

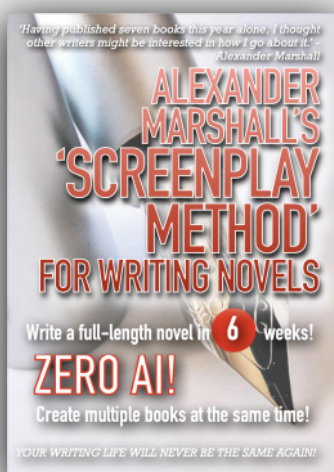
CLARENDON HOUSE PUBLICATIONS

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

This week from Clarendon House



Issue # 83 of the
Inner Circle Writers' Magazine



Alexander Marshall's
'Screenplay Method'
for Writing Novels
AVAILABLE FOR FREE
with the above magazine!



Welcome!

Welcome to the Clarendon House Newsletter for week ending 12th December 2025! Less than two weeks to Christmas! And with that in mind, this week saw the release of Issue # 83 of the **Inner Circle Writers' Magazine**, with special Christmas gifts on page 6 - a brand-new short guide to writing novels super-fast without any use of AI whatsoever, and much more!

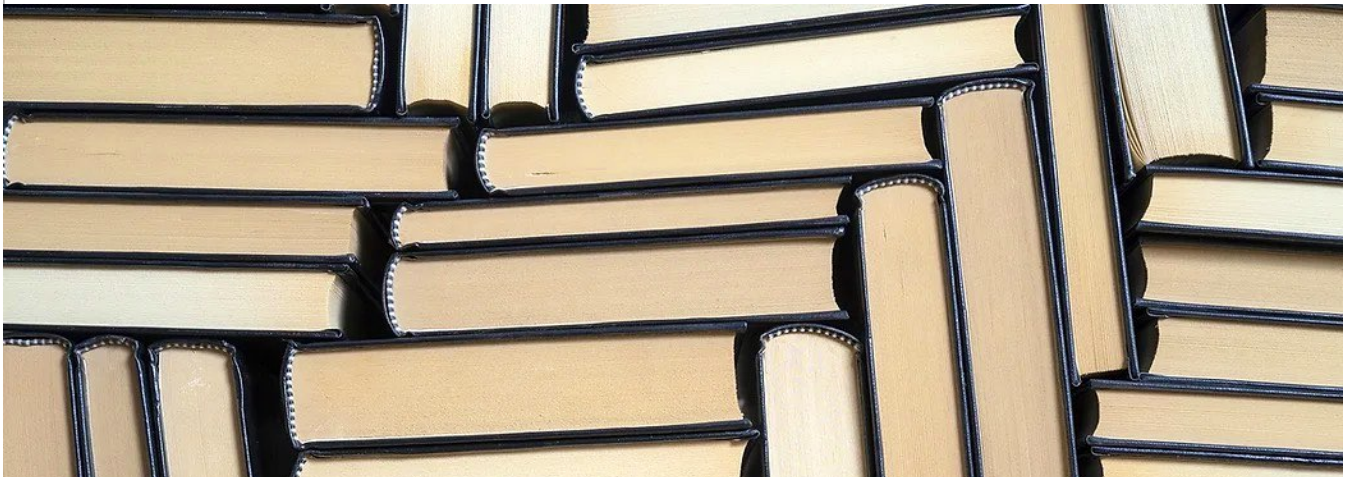
In an issue jammed with festive delights, there's also an interview with the wonderful and award-winning author **Sharon Frame Gay**, plus Christmas fiction from **Tobias Green** and **Alexander Marshall** and **Charles Dickens**, as well as another fabulous chapter of **E. E. Nesbit's** classic *The Railway Children*!

You'll also find enlightenment in another chapter from **Fictivity**, and more about the **Laws of Spamming** - and there's a **Christmas Literary Quiz** on page 50!

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Feedback is welcome. Drop me a line at grant@clarendonhousebooks.com

Below is a popular blog item.



