

Dare to know

Action and Adventure Fiction

Fiction featuring characters involved in exciting and usually dangerous activities and adventures.

A genre in which protagonists are engaged in fast-paced plots while completing a task that takes them to different, often exotic geographical locations. The elements of physical peril and violent conflict are often the focus. Protagonists' escapades are normally based in the real world, and stories can feature people in any time period, past or present. Settings may include the wharfs and barrooms of the Far East, the mountain passes of the Tibetan peