

CLARENDON HOUSE PUBLICATIONS

‘The world is better with all this beautiful work seen at last.’ – A. Delf, author

This week from Clarendon House



Issue # 92 of the Inner Circle Writers' Magazine!

Apart from finding out who has won this year's Great Clarendon House Writing Challenge, discover the details of the forthcoming **Great Clarendon House Poetry Challenge!**

Plus **Classic Masterpieces** featuring *The Railway Children* by **E. Nesbit**, a comic sci-fi tale from **Alexander Marshall** and a spooky **Master Author Showcase** from **M. R. James!**

Explore the key concepts behind effective storytelling in the **Fictivity** series and learn about writing style in **7 Secrets of Successful Stories**. And a quiz, submission opportunities and much more!



Welcome!

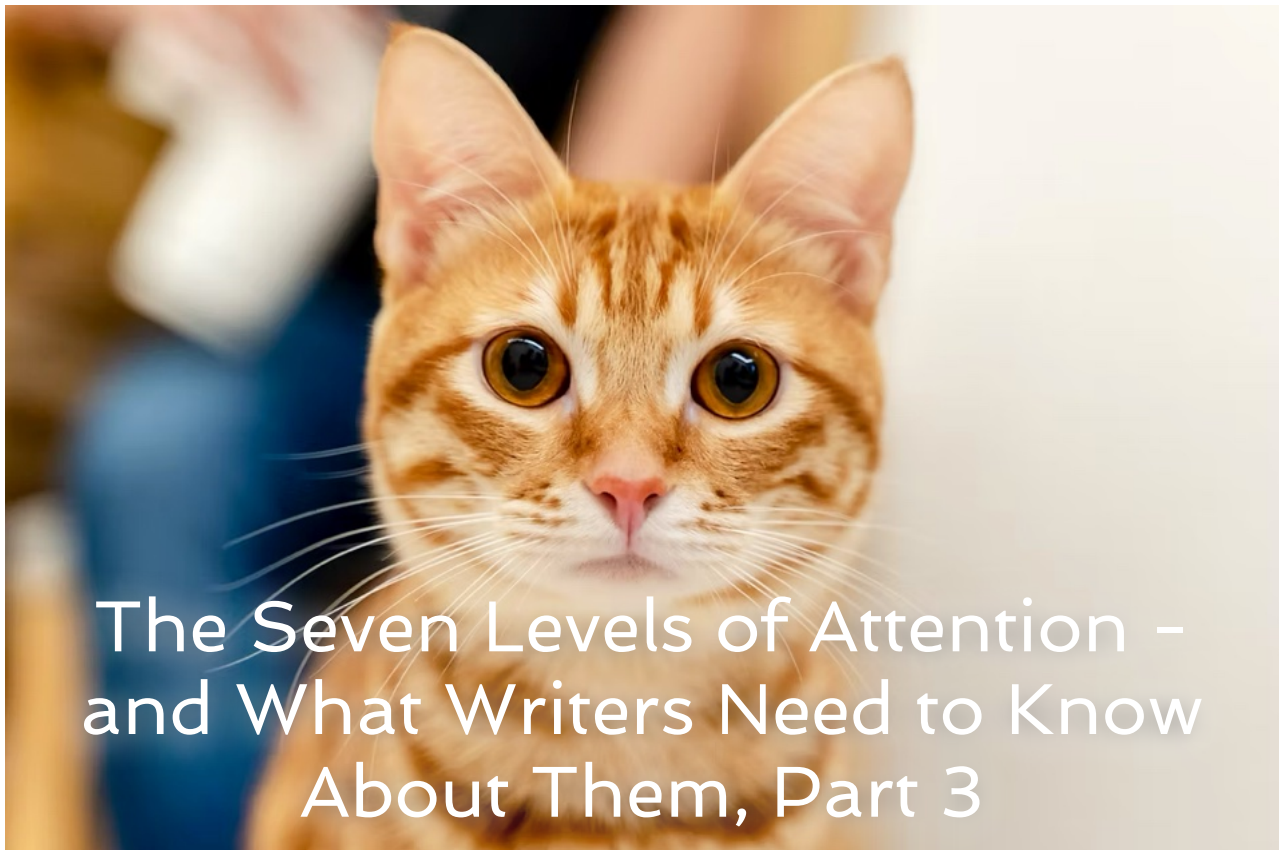
This week: It's all over! Find out who won the **Great Clarendon House Writing Challenge 2026** with its offer of a **book contract** with Clarendon House Publications, a **free webpage** on the Clarendon House website, a **free full-page ad** in the Inner Circle Writers' Magazine for a whole year, **free marketing advice** and much more! As voted for by YOU, the readers! Get the latest issue of the Inner Circle Writers' Magazine!

Stay tuned for more!

Feedback is welcome. Drop me a line at

grant@clarendonhousebooks.com

Below is a popular blog item.



The Seven Levels of Attention - and What Writers Need to Know About Them, Part 3

In one version of the story of Schrödinger's cat, a cat is imagined as being enclosed in a box with a radioactive source and a poison that will be released when the source (unpredictably) emits radiation. According to quantum mechanics, the cat is simultaneously both dead and alive until the box is opened and the cat observed.

I prefer the version in which no deaths are involved: the cat is either there, or not there, much like the Cheshire Cat in *Alice in Wonderland*. The point is that something may be there or not, and we don't know which it is until we look.

This principle applies to the 'glance-in-shop-window' type of attention which we have called 'Momentary Attention'. It is something that we as writers run into all the time: is there or isn't there someone looking at our books, our websites, our Facebook pages or ads? Web analytics try to tell us as much as they can: we can measure visits to pages or sites, amount of time spent on each page, number of pages viewed and all the rest of it. But we don't really know what's going on there - what is the visitor thinking? Are they there by accident or design? What attracted them? What drove them away?

And, importantly, how do we get them stay longer?

A huge sub-industry of advertising and split-level testing and all the rest of it has grown up to try to answer those questions.

They are probably the wrong questions.

In the vast Zero Attention category are many millions of people who will never come close to us or our work and whose existence will remain as much an unknown to us as ours is to them. But in the very large Momentary Attention category, the Venn diagram circles have crossed, even if only slightly and fleetingly: someone, somewhere, for some reason, has seen us or our books, possibly. As soon as we try to open the box to see them, they are not there.

What should we do about this?

Well, the easiest way to make sure that a cat is there more often is to leave it a saucer of milk.

If we keep leaving a saucer of milk, the cat will gradually become more confident that being there is worth it, and we will convert momentary and hardly traceable attention into the next more visible category, Intermittent Attention - in other words, the cat will come to see our saucer as a reliable food source and will visit regularly. Eventually, we will be able to recognise the cat and introduce ourselves to it.

The equivalent of a saucer of milk in our terms as writers of fiction is some kind of free gift.

Free gifts have gotten a bad name. That's because the internet has become swamped with them. There are so many free chapters, free novellas, free first books, free sets of books, free libraries of material now that whole houses could be filled with the stuff. Making something free of itself isn't the way to guarantee more cats.

If I can stretch the analogy a little further, the reason that the cat comes back is because cats like milk. Any free gift that you put out there as a writer, into the vast void of the world wide web, has to have more to attract attention than just the fact that it is free - it has to be something that falls remotely within the range of what its audience will like.

This is where things switch around in an important sense.

Writers often feel that their task is to shout loudly enough or fire off enough messages until they attract the attention of or latch onto enough people to maintain a viable career. They are the hunters, in other words, and the readers, or potential readers, are the prey. Writers often feel that, having written a book and gotten it out into the world in some form, either through a publisher or through their own efforts, they must get up each day and gird their loins with the weapons of reader acquisition, and journey out there, into the marketplace, to do battle with the hordes of ignorance, or whatever mysterious forces are preventing readers from buying their books.

Momentary Attention, in this analogy, is a little like catching a glimpse of the hunted deer deep in the forest, only to find that it has vanished completely when one arrives at that spot.





