Introduction
The Infinite Boundary
What is, and isn't, science fiction and fantasy, and by whose standards: publishers', writers', readers'
What basic concepts and approaches qualify a story as true speculative fiction, and how SF and fantasy differ from one another
World Creation
How to build, populate, and dramatize a credible, inviting world that readers will want to share with you
Dragging ideas through "the idea net" of why, how, and with what result
Developing the rules of your world ... and then abiding by them and making them matter: the rules of Time, Space, and Magic
Working out the history, language, geography, and customs of your invented world
Story Construction
Finding a character for an idea, or developing ideas for a character to enact
Qualifications for the main character: who hurts the most? Who has power and freedom to act?
Should the viewpoint character be the main character? How do you decide?
Determining where the story should begin and end
The MICE quotient: milieu, idea, character, event--knowing which is most important in your story will help you decide its proper shape
Writing Well
Keeping exposition in its place
Leading your reader into the strangeness, step by step
Piquing the reader's interest
Keeping the "level of diction" appropriate to the story's imagined world
Using invented jargon sparsely and effectively
The Life and Business of Writing
The markets for short and long speculative fiction--magazines, anthologies, fanzines--and how to reach them
Classes, workshops, conferences and conventions
Collaboration, adaptation, and shared worlds
Professional writers' organizations
Awards in speculative fiction
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