Building a Bridge to Your 'Grand Novel'

As a writer, you probably have your 'grand novel' (or fantasy series, or family saga, or whatever) sitting either on a shelf, or in a hard drive, or still forming in your imagination somewhere. I think most writers have this to some degree: that 'perfect' and usually lengthy piece which one day they hope and imagine will be published and read by millions.

Writers then have a kind of angst about whether or not that work will actually ever get written, or, if it already exists in some form, whether or not it will ever reach its destined audience. The usual frustration arises from glancing at the many apparently insurmountable obstacles between where they are now and the completion, publication and distribution of that work. The usual advice is to 'Get writing' - but the response is, more often than not, apathy and despair in the writer.

In this article, I'm going to briefly look at a different approach to getting to that goal. I'm going to do it by examining a model from the tried-and-tested world of information marketing, which has been with us for over a decade now.

Information marketers - that is, people who have and want to sell some kind of digital

information product like an e-book or online course - are normally advised to construct a 'product ladder' as the primary vehicle to move new customers from low-value to high-value and as a way to routinely increase average 'lifetime customer value'. What this means is something that you may have encountered yourself: first of all, they put out a 'free report' or short checklist or something which a prospect simply downloads in exchange for their email address; then that prospect is led on from that to a low-priced item, which then leads to a slightly higher-priced item, and so on, up to the largest and most expensive item at the top of the 'ladder'. You have probably climbed such a ladder at least partway at some point yourself. The concept is that, instead of trying to sell the giant, high-cost thing at the top of the ladder to the public straight away, you draw them up a series of steps until they are ready to view and perhaps purchase it. A product ladder within the arena of information marketing, then, is defined as a coordinated series of products typically getting deeper and larger in terms of value of content, as well as escalating in perceived value and price.

Let's imagine for a moment that your grand novel, in whatever shape it is in at the moment, is the thing at the top of one of these 'ladders'. This is the item which you hope readers will buy, read and love - it is your legacy, the one piece of writing that you would like to be remembered for, the one thing that you are proudest of. It might be the longest, or it might not; it might be the most expensive, or perhaps not. It is, or will be, your best work, as far as you are concerned.

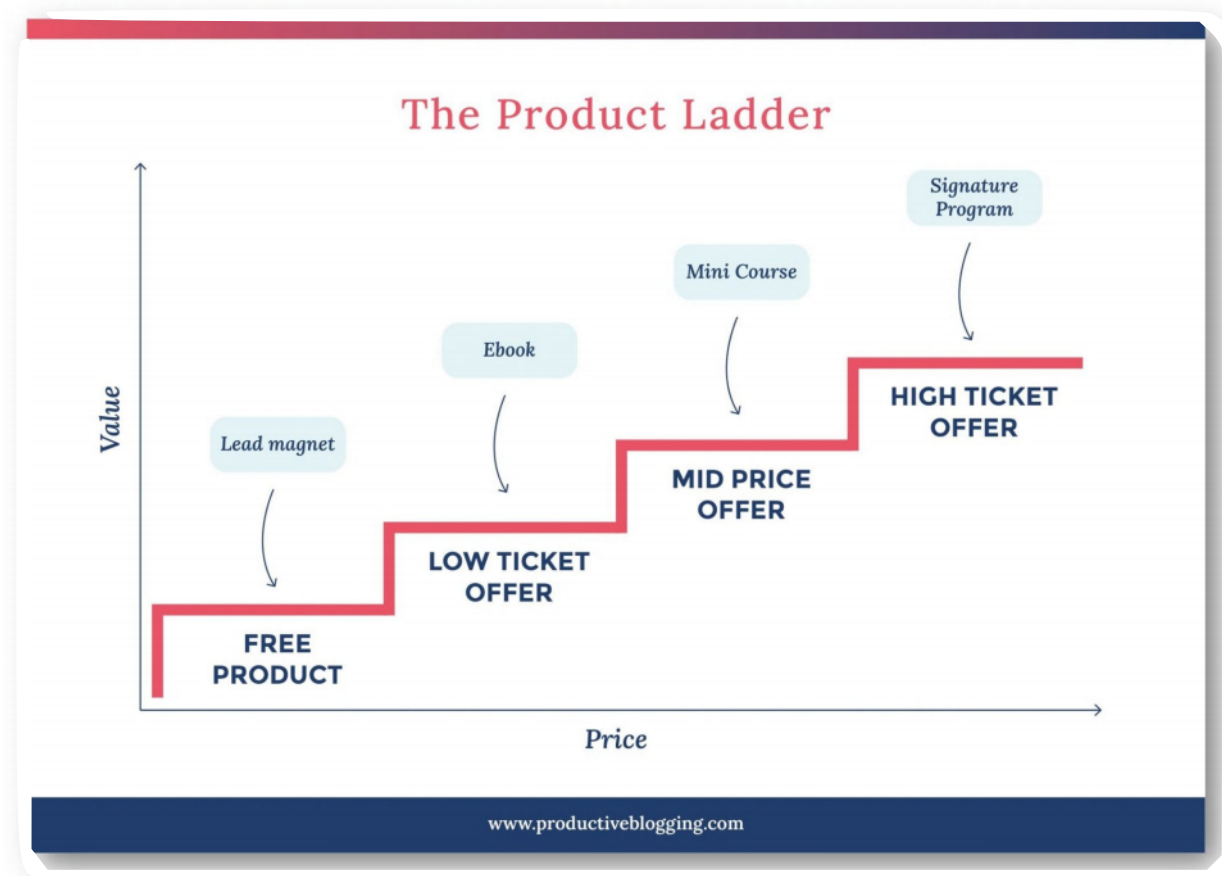
How can you build a 'product ladder' leading up to it?

We need to first look at what the professional info marketers do. Where this advice about product ladders typically falls apart in the world of marketing, is in the order marketers are taught to use when putting together the various products for their ladder. The way lots of them do it is from the top down - i.e. they start with their most expensive backend product (or the biggest backend product/offer they eventually want to have), and then pull-out pieces or chunks of that big backend product to create smaller products lower on their product ladder. Pulling-out more and

more chunks, getting the content more and more focused, gives them a range of items all the way down to their 'free offer' that will be used to acquire new customers at the bottom of their ladder.

If you were to follow this advice as a writer, you would take chapters of your grand novel, your best work, and turn them into self-sufficient 'mini-books' of their own; then take sections out of those chapters and create short stories, perhaps; then take aspects of those short stories and create character studies or histories or maps or back stories about each. These smaller items would then be presented to prospective readers, perhaps for free. The idea would be that these glimpses, these snippets, would draw the readers deeper into your world, and further up the ladder: they would admire a map, then buy a short story, then indulge in small novel before committing themselves to the grand work at the top.

It sounds credible and perhaps even exciting. Those of you with a grand novel already written may think immediately of how could you emulate this.





But the truth is that the way the top marketers go about this process is in the reverse order. They approach it from the bottom up.

First they create a front-end, customer acquisition product, the lowest rung of the ladder. They then build up from there.

Let's be clear, though: in the massive world of marketing, the most successful information marketers and companies usually have multiple product ladders. Various product ladders get put together based on the responses of the public to a range of different front-end products and offers. For example, a retail company might put out a series of free vouchers for various in-shop items. Based on which vouchers prove the most popular over a period of time, the retailer develops that ladder further. Successful front-end products are the ones that may get a full or partial product ladder built around them.

Those front-end products and offers that don't pull in new customers do not get their product ladder developed. Taking this bottom-up approach, the most successful info-marketers and companies build product ladders based on products, topics, ideas, and content that have been proven to be of interest to the public.

Do you see the difference? The top-down approach is based on pure assumptions of what the public wants. It can collapse quickly and totally if the public aren't interested in the first item on the ladder.

Now, for writers, this is scary in a number of ways. Whereas dividing up a grand work into smaller and smaller sections and spreading it around sounds as though it might have some promise, the notion that that might fail because readers might not be interested is potentially devastating. But also, to do it the other way is challenging: it means writing a lot more and in a wider range.

The difficult-to-confront truth is that it is the front-end, 'first rung on the ladder' items that allow you discover what your market wants and desires. If you could put out more and more small 'first rung on the ladder' pieces, you would quickly learn which styles, topics, ideas, and content your market is most keen to engage with and, most importantly (at this stage), willing to pay for. It's the response to these small and often free items that enables you to then decide how you want to develop larger, deeper products for a full or partial product ladder.

Done this way, from the bottom up, as it were, you have a much greater chance of creating a sequence of bigger items that potential new customers are actually going to reach for, because it will all be built based on what the market has shown they want more of.

‘But what does that mean?’ you might protest. ‘Does that mean that I have to try a variety of different styles and topics and produce possibly dozens of shorter works before my grand novel will ever see the light of day? And how, if the public is only interested in other things, will they ever get to like my greatest work?’

I understand these issues totally, and there are a number of answers to them.

Yes, to make this model work, you have to write a lot more and in a wider range of styles, covering a broader gamut of topics than perhaps you are used to. This will stretch you as a writer, and possibly push you to the edge of what you can do. It will inevitably lead away from what you consider to be your greatest work, into realms of writing that perhaps you have avoided in the past. Is this just ‘populism’, following the crowd, or, worse, following the

money? ‘What happened to the integrity of my own style?’ you might say. ‘What if I don’t like to write in another way?’

It’s up to you. But if you think about it, what we’re doing here is building a bridge, and the strongest bridges normally rest on the widest foundations. The broader and more varied you can make your writing, the more chance you have of building a bridge which eventually leads your readers to the grand novel you always dreamed they would read and love.

For example: your grand novel is a huge, sprawling space opera set in the distant future. But you find that, following the model above, your most popular item, as shown by the level of interest and engagement of readers when you offered a short e-novel for free on the internet, is a Western cowboy tale about a gunslinger lost in the desert, told in the idiom of that genre. What should you do? Write more Westerns, expanding upon your original themes and stories, and develop a following of loyal readers. Over a period of time, some of those readers will become avid fans who will seek for other works by you - enter, stage right, your grand space opera adventure.



If you were to divide up your space opera story as in the 'top down' template above, offering a snippet for free on the internet, you might find that the style and subject matter are of no interest to readers at that time, and conclude that your writing career is doomed and that you are 'no good'.

Your job as a writer going forward is to be hugely prolific and experimental with shorter forms of fiction which stretch your style and range of subject matter as far as you can go. Find out what the market wants and then create backend products and product ladders with a high likelihood of success, profits, and a

growing following. Then, at an appropriate point up the ladder, introduce your fans to the work you have hidden in the back, your greatest novel.

One of the huge side advantages to this approach is that you will grow as a writer in ways that you didn't expect: you will produce more volume and a wider range of quality in styles that you wouldn't have thought possible without taking this approach. And who knows? Perhaps even the 'grand novel' that you have had sitting somewhere for years will turn out to be only one of a series of utterly different grand novels in years to come.

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)

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TOBIAS GREEN
AND ALEXANDER MARSHALL

**SAGA OF THE INNER WORLDS
VOLUME ONE**



THE GENETIAN



'Genet, the worldsphere known as Emerald, is categorised as a winterworld...'
First in Tobias Green's renowned
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Humble beekeeper Veren Vantra, living a quiet life alone on the island of Garth on the seas of a half-frozen world, discovers in his cellars a creature unlike anything he has seen before...

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Why has the fabled Citadel of the North remained hidden deep in the Great Ice for centuries?

And, while the machinations of the War Lord overturn the world and everything that ordinary Genetians think they know, it falls to Veren to solve the riddle of the Golden Worm...

