, the mysteries yet to be solved. This is all planned!





Finding the ending years later

This has happened to me several times. My short story, *The Evolving*, which I wrote in my early twenties, was rewritten decades later with an altered ending that actually made sense. Another short story, *Walked* (which had a different title), was written in the late nineties but the ending was deeply unsatisfactory. I knew the MC had to get to the desert in a plane, but what did she find there? Over ten years later, the story became part of *The Exodus Sequence* and the ending resolved perfectly. It

was as if the story had to wait for the right ending to come along! Another *Exodus Sequence* story, *Crashed*, had a very weak ending that I couldn't resolve. By applying my *Big Writing Tip*, I finally found the perfect ending years later. But I had to really work for it!

Not knowing the ending

My short story, *Diamonds on the Moon*, is a relatively unstructured piece which I didn't plan at all. I started with a dragon waking up on the moon, trapped in a crater, wondering what his purpose in

life was. I had NO idea where this was going. I certainly hadn't planned for Neil Armstrong to turn up in it! I really just wanted to write about beauty and joy and friendship and I think I succeeded with that. The final sentences of the story capture a theme that is prevalent throughout my writing (which means the ending worked for me, though I can't be sure it works for anyone else!) I planned nothing, yet the story is definitely finished and finished on a high note too, despite the sadness.

No ending at all

A recently completed Exodus Sequence story (which will appear in a collection of short stories as well as the second Exodus volume — eventually) began very strongly indeed. With characters that leapt off the page and feeling very alive, it was great fun to write. But once they reached their goal, knocking on the front door of a forest cabin they were trying to find and conversing with the inhabitant within – what then? I had no idea! Where was the story going? What were they trying to do? Why was this person in a cabin important? I couldn't answer any of these questions and was clueless as to how I was going to end the story. I continued on boldly until finally I ran out of steam.

I'd rather hoped something would occur to me before I reached the ending, but it didn't. So I abandoned it for a while, then applied my Tip, and ended up with something more brilliant than I could ever have hoped for. It moved the whole Exodus Sequence forward, rather than reaching the dead end of plot stagnation which is where I'd left it.

Having an ending come to me out of the blue

This is utterly brilliant when it happens. It's what you dream of as a writer. It's creation at its most excellent. It also hardly ever happens. I wrote Experienced pretty much "off the cuff" as it were. There was no planning. I launched into it wildly, then had to stop and restart the

whole thing because I needed to change it into first-person-weird. If you read it, you'll know what I mean by "weird" because it's a very dense story and takes a while for the confusing claustrophobic drug comedown to wear off and the plot to emerge. The reader is basically walking in the MCs exactly footsteps — there's no space from him. You're so far inside his head that you couldn't escape if you wanted to. For me, the revelation came during the fight at the end. I knew what the MC had to do during the fight. I just didn't expect him to end up on real-world Io (that weeny volcanic moon that spins around Jupiter), nor did I expect that very last scene. It absolutely tears me apart!



BIG WRITING TIP

If you can't find an ending to your WIP, there is only ever one reason for it: something hasn't worked earlier on.

Oh, wait, didn't I already say this at the beginning of this article? Well, yes. Because my Big Writing Tip isn't any more complicated than that. It's not some big secret thing. It has nothing to do with inspiration, creative ability or your muse. I'm quite sure there are a zillion other articles out there with advice. Perhaps I'm saying exactly the same thing. Perhaps I've come up with something genius. Honestly, this is just what I've done and it's worked for me. Hopefully it'll work for you.

If you're stuck and in despair, the first thing you need to do is walk away from the story for a bit. It doesn't matter how long. If you can't stand the story anymore, then make it quite a long bit. You may just need a cup of tea or you may need to abandon it for years. But if you don't want to do the latter, try this:

1. Read the story from the beginning and make notes. It doesn't matter where or how: I like using plain text documents. But I've also been known to handwrite notes in vast volumes.





2. Ask painful questions while you read: Does the plot make sense? Do you know your characters well? Do they remain “in-character” as it were? Do you know what they want? Do you even LIKE the story and where it’s going? Is there an earlier scene that suggests a way out for the character and an ending to the story?

3. If you’ve had ideas while writing of earlier events that need changing, then change them now. Sometimes if you spot a plot flaw, you’re not going to be able to think clearly until that flaw is cleared up.

4. During this particular edit (it may be the first time the story is edited), you will almost certainly find things that don’t work. Plot flaws, character errors, missing elements, maybe even a lack of structure. You may find your tense is wrong or it should be in a different voice (first person rather than third). You may even find the style is all wrong for the story and that it needs to be hard ass noir rather than wishy-washy fantasy (that would be quite an extreme change, but you get the idea!)

5. By now you’ve done a huge edit on your story, you’ve rewritten it, you’ve changed it, you’ve found a new character or deleted one, your MC has expanded a bit and you know them inside out, you know their goals and dreams and past mistakes: you KNOW your story. Has an ending miraculously suggested itself to you yet? If it hasn’t, then there is still something missing from the story — and it’s not the ending that’s missing, it’s something earlier! Find it and add it and connect it to the end. There’s your story.

1. I'm currently working on a new short story for the Exodus Sequence about an MC from a previous short story, Woken. His name also crops up in various other stories, so I thought I knew him quite well. In this new story, he's found dead on a beach in ancient Greece by a hermit — except that he isn't dead and he has a huge story to tell. The purpose of this story is to tell the truth about Atlantis (at least, the truth according to my Exodus Sequence universe). I launched in with no plot, no particular idea of which characters were going to do what. I had some scenes in my head that I wanted to have play out. And I knew that at the end, the hermit leaves his tiny Greek island and goes off to find some big name, like, I don't know, how about Plato, to tell his story to, which is how Plato found the idea for his Atlantis. That ending is all well and good, but what about the ending of the story that the MC relates? That is the ending that has eluded me completely.

I already know there are some huge problems with the structure of the story. It doesn't have one! It lurches about with info dumps and static conversations between characters. I hate it! Worse still, I don't have all my facts straight. The Exodus Sequence is a huge story with many characters, spanning millions of years. Most of the stories are concentrated in the present or future. Shattered takes place at the time of the Neanderthals and Woken in Arthurian times. But this one, while set in the hermit's time of ancient Greece at the time of Plato, also has a huge chunk set long, long, long ago, when there weren't supposed to be any people on this planet at all. It's the heart of my Atlantis story, the soul of the Exodus Sequence. The "thing" that happens here affects everyone forever more.





No pressure in getting it right, then!

What I've been doing is rereading ALL the stories in the Exodus Sequence and making historical notes. I started this a few years ago and forgot about it. Basically, I'm working on canon. If the story has already been published, which most of them are, then I can't change the history. And there is a lot of it! It's going to be very useful indeed to have all the "history" in one place with casual references to past events recorded in a linear fashion (to make my life easier.)

This is excessive when it comes to doing homework in order to find an ending to a story that has stalled, but it shows you how far I'll go to get it right. Hopefully, your story is just a one-off and just requires some serious editing. By working on the Exodus universe history, or canon, I've already got a thousand ideas of how to fix up the story. Better still, I've found the ending! I realised my MC can't possibly know who traps him. THAT was the plot flaw. It also means that in a future story, I can have a big revelation when he finds out who it is, as it doesn't work here. No writing is ever wasted!



You can find out more about Susannah J. Bell's books [here](#).



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The Wonderful World of **MARKETING**

EFFECTIVE MESSAGING

To recap slightly: modern marketing tells you to stand in a packed room and toss out your message like tennis balls into the crowd in the hope that some people will catch a ball and pay attention, maybe even buying what you have to offer. You've been on the receiving end of this many times — the result is usually that the tennis balls get ignored, and, if the person persists in tossing them, avoided or blocked. Only occasionally does a tennis ball catch your eye enough for you to pay some attention to it; even more rarely do you then move into action because of what you have seen.

Realistic marketing, instead of randomly projecting messages and then hoping for responses, first isolates the broad group that your message will appeal to. It depends on you knowing very much what your message is, and how to say it well; and it depends upon you somehow selecting out that interested sub-group from the vast crowd.

Realistic marketing — or organic marketing, to give it another name — is often counter-intuitive. Whereas conventional marketing goes for numbers, and dazzles with the vast potentials of sites like Google, Amazon or Facebook, organic marketing tells you to 'think small': what you want to go for are the people who are going to be most interested in what you have to offer, rather than the most people. It's strange to think of it like this, perhaps, but as you isolate who your potential fans and super-fans are, the interest level goes up as the numbers go down. In an extreme imaginary case, you might have only one 'hyper-fan' in the whole world: this person would adore everything you do and say and would buy even your shopping list. But it's more likely that your work will attract a small number of very interested people. Whether or not you can build a viable writing career will depend upon the size of that small group, rather than being able to get a message to billions of people who couldn't care less. If you can find 10,000 people who ardently admire your stories, you have it made — as long as you can generate

Broad, mildly interested group

Smaller, more interested group

Fans

Superfans

more and more stories; if you can find 100,000, you'll be a best-selling writer; but if you can find only 1,000, you will struggle to make ends meet from your writing alone.





We need to make sure that those selected readers are *fully awake and aware* enough to appreciate what you are trying to do for them.

This means that it's vital that, once you have isolated a likely looking number of potential readers, you make sure that your message is getting across to them effectively. We've looked at working out what your message is, and we've glanced at finding out for whom your message will have any appeal — but we need to go deeper and further if we want to get any real success.

We need to make sure that those selected readers are *fully awake and aware* enough to appreciate what you are trying to do for them.

Re-imagine that analogy of the crowded room above. Let's say you've managed to draw a few people closer to your corner by putting up a sign — an effective and consistent author platform with a clearly defined and attractive message is the key here. So you have these people standing around — why aren't they reaching to purchase your books?

The best acid test for this sort of thing is yourself and your own experiences. When you like a particular author's work, that doesn't mean that you spend all day exploring their website or downloading their materials, does it? You have other things going on: life and its routines and demands has a constant grip on your attention. You have other interests, other duties, other tasks to perform; indeed, you have other authors in whom you are interested, and perhaps many other books to read. So the fact that an author has managed to attract you enough to bookmark their page, or even to make you move some of their books into your shopping cart, does not necessarily mean a huge number of purchases from you every day.

You could say, in fact, that you are bedazzled by other things — legitimate and real other things, to be sure, but other things that distract you from a full focus on an author's offers. Your potential readers are exactly the same — they might well like you and have the best of intentions regarding buying and reading your work, but they are already 'hooked' by innumerable other demands upon their attention.

What can you do to attract more of that attention?

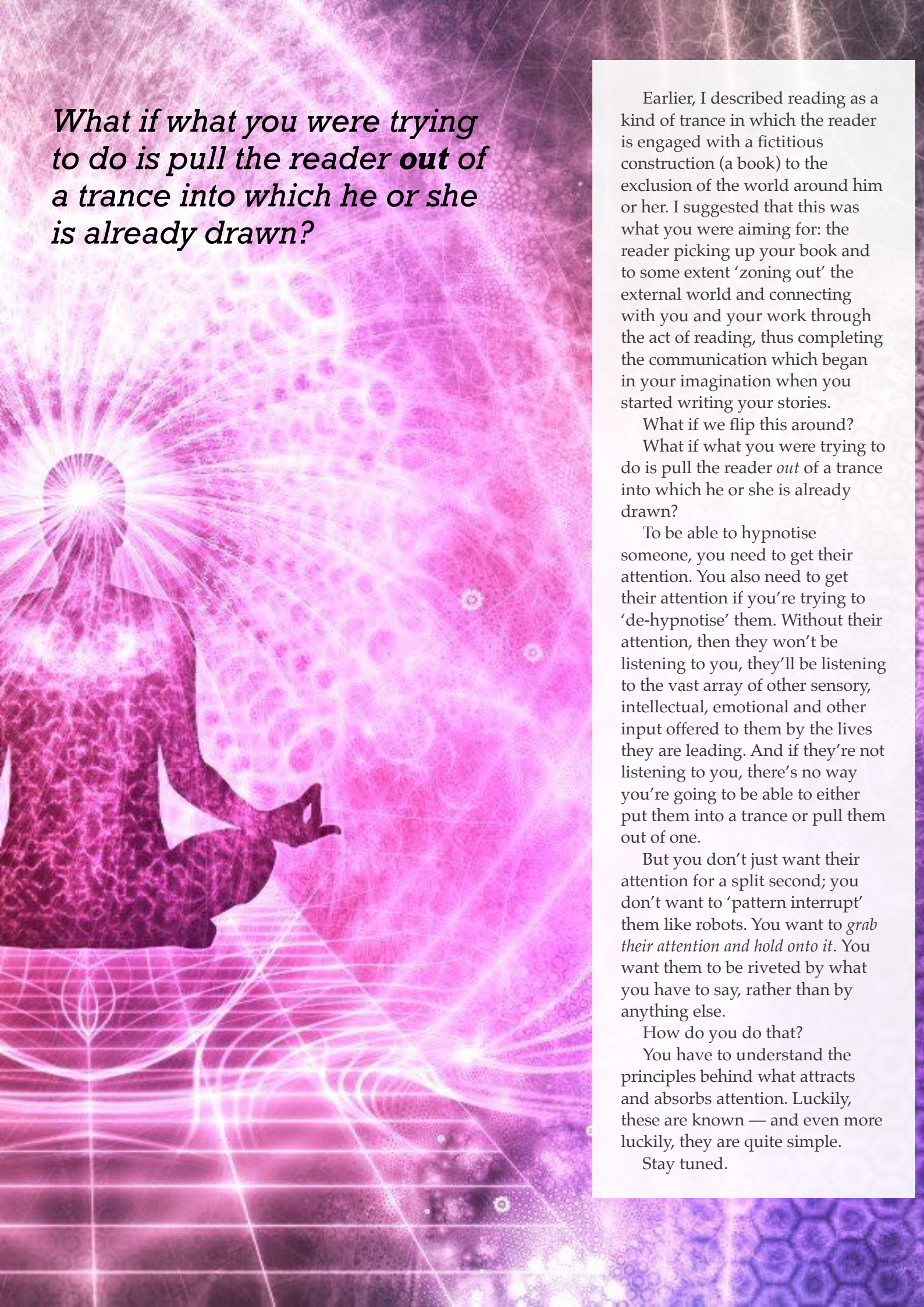
Here comes one of the biggest — but perhaps most difficult — concepts on the way to success for you as a writer:

Imagine that they are 'hypnotised'.

It's not all that hard to do, because again, in the perfect test case of yourself, you can see this hypnotism at work. You wake up and immediately fall into established routines, attending to daily tasks, checking news, making meals, setting off to work and so on. At work you probably have countless little habits which engage your attention all day — it might be true to say that your workday consists of those habits. Then you head home, again consumed by routine and habit, your attention looked into patterns and vectors which appear at times to be immovable. Modern marketers came up with the term 'pattern interrupt' to describe trying to break into this largely sealed world of the potential customer. 'Pattern interruption' involves jolting you out of your comfortable and predictable world by catching your eye somehow. It's a flawed idea because it again depends upon the notion, covered earlier, that you are just a robot and that what you do is partly automated and can be interfered with in some way on a mechanical level. It misses the bigger picture.

The bigger picture is that we are all hypnotised or semi-hypnotised into a world of patterns and predictabilities and habits and routines. Our attention is largely already channeled based on our own experiences and choices. We drift through our daily lives on treadmills that we created: they are not necessarily entirely unpleasant treadmills — most of us have striven to build some pleasure into our patterns — but they are exclusive treadmills, mainly: we see what we have selected to see, and mostly exclude what we have not yet selected.





What if what you were trying to do is pull the reader **out** of a trance into which he or she is already drawn?

Earlier, I described reading as a kind of trance in which the reader is engaged with a fictitious construction (a book) to the exclusion of the world around him or her. I suggested that this was what you were aiming for: the reader picking up your book and to some extent 'zoning out' the external world and connecting with you and your work through the act of reading, thus completing the communication which began in your imagination when you started writing your stories.

What if we flip this around?

What if what you were trying to do is pull the reader *out* of a trance into which he or she is already drawn?

To be able to hypnotise someone, you need to get their attention. You also need to get their attention if you're trying to 'de-hypnotise' them. Without their attention, then they won't be listening to you, they'll be listening to the vast array of other sensory, intellectual, emotional and other input offered to them by the lives they are leading. And if they're not listening to you, there's no way you're going to be able to either put them into a trance or pull them out of one.

But you don't just want their attention for a split second; you don't want to 'pattern interrupt' them like robots. You want to *grab their attention and hold onto it*. You want them to be riveted by what you have to say, rather than by anything else.

How do you do that?

You have to understand the principles behind what attracts and absorbs attention. Luckily, these are known — and even more luckily, they are quite simple.

Stay tuned.

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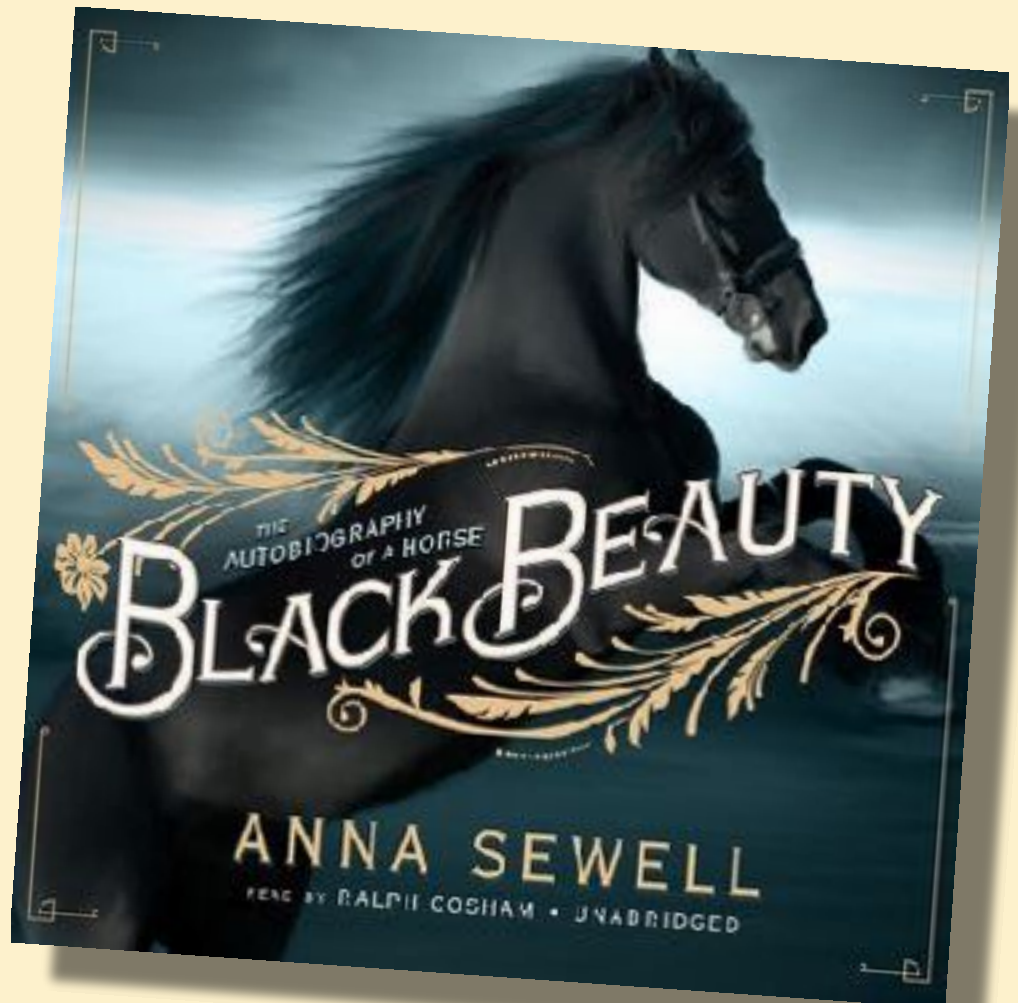
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TONY J. FYLER AUDIO BOOK REVIEW

Black Beauty was absolutely not what vague glimpses of Seventies TV versions persuaded me it would be.

Why this should be so, I'm no longer sure, but I always thought *Black Beauty* was written from the point of view of the horse's owners. But no. Like Michael Morpurgo's much later *War Horse*, this is the story of the horse himself, told in his own voice.

As such, it's distinctly affecting at several points — the horse serving several masters under several names, saving lives by instinct, suffering from the vagaries of vanity and fashion (Sewell's novel was instrumental in discouraging the use of a rig that made horses suffer for the sake of a smart look, so *Black Beauty* becomes an activist novel fairly early on, and achieves its aims). It shows the progress of Beauty from eager foal who wants to join the hunt (and gets a rude awakening on its horrors) through carriage horse, cart horse and cab horse, shining light on the worlds of humans good and bad, rich and poor, compassionate and vicious. Ultimately, the book espouses a simple message. Your life might be what it is, but you show your fundamental nature most of all in your dealings with those whose censure and whose judgement cannot harm you. Do you treat them well out of pure human decency and fellow feeling, or do you beat them down with words and spites, taking out your frustrations with the world on those whose judgements you need not fear?



The message of *Black Beauty* is simple, and pure, and for me at least monstrously hard. Surrounded as I am with good examples, with people who give good for bad, I know my own dichotomy — I am a humanist in the abstract, and a hater in the particular. *Black Beauty* is a book that impresses with its warmth of spirit, its simplicity of message, and its vehemence of viewpoint.

Be kind, it says, and kindness will return to you. Among the darkness, among the struggle, among the certainty of ill fortune. It will come back to you.



Tony J. Fyler edits and writes reviews. You can find him over at [Jefferson Franklin Editing](#).

THE SEVEN CHARACTER ARCHETYPES OF FICTION



THE ANTAGONIST

Examples: Sauron, Voldemort, Emperor Palpatine, Morgana Le Fay

Examples: Gollum, Malfoy, Darth Vader, Mordred

THE SHADOW PROTAGONIST



THE SUBMERGED COMPANION

Examples: Eowyn, Estella, Leia, Lady Macbeth

Examples: Frodo, Harry Potter, Luke Skywalker, King Arthur

THE PROTAGONIST



THE EMERGING COMPANION

Examples: Aragorn, Sirius Black, Han Solo, Lancelot

Examples: Samwise, Ron Weasley, R2-D2 and C-3PO

THE COMIC COMPANION



THE WISE OLD FIGURE

Examples: Gandalf, Dumbledore, Yoda, Merlin

The construction of characters turns out to be much simpler - and stranger - than you might think. Learn more about the Seven Archetypes of Fiction and much, much more in *7 Secrets of Successful Stories*, available [here](#).

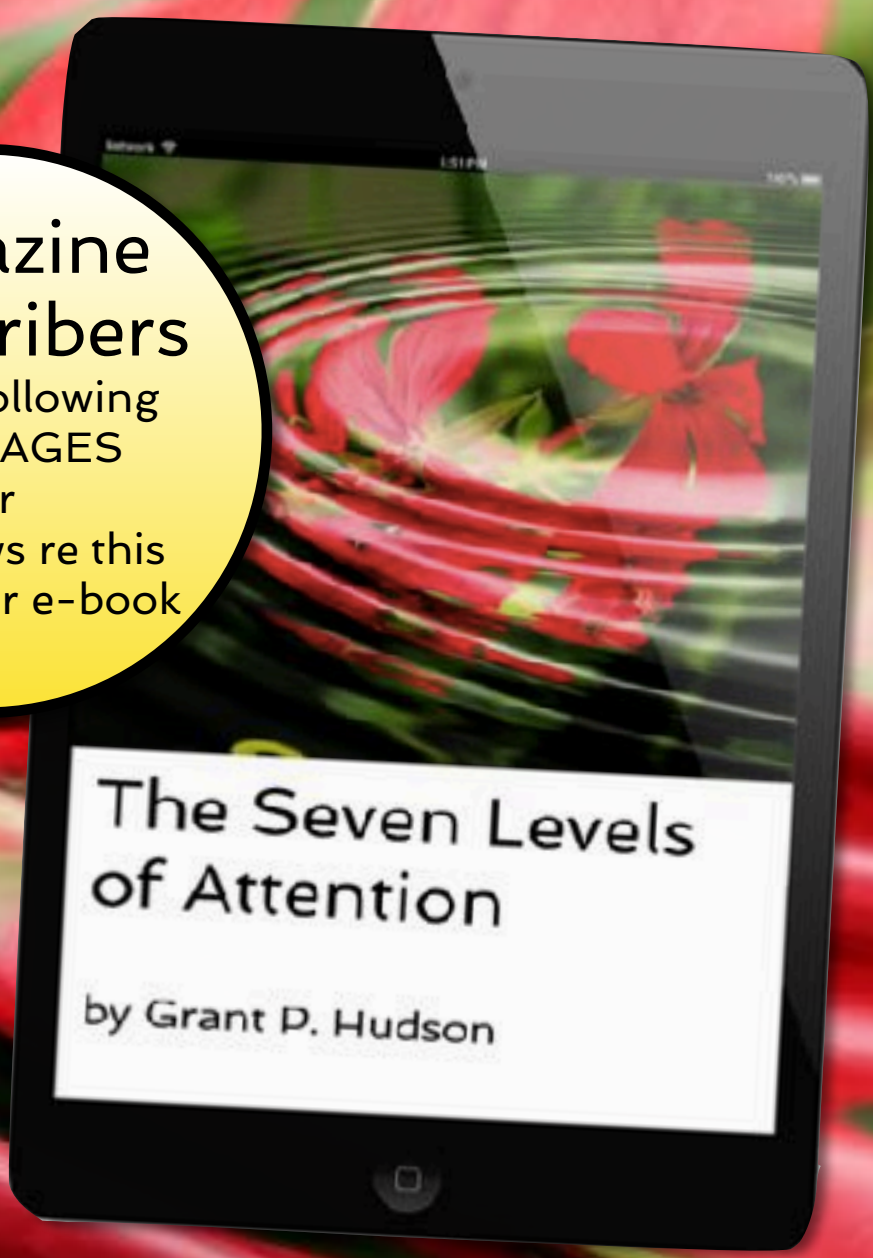


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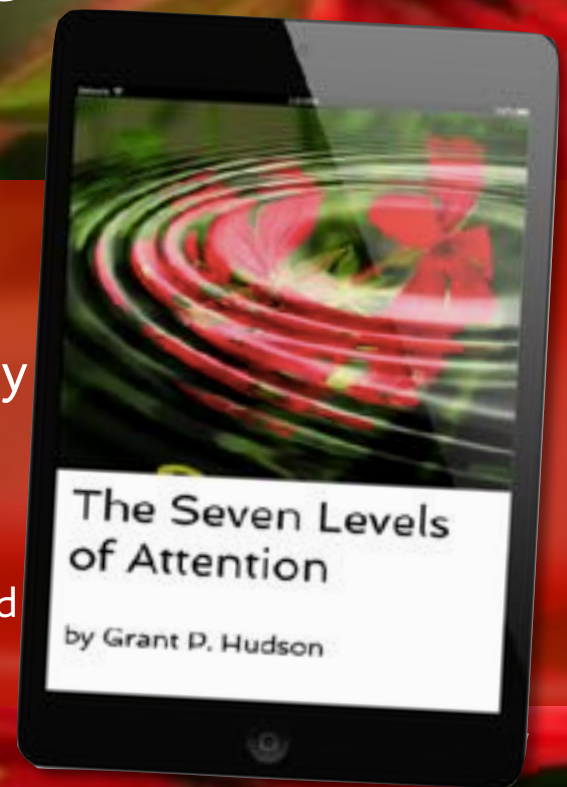
WITH THE



PRESENTS

As a writer, you want to **grab** attention.
You want to **guide** attention.
You want to move the reader by expertly
using attention.

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- What **Momentum, Mystery** and **Morality** in fiction have to do with attention and what precise mechanisms are associated with each
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The Promise

They said I broke my promise. That I didn't come back although I said I would. I swore it with my dying breath and what vow is more sacred than that? They said I lied but I did not.

I have come back so many times. I have waded through the mud over and over again. I have listened to the screams of the dying so often that even on days when there is no fighting I can still hear them in every breath of wind that ruffles my hair. I have fought with blood in my eyes and a grip so slick I could

barely hold my weapon and I have wept, so many tears, for all the lives that have been lost.

I remember every life I have led. I can remember them all and as I age, as I struggle once again towards manhood, I wonder what the next conflict will be, what excuse will be used to restart the killing. My life, or should I say my lives, would have driven many men mad by now; perhaps I am made of sterner stuff or perhaps I recognise that there is no point in trying to deny my fate.

Sometimes I think I recognise people. One general who commanded on the battlefield had a spark in his eye that reminded me so very much of a former comrade that I nearly walked up to him and addressed him by his old name. I stopped myself. He would not have understood and would not have seen me as the man I was; instead he would have looked askance at my approach and summoned men to remove me from his presence. So many times I have had to bow and scrape to men such as these. The Buddhists have a word for it I discovered but if I believe their teachings then I would have to believe that there is no end to this endless fighting and that, I think, would drive me mad.

I have seen enemies become friends and friends become enemies. I have fought on English soil, felt the turf crumbling under my feet as I struggled to stay upright in the face of

the onslaught. Englishmen fighting Englishmen and not even realising why they are there. They follow the call of their master, their lord and I go too, even though I am aware of how futile it is. I have fought in the fields of France, stared as a crossbow bolt arrows toward me. It is strange in that moment how time slows, how the men around you fall silent and it is then, in that moment before death comes, that you see beauty, that you understand everything.

I have become a connoisseur of history. Revisiting the past in the books of the present to read about the battles I have been a part of. They get things wrong, they get so much wrong and yet when I try to explain what happened, when I try to correct my teachers, they refuse to listen. *How could I know? Was I there?* The battles sound quaint, even poetic as though they were not fought by real men, bleeding real blood and dying real deaths.



Perhaps this life is a curse, but why? Why have I been cursed? I have done no great wrong that I am aware of. I have fought for survival but that is something that every man in the world is guilty of, and I have never known anyone else who has had to endure what I have had to endure. What possible reason could God have for making me live these lives? I would ask him but I think his face is turned away from me.

Several lifetimes ago I wanted to ask one of my comrades to speak to God for me. We were trapped in a trench, cut off from the rest of our regiment, cold to the bone and waiting, waiting

for a German to come and finish us off. But before I could say anything he picked up his pistol and placed it against his temple. I closed my eyes. Even I, who have seen so much death and destruction, closed my eyes. I cannot forget the feeling of his brain matter on my face and what sickens me is that for a moment, and it was only a brief moment, I felt grateful for the warmth. I envied him his death. No Germans came but instead a thick choking cloud of gas. I coughed and I coughed, my lungs burned and I saw my own red blood thick on the floor of the trench long before I died.





Perhaps I have lost hope. I have tried praying as I see others around me doing but no one answers. Part of me marvels at this modern world, the part of me that recalls the cold and the damp of a roughly built shelter, that remembers having to sleep with the cattle and the sheep and the dogs just to keep the warmth in our bodies, that part finds this world of constant noise, of machines that appear to think for themselves and of light at the mere touch of a button, overwhelmingly strange.

I am waiting with the others now, my rifle tucked under my arm, my bulletproof vest pulled tight around my body and for a moment I wish for my sword. Not Excalibur, for that was never more than a symbol, but my own trusty sword and my mail coat and my horse. I cannot wish myself back into the past, I cannot escape the end that is waiting for me in the desert but what I wish I could do, what I would make my dying wish if I am to be given one this time around, is that the people would know that I came back, that Arthur King of the Britons kept his promise and came back.



PRESENTS

MASTER AUTHOR SHOWCASE

A Scandal in Bohemia

Part One

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle



Sir Arthur Conan Doyle KStJ DL (1859 – 1930) a British writer and medical doctor, created the character Sherlock Holmes in 1887 when he published *A Study in Scarlet*, the first of four novels and more than fifty short stories about Holmes and Dr. Watson, considered milestones in the field of crime fiction. A prolific writer Doyle's works include humorous stories about the Napoleonic soldier Brigadier Gerard, and fantasy and science fiction stories about Professor Challenger, as well as plays, romances, poetry, non-fiction and historical novels.