The Big Switch occurs when writers turn from being hunters into being gatherers and farmers (to stretch analogies again).

To cultivate Momentary Attention means leaving enough out there of interest to people so that a momentary visit becomes an intermittent visit - so that, instead of clicking on a website, glancing around and then going, potential readers click onto something, sign up for something, join something, or otherwise commit themselves to something.

You've seen this all the time yourself and have probably clicked, signed up for, joined and otherwise committed to things yourself.

Why did you do that, in each case?

Because, to return to an earlier analogy, you liked milk - whatever was being offered

was something you needed or felt like you might enjoy.

Non-fiction writers, or those offering services and products that are not to do with fiction, find this easier: they can present free tickets to all kinds of offers. But what can a fiction writer present other than his or her book or an excerpt from it?

This is where the whole emphasis has to be different, and where writers become gatherers rather than seekers. You, as a writer, are not a hunter pursuing a hapless reader; you are a gatekeeper, inviting in a fortunate acolyte.

Yes, I know, that's quite a few metaphors now. But this one is potentially life-changing.

A writer is a gatekeeper, someone who presents a work in its most interesting form so that individual readers engage with it, understand it, and contribute to it. To be able to do this effectively, you have to know precisely what the most interesting and key simplicities of your work are. Figure those out, and a connection between the individual reader and your work will be easier to establish. Your 'free gift' won't be just something you've written and offered for free, but a specific construction, a bridge deeper and deeper into the work's heart so that the potential reader comes to know it rather than simply 'know about' it.

This bridge to this deeper knowledge is made by making sure that the work is as interesting as possible, by clearing obstacles out of the way, and by moving forward at the most optimum pace. Making it as interesting

as possible means understanding it to its core yourself, first. Once you know what lies at the story's heart, the bridgework becomes easier.

Don't expect Momentary Attention to become Captured Attention in one stroke. Your job with these people is create something that they like enough so that they linger a little; you'r not trying to fence them in. Get the momentary visit to become regular: aim for Intermittent Attention. Remember, you're not a hunter, you're a gatekeeper; your job is to show them the way, not spear them.

It's hard work capturing a cat, anyway - much better if the cat comes to you of its own accord.

And when it does?

Stay tuned - or get my book [The Seven Levels of Attention](#).

How Stories Really Work

**Exploring the
Physics of
Fiction**

by Grant P. Hudson



*'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 collage displays five covers of the magazine "High Fantasy and Science Fiction Magazine", published by Clarendon House Publications. The covers are arranged in a slightly overlapping manner on a light blue background.

- Top Left Cover (Issue #1):** Features a woman with long brown hair in a red cloak. The headline is "TALES FROM GANDRIA". Other text includes "A FREE MAGAZINE FOR LOVERS OF TOLKIEN, C.S. LEWIS, URSULA LE GUIN, ALEXANDER MARSHALL AND OTHERS" and "ISSUE #1".
- Top Middle Cover (Issue #2):** Features a wizard in a white robe and a pointed hat. The headline is "AT THE BACK OF THE NORTH WIND" by Doctor Zenmik and the Cerebrachrone. Other text includes "FREE FOR LOVERS OF TOLKIEN, C.S. LEWIS, URSULA LE GUIN, ALEXANDER MARSHALL AND OTHERS" and "ISSUE #2".
- Top Right Cover (Issue #4):** Features a futuristic city with a large circular structure. The headline is "The Boy on the Beach" by Gary Bonn. Other text includes "FREE FOR LOVERS OF TOLKIEN, C.S. LEWIS, URSULA LE GUIN, ALEXANDER MARSHALL AND OTHERS" and "ISSUE #4".
- Bottom Left Cover (Issue #5):** Features a woman wearing a silver space helmet. The headline is "AT THE BACK OF THE NORTH WIND" by GEORGE MACDONALD. Other text includes "FREE FOR LOVERS OF TOLKIEN, C.S. LEWIS, URSULA LE GUIN, ALEXANDER MARSHALL AND OTHERS" and "ISSUE #5".
- Bottom Right Cover (Issue #6):** Features a close-up of a woman's face with a green, crystalline texture. The headline is "SSS" by GARY BONN. Other text includes "FREE FOR LOVERS OF TOLKIEN, C.S. LEWIS, URSULA LE GUIN, ALEXANDER MARSHALL AND OTHERS" and "ISSUE #6".