For lovers of fiction like that of Ursula K. Le Guin, or the Icelandic Sagas, or J. R. R. Tolkien, or mediaeval epics.

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ANDREW and HELEN BIRCH



Space Truckers 6 Marvis City Blues



Jack Booth turned into the shadows, and away from the blinking neon that permeated the mask covering his face. Avoiding the puddles of the alley, he stepped into a doorway, and opened the door. Looking around, he sighed. The sign that read 'Booth, Private Investigations', was faded and peeling...

Outside, Marvis City was alive. Vendors with street stalls hawked their wares among the neon signs, to the throng of night owls, with tastes and smells from across the galaxy. Con-artists and tricksters walked up and down the strip looking for the unsuspecting tourists, and the easy mark. Cabs lifted off and set down, taking drunken revellers from across the galaxy, to night spots and flesh pots, where a week's wages could be spent in a moment. Whatever you could imagine, it could be bought in Marvis City. Whatever kink or fantasy your heart desired, as long as you had the green, it was here for the taking...

Come to Marvis City in the universe of the Spacetruckers and enter the dark world of the detective especially that of Jack Booth, scarred ex-soldier from the Celeron Wars, who now battles against injustice and corruption as a detective in one of the wildest cities in the galaxy...

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High in the Absaroka Range of the wild territory of Wyoming, Red Valley became the home of three great families, the Castletons, the Malmouths - and the Kings, who took the narrow land around High Gulch, amongst the peaks.

But when Victoria King's father Matt dies, her whole world begins to unravel - what she thought was her home is soon left far behind as she is pursued across snowy mountains and through dark, twisting valleys by evil men, focused on one thing: possessing her, and through her the whole valley. Strange, half-savage men, wild, half-demonic bears, and a man who has no heart at all await her on the road, and much more besides...

Join Victoria King, her loyal partner Abe Stone, the peculiar wild man Old Laramie, Captain Stirling and others on a ride you will never forget into 1880s Wyoming, where the only real law is written by the bullet...



The Shattered Stone

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BERNARD CRISPIN
WITH ALEXANDER MARSHALL

THE JOURNALS OF
SUSAN COVENTRY
VOLUME ONE

WINTER'S
DOOR

When Susan Coventry and her brother Reggie are evacuated to a huge rambling ruin of a house in Yorkshire after a bomb in the London Blitz kills their parents, little do they suspect the adventures they'll have...

Like meeting Professor Cassius Clocktower, the mysterious man from another world, and his tiny lightbird, Erith...

Or discovering the strange mystery of the Beckenwith Necklace...

Or encountering the Ghost of Greenbridge Gate...

Or trying to figure out how on earth to get rid of the horrible Skelthorpes...

And what is the real significance of the portal known as Winter's Door?

Begin following the exploits of Susan and her brother in this first of the Journals of Susan Coventry.



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CLARENDON HOUSE AUTHOR ALEXANDER MARSHALL RAVEN STARK: HYPEREAN WARS



THE RETURN OF CAPTAIN INVINCIBLE

1940: Britain and Nazi Germany are at war.

HMS Eagle, under the command of Captain John Strange, is sent to investigate a huge craft of extra-terrestrial origin which has plunged into the ocean west of Spitsbergen. He finds that the Germans have been there first - and that the secrets of the ship threaten to alter not only his life, but the entire destiny of humanity...

In this novella launching the Raven Stark series, sorcery and spectral evil meet super-science and space wars - and the world will never be the same again...

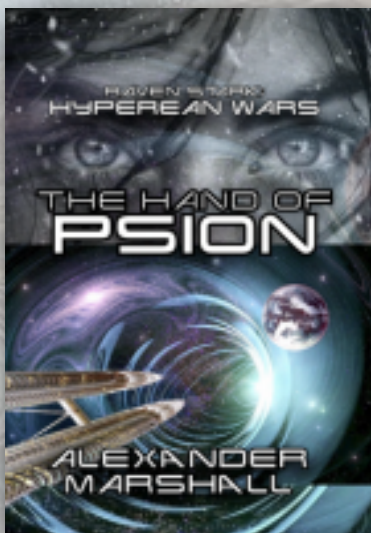
SPECTREBROOD

1940: Britain stands alone on the threshold of an invasion...

But from an alien craft in the Arctic Sea comes an evil even greater than the Nazi threat...

Raven Stark, a gifted but physically challenged orphan with a talent for tackling bullies, stumbles upon a secret initiative to save humanity hidden under an ordinary London shop...

When her best friend disappears while seeking her sinister father, Raven is driven to make decisions that will change life on Earth in ways no one could have imagined - and to find out who, or what, she really is...



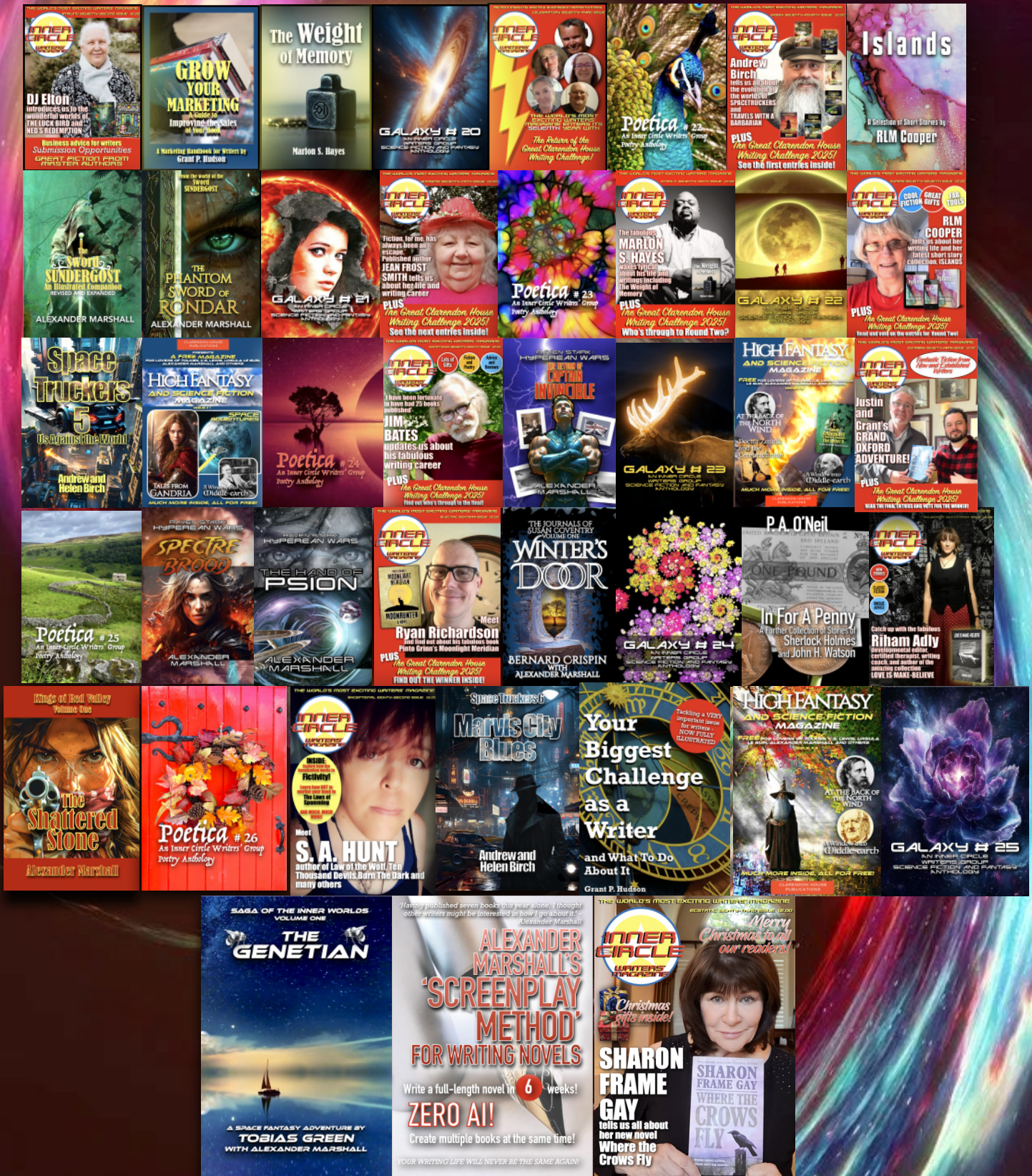
THE HAND OF PSION

1940: the Nazi regime stands poised to invade Britain...