To Sherlock Holmes she is always *the* woman. I have seldom heard him mention her under any other name. In his eyes she eclipses and predominates the whole of her sex. It was not that he felt any emotion akin to love for Irene Adler. All emotions, and that one particularly, were abhorrent to his cold, precise but admirably balanced mind. He was, I take it, the most perfect reasoning and observing machine that the world has seen; but as a lover, he would have placed himself in a false position. He never spoke of the softer passions, save with a gibe and a sneer. They were admirable things for the observer—

excellent for drawing the veil from men's motives and actions. But for the trained reasoner to admit such intrusions into his own delicate and finely adjusted temperament was to introduce a distracting factor which might throw a doubt upon all his mental results. Grit in a sensitive instrument, or a crack in one of his own high-power lenses, would not be more disturbing than a strong emotion in a nature such as his. And yet there was but one woman to him, and that woman was the late Irene Adler, of dubious and questionable memory.

I had seen little of Holmes lately. My marriage had drifted us away from each other. My own complete happiness, and the home-centred interests which rise up around the man who first finds himself master of his own establishment, were sufficient to absorb all my attention; while Holmes, who loathed every form of society with his whole Bohemian soul, remained in our lodgings in Baker Street, buried among his old books, and alternating from week to week between cocaine and ambition, the drowsiness of the drug and the fierce energy of his own keen nature. He was still, as ever, deeply attracted by the study of crime, and occupied his immense faculties and extraordinary powers of observation in following out those clues, and clearing up those mysteries, which had been abandoned as hopeless by the official police. From time to time I heard some vague account of his doings; of his summons to Odessa in the case of the Trepoff murder, of his clearing up of the singular tragedy of the Atkinson brothers at Trincomalee, and finally of the mission which he had accomplished so delicately and successfully for the reigning family of Holland. Beyond these signs of his activity, however, which I merely shared with all the readers of the daily press, I knew little of my former friend and companion.

One night—it was on the 20th of March, 1888—I was returning from a journey to a patient (for I had now returned to civil practice), when my way led me through Baker Street. As I passed the well-remembered door, which must always be associated in my mind with my wooing, and with the dark incidents of the Study in Scarlet, I was seized with a keen desire to see Holmes again, and to know how he was employing his extraordinary powers. His rooms were brilliantly lighted, and even as I looked up, I saw his tall, spare figure pass twice in a dark silhouette against the blind. He was pacing the room swiftly, eagerly, with his head sunk upon his chest, and his hands clasped behind him. To me, who knew his every mood and habit, his attitude and manner told their own story. He was at work again. He had risen out of his drug-created dreams, and was hot upon the scent of some new problem. I rang the bell, and was shown up to the chamber which had formerly been in part my own.





His manner was not effusive. It seldom was; but he was glad, I think, to see me. With hardly a word spoken, but with a kindly eye, he waved me to an armchair, threw across his case of cigars, and indicated a spirit case and a gasogene in the corner. Then he stood before the fire, and looked me over in his singular introspective fashion.

"Wedlock suits you," he remarked. "I think, Watson, that you have put on seven and a half pounds since I saw you."

"Seven," I answered.

"Indeed, I should have thought a little more. Just a trifle more, I fancy, Watson. And in practice again, I observe. You did not tell me that you intended to go into harness."

"Then how do you know?"

"I see it, I deduce it. How do I know that you have been getting yourself very wet lately, and that you have a most clumsy and careless servant girl?"

"My dear Holmes," said I, "this is too much. You would certainly have been burned had you lived a few centuries ago. It is true that I had a country walk on Thursday and came home in a dreadful mess; but as I have changed my clothes, I can't imagine how you deduce it. As to Mary Jane, she is incorrigible, and my wife has given her notice; but there again I fail to see how you work it out."

He chuckled to himself and rubbed his long nervous hands together.

"It is simplicity itself," said he, "my eyes tell me that on the inside of your left shoe, just where the firelight strikes it, the leather is scored by six almost parallel cuts. Obviously they have been caused by some one who has very carelessly scraped round the edges of the sole in order to remove crusted mud from it. Hence, you see, my double deduction that you had been out in vile weather, and that you had a particularly malignant boot-slicking specimen of the London slavey. As to your practice, if a gentleman walks into my rooms, smelling of iodoform, with a black mark of nitrate of silver upon his right forefinger, and a bulge on the side of his top hat to show where he has secreted his stethoscope, I must be dull indeed if I do not pronounce him to be an active member of the medical profession."

I could not help laughing at the ease with which he, explained his process of deduction.

"When I hear you give your reasons," I remarked, "the thing always appears to me so ridiculously simple that I could easily do it myself, though at each successive instance of your reasoning I am baffled, until you explain your process. And yet, I believe that my eyes are as good as yours."

"Quite so," he answered, lighting a cigarette, and throwing himself down into an armchair. "You see, but you do not observe. The distinction is clear. For example, you have frequently seen the steps which lead up from the hall to this room."

"Frequently."

"How often?"

"Well, some hundreds of times."

"Then how many are there?"

"How many? I don't know."

"Quite so! You have not observed. And yet you have seen. That is just my point. Now, I know there are seventeen steps, because I have both seen and observed. By the way, since you are interested in these little problems, and since you are good enough to chronicle one or two of my trifling experiences, you may be interested in this." He threw over a sheet of thick pink-tinted note paper which had been lying open upon the table. "It came by the last post," said he. "Read it aloud."

The note was undated, and without either signature or address.

"There will call upon you to-night, at a quarter to eight o'clock," it said, "a gentleman who desires to consult you upon a matter of the very deepest moment. Your recent services to one of the royal houses of Europe have shown that you are one who may safely be trusted with matters which are of an importance which can hardly be exaggerated. This account of you we have from all quarters received. Be in your chamber, then, at that hour, and do not take it amiss if your visitor wears a mask."

"This is indeed a mystery," I remarked. "What do you imagine that it means?"

"I have no data yet. It is a capital mistake to theorise before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts. But the note itself—what do you deduce from it?"

I carefully examined the writing, and the paper upon which it was written.





"The man who wrote it was presumably well to do," I remarked, endeavoring to imitate my companion's processes. "Such paper could not be bought under half a crown a packet. It is peculiarly strong and stiff."

"Peculiar—that is the very word," said Holmes. "It is not an English paper at all. Hold it up to the light"

I did so, and saw a large *E* with a small *g*, a *P* and a large *G* with a small *t* woven into the texture of the paper.

"What do you make of that?" asked Holmes.

"The name of the maker, no doubt; or his monogram, rather."