Each cover also includes the magazine title "HIGH FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE" and the publisher's name "CLARENDON HOUSE PUBLICATIONS".

THE MAGAZINE IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SOCIAL MEDIA GROUP
HIGH FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION.
 IT IS COMPLETELY FREE TO DOWNLOAD

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www.clarendonhousebooks.com

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Grant P. Hudson

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CLARENDON HOUSE AUTHOR

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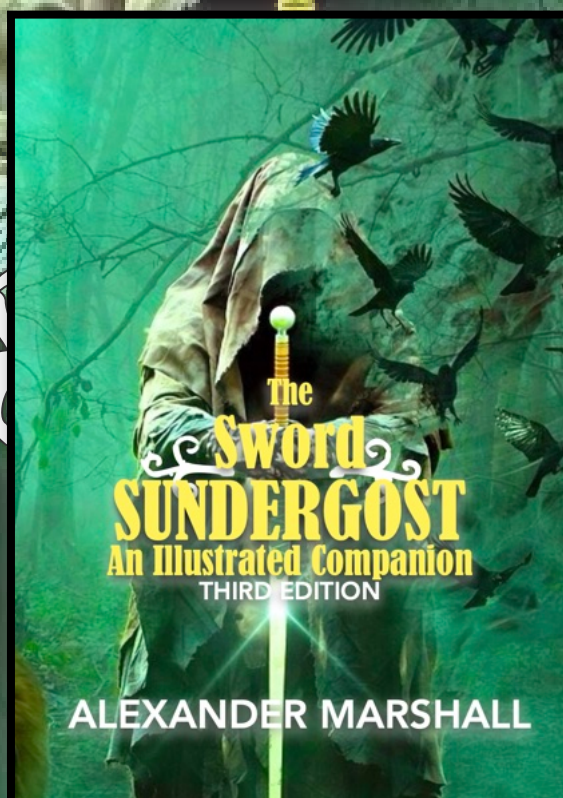
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CLARENDON HOUSE AUTHOR