But the nascent British Space Fleet has its hands full with a menace far more powerful, one that threatens all life on Earth...

With her best friend taken by the enemy for purposes too dark to contemplate, and Captain Invincible shorn of his powers, the newly emancipated Raven Stark finds herself confronting the ultimate challenge alone, on the frozen edge of the world...

CLARENDON HOUSE PUBLICATIONS 2025 so far!



Stay tuned for much more!
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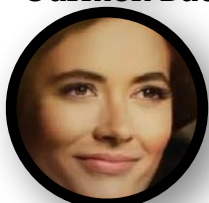
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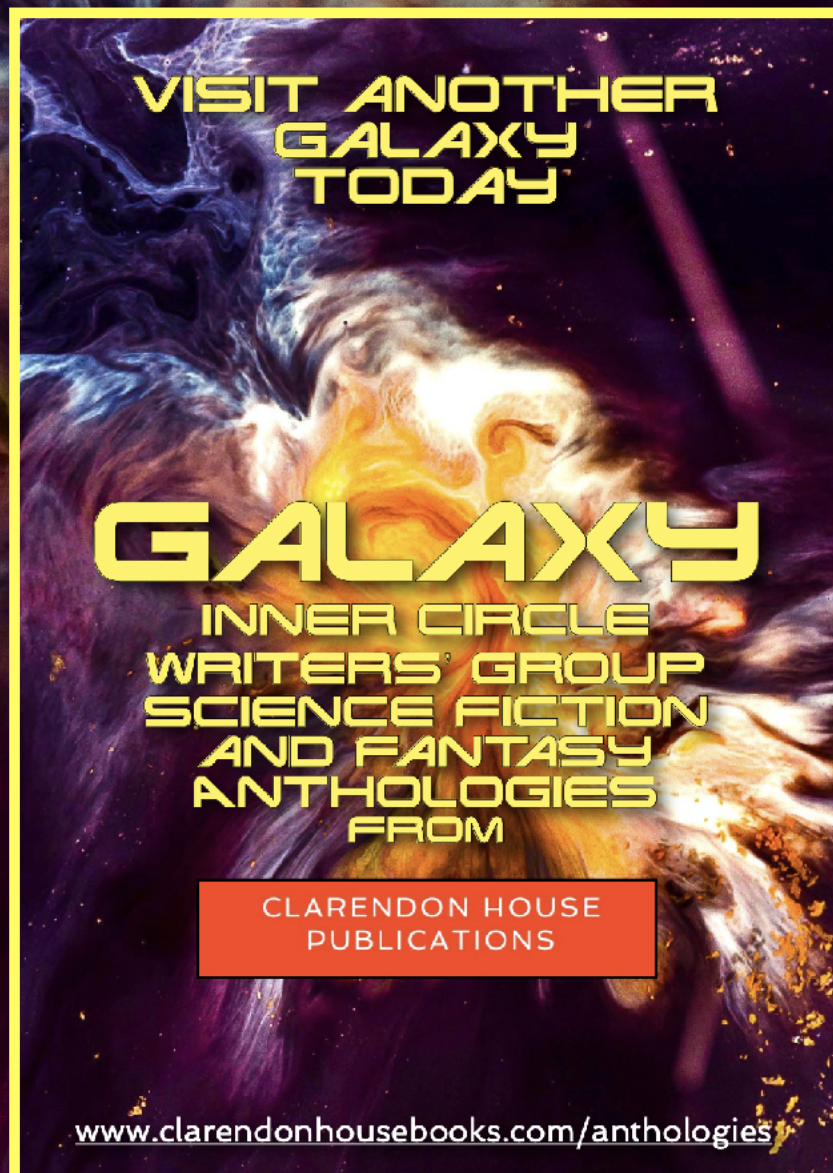