"Not all. The *G* with the small *t* stands for 'Gesellschaft,' which is the German for 'Company.' It is a customary contraction like our 'Co.' *P*, of course, stands for 'Papier.' Now for the *Eg*. Let us glance at our 'Continental Gazetteer.' He took down a heavy brown volume from his shelves. "Eglow, Eglonitz—here we are, Egria. It is in a German-speaking country—in Bohemia, not far from Carlsbad. 'Remarkable as being the scene of the death of Wallenstein, and for its numerous glass factories and paper mills.' Ha! ha! my boy, what do you make of that?" His eyes sparkled, and he sent up a great blue triumphant cloud from his cigarette.

"The paper was made in Bohemia," I said.

"Precisely. And the man who wrote the note is a German. Do you note the peculiar construction of the sentence—"This account of you we have from all quarters received"? A Frenchman or Russian could not have written that. It is the German who is so uncourteous to his verbs. It only remains, therefore, to discover what is wanted by this German who writes upon Bohemian paper, and prefers wearing a mask to showing his face. And here he comes, if I am not mistaken, to resolve all our doubts."

As he spoke there was the sharp sound of horses' hoofs and grating wheels against the curb, followed by a sharp pull at the bell. Holmes whistled.

"A pair, by the sound," said he. "Yes," he continued, glancing out of the window. "A nice little brougham and a pair of beauties. A hundred and fifty guineas apiece. There's money in this case, Watson, if there is nothing else."

"I think I had better go, Holmes."

"Not a bit, doctor. Stay where you are. I am lost without my Boswell. And this promises to be interesting. It would be a pity to miss it."

"But your client—"

"Never mind him. I may want your help, and so may he. Here he comes. Sit down in that armchair, doctor, and give us your best attention."

A slow and heavy step, which had been heard upon the stairs and in the passage, paused immediately outside the door. Then there was a loud and authoritative tap.

"Come in!" said Holmes.

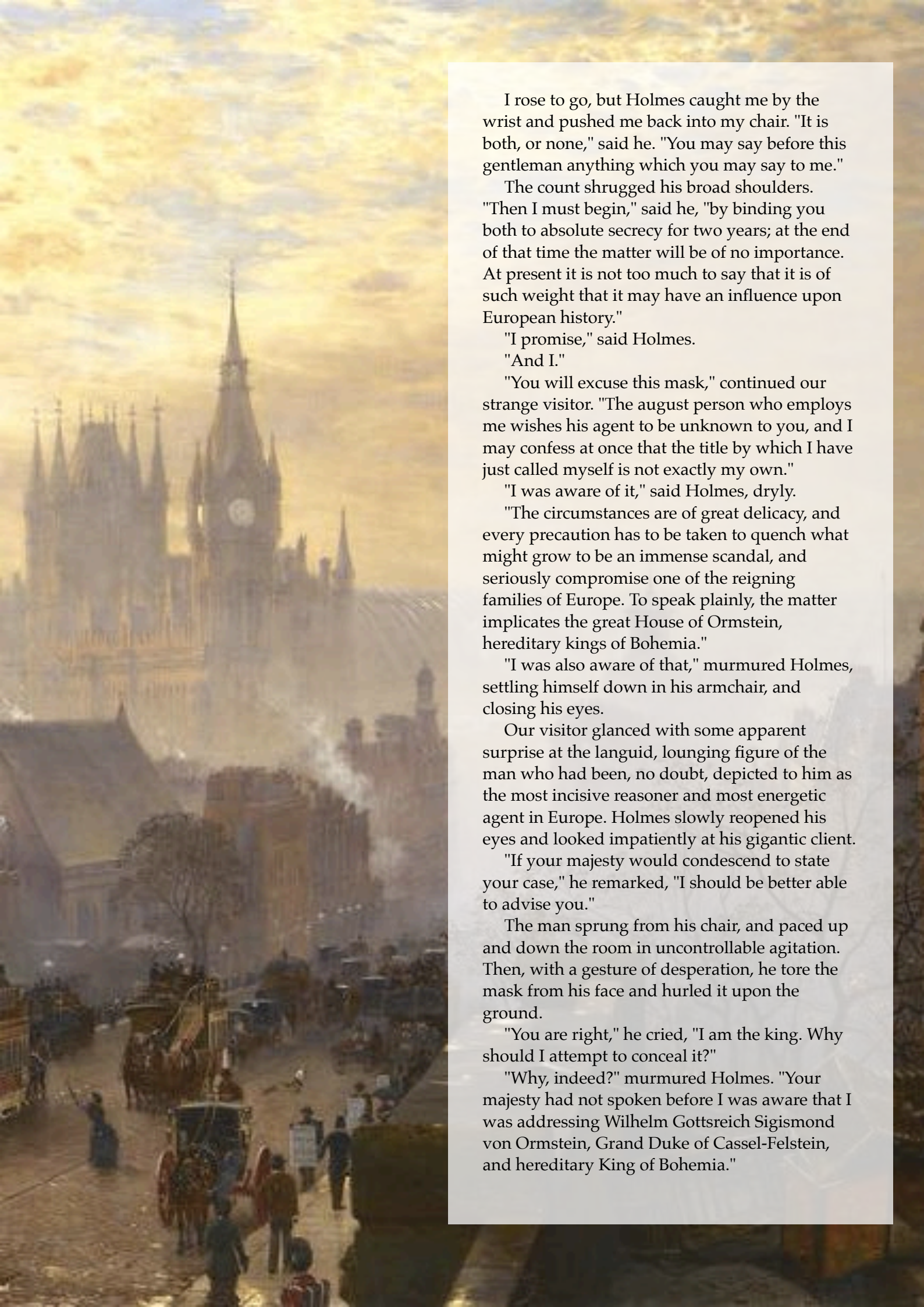
A man entered who could hardly have been less than six feet six inches in height, with the chest and limbs of a Hercules. His dress was rich with a richness which would, in England, be looked upon as akin to bad taste. Heavy bands of astrakhan were slashed across the sleeves and front of his double-breasted coat, while the deep blue cloak which was thrown over his shoulders was lined with flame-coloured silk, and secured at the neck with a brooch which consisted of a single flaming beryl. Boots which extended halfway up his calves, and which were trimmed at the tops with rich brown fur, completed the impression of barbaric opulence which was suggested by his whole appearance. He carried a broad-brimmed hat in his hand, while he wore across the upper part of his face, extending down past the cheekbones, a black visard mask, which he had apparently adjusted that very moment, for his hand was still raised to it as he entered. From the lower part of the face he appeared to be a man of strong character, with a thick, hanging lip, and a long, straight chin, suggestive of resolution pushed to the length of obstinacy.