GARETH MACREADY



THE BONES OF MY UNIVERSE

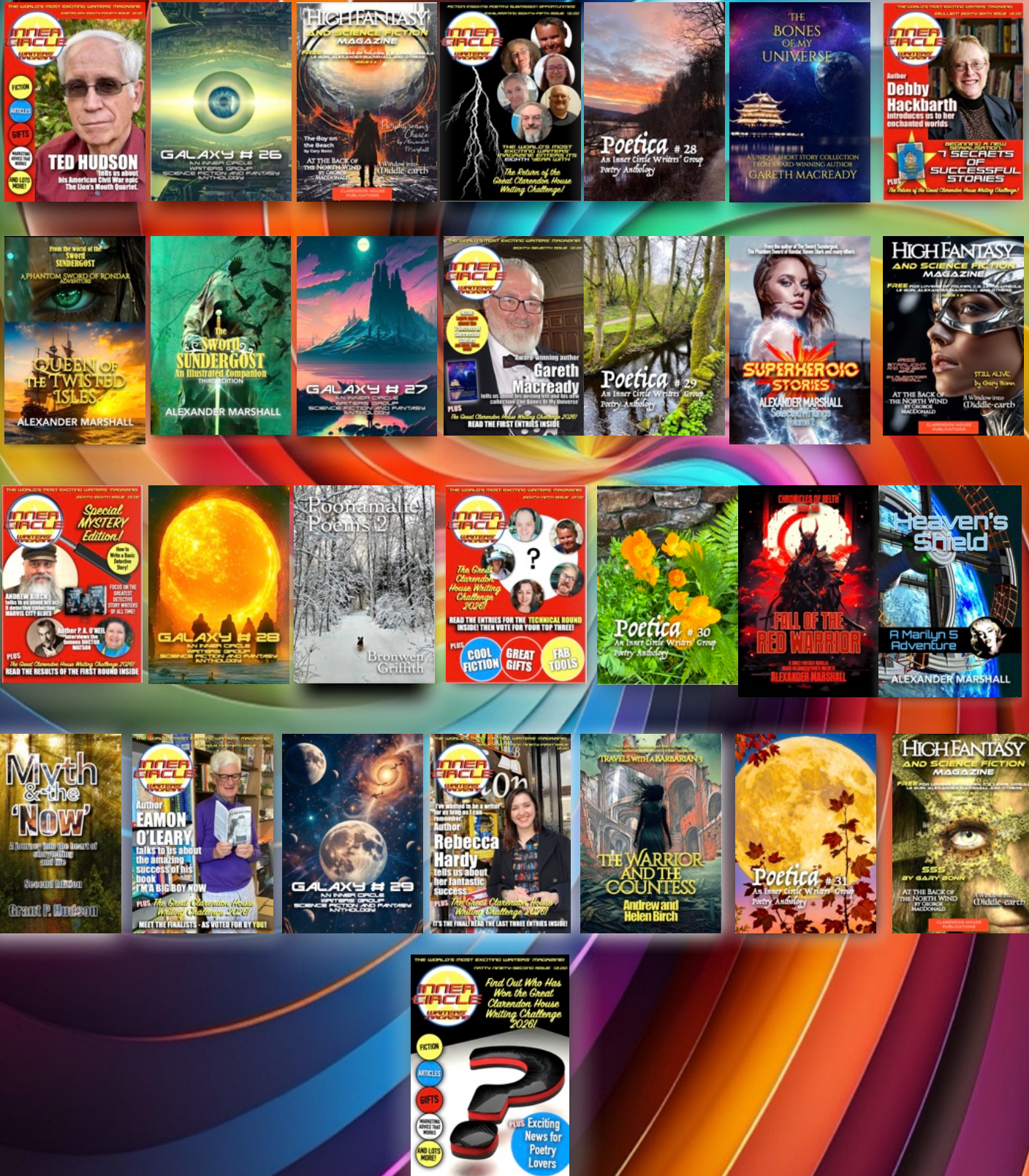


In this unique collection of short stories, Gareth Macready demonstrates both tremendous skills as a writer and an extraordinary understanding of both the Australian and Japanese cultures, blending them together to create science fiction like nothing else you will have ever read, including Dragon Tech, alien police procedures and dramatic martial arts, as well as a fine sensitivity for the human condition.

Gareth Macready lived in Japan, working as a variety act, and built a small studio theatre there. He received the Key to the City from Osaka City Council and collaborated with Japan's biggest comedy company, advising the council on the city's inaugural PerformaFest. Ten of his short stories have been published in Galaxy anthologies. One of his short stories received an Honourable Mention from The LRH Writers of the Future Competition. His short film script, Frank Sees Grandpa, won the Best Screenplay Short at the Ardélion Awards Gala 2025.

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Over seven years ago, I launched Clarendon House Publications from my home here on the edge of the Yorkshire Moors in England.

Since then, I have published almost **300** high quality items - books, magazines, course modules - and helped hundreds of authors and poets achieve publication, some for the first time.

Over 30 authors have had individual novels or collections produced through me - some of these have had several books published and have gone on to carve out careers for themselves as writers.

With the best-selling books **How Stories Really Work** and **Become a Professional Author** (and the **Become a Professional Author Course**) I have helped writers understand exactly what it is they are doing and how they are doing it - and boosted their confidence to do more of it.

Many Clarendon House writing tools have been released for free download, fully illustrated, in order to assist writers create real careers for themselves.

Now, here collected for the first time for your convenience, are all those publications with links to take you to wherever you need to go to acquire them. They make great gifts - for yourself and others!

Please email me if you have any questions or feedback:
grant@clarendonhousebooks.com

Here's to many more publications and many more years helping you achieve your dreams!

Grant P. Hudson

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