Samantha Hamilton

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powers and strange
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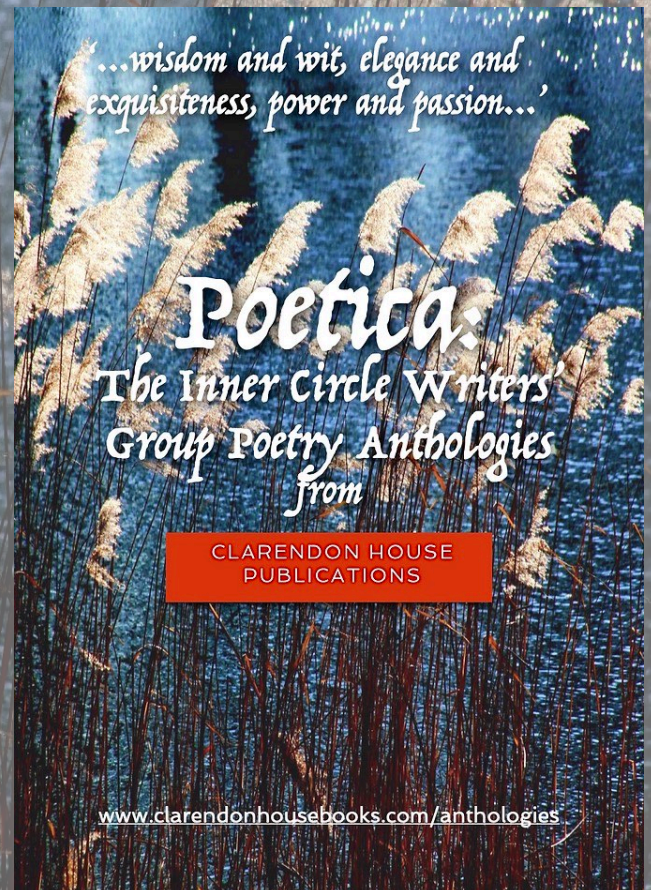
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The

Poetica

anthologies

*Poetry should surprise
by a fine excess and not
by singularity—it should
strike the reader as a
wording of his own
highest thoughts, and
appear almost a
remembrance.
— John Keats*



For a complete guide to the Poetica anthologies,
including new submission guidelines,
please download this free guide at
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CLARENDON HOUSE AUTHOR

ALEXANDER MARSHALL



THE PHANTOM SWORD OF RONDAR

Annua Larkswing once studied to be a Herald of Raendu in the Hall of Ramsgarden high in the hills of Rondar - but she abandoned the ways of peace and went to fight in the War of the Sword, becoming one of the fabled Crimson Company...

Fearful Fretravorn is home to the Bloodseekers, vicious raiders who seek the downfall of the kingdom of Rondar across the sea; they will stop at nothing to utterly destroy that realm...

*When a savage raid upon the coastal village of Tagavorn results in the cruel death of Krisain, Annua's adopted daughter, a wild and vengeful power is unleashed which neither the lord of the Bloodseekers nor the queen of Rondar could have foreseen: it is time for the **Phantom Sword of Rondar** to strike again...*

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-David Bowmore, author of *The Magic of Deben Market*

The Sword SUNDERGOST



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