"You had my note?" he asked, with a deep, harsh voice and a strongly marked German accent. "I told you that I would call." He looked from one to the other of us, as if uncertain which to address.

"Pray take a seat," said Holmes. "This is my friend and colleague, Doctor Watson, who is occasionally good enough to help me in my cases. Whom have I the honor to address?"

"You may address me as the Count von Kramm, a Bohemian nobleman. I understand that this gentleman, your friend, is a man of honour and discretion, whom I may trust with a matter of the most extreme importance. If not, I should much prefer to communicate with you alone."





I rose to go, but Holmes caught me by the wrist and pushed me back into my chair. "It is both, or none," said he. "You may say before this gentleman anything which you may say to me."

The count shrugged his broad shoulders. "Then I must begin," said he, "by binding you both to absolute secrecy for two years; at the end of that time the matter will be of no importance. At present it is not too much to say that it is of such weight that it may have an influence upon European history."

"I promise," said Holmes.

"And I."

"You will excuse this mask," continued our strange visitor. "The august person who employs me wishes his agent to be unknown to you, and I may confess at once that the title by which I have just called myself is not exactly my own."

"I was aware of it," said Holmes, dryly.

"The circumstances are of great delicacy, and every precaution has to be taken to quench what might grow to be an immense scandal, and seriously compromise one of the reigning families of Europe. To speak plainly, the matter implicates the great House of Ormstein, hereditary kings of Bohemia."

"I was also aware of that," murmured Holmes, settling himself down in his armchair, and closing his eyes.

Our visitor glanced with some apparent surprise at the languid, lounging figure of the man who had been, no doubt, depicted to him as the most incisive reasoner and most energetic agent in Europe. Holmes slowly reopened his eyes and looked impatiently at his gigantic client.

"If your majesty would condescend to state your case," he remarked, "I should be better able to advise you."

The man sprung from his chair, and paced up and down the room in uncontrollable agitation. Then, with a gesture of desperation, he tore the mask from his face and hurled it upon the ground.

"You are right," he cried, "I am the king. Why should I attempt to conceal it?"

"Why, indeed?" murmured Holmes. "Your majesty had not spoken before I was aware that I was addressing Wilhelm Gottsreich Sigismund von Ormstein, Grand Duke of Cassel-Felstein, and hereditary King of Bohemia."

"But you can understand," said our strange visitor, sitting down once more and passing his hand over his high, white forehead, "you can understand that I am not accustomed to doing such business in my own person. Yet the matter was so delicate that I could not confide it to an agent without putting myself in his power. I have come incognito from Prague for the purpose of consulting you."

"Then, pray consult," said Holmes, shutting his eyes once more.

"The facts are briefly these: Some five years ago, during a lengthy visit to Warsaw, I made the acquaintance of the well-known adventuress Irene Adler. The name is no doubt familiar to you."

"Kindly look her up in my index, doctor," murmured Holmes, without opening his eyes. For many years he had adopted a system for docketing all paragraphs concerning men and things, so that it was difficult to name a subject or a person on which he could not at once furnish information. In this case I found her biography sandwiched in between that of a Hebrew rabbi and that of a staff commander who had written a monograph upon the deep-sea fishes.

"Let me see!" said Holmes. "Hum! Born in New Jersey in the year 1858. Contralto—hum! La Scala—hum! Prima donna Imperial Opera of Warsaw—yes! Retired from operatic stage—ha! Living in London—quite so! Your majesty, as I understand, became entangled with this young person, wrote her some compromising letters, and is now desirous of getting those letters back."

"Precisely so. But how—"

"Was there a secret marriage?"

"None."

"No legal papers or certificates?"

"None."


"Then I fail to follow your majesty. If this young person should produce her letters for blackmailing or other purposes, how is she to prove their authenticity?"

"There is the writing."

"Pooh-pooh! Forgery."

"My private note paper."





"Stolen."

"My own seal."

"Imitated."

"My photograph."

"Bought."

"We were both in the photograph."

"Oh, dear! That is very bad. Your majesty has indeed committed an indiscretion."

"I was mad—insane."

"You have compromised yourself seriously."

"I was only crown prince then. I was young. I am but thirty now."

"It must be recovered."

"We have tried and failed."

"Your majesty must pay. It must be bought."

"She will not sell."

"Stolen, then."

"Five attempts have been made. Twice burglars in my pay ransacked her house. Once we diverted her luggage when she traveled. Twice she has been waylaid. There has been no result."

"No sign of it?"

"Absolutely none."

Holmes laughed. "It is quite a pretty little problem," said he.

"But a very serious one to me," returned the king, reproachfully.

"Very, indeed. And what does she propose to do with the photograph?"

"To ruin me."

"But how?"

"I am about to be married."

"So I have heard."

"To Clotilde Lothman von Saxe-Meiningen, second daughter of the King of Scandinavia. You may know the strict principles of her family. She is herself the very soul of delicacy. A shadow of a doubt as to my conduct would bring the matter to an end."

"And Irene Adler?"

"Threatens to send them the photograph. And she will do it. I know that she will do it. You do not know her, but she has a soul of steel. She has the face of the most beautiful of women and the mind of the most resolute of men. Rather than I should marry another woman, there are no lengths to which she would not go—none."

"You are sure she has not sent it yet?"

"I am sure."

"And why?"

"Because she has said that she would send it on the day when the betrothal was publicly proclaimed. That will be next Monday."

"Oh, then we have three days yet," said Holmes, with a yawn. "That is very fortunate, as I have one or two matters of importance to look into just at present. Your majesty will, of course, stay in London for the present?"

"Certainly. You will find me at the Langham, under the name of the Count von Kramm."

"Then I shall drop you a line to let you know how we progress."

"Pray do so; I shall be all anxiety."

"Then, as to money?"

"You have *carte blanche*."

"Absolutely?"

"I tell you that I would give one of the provinces of my kingdom to have that photograph."

"And for present expenses?"

The king took a heavy chamois-leather bag from under his cloak, and laid it on the table.

"There are three hundred pounds in gold, and seven hundred in notes," he said.

Holmes scribbled a receipt upon a sheet of his notebook, and handed it to him.

"And mademoiselle's address?" he asked.

"Is Briony Lodge, Serpentine Avenue, St. John's Wood."

Holmes took a note of it. "One other question," said he, thoughtfully. "Was the photograph a cabinet?"

"It was."

"Then, good-night, your majesty, and I trust that we shall soon have some good news for you. And good-night, Watson," he added, as the wheels of the royal brougham rolled down the street. "If you will be good enough to call to-morrow afternoon, at three o'clock, I should like to chat this little matter over with you."

End of Part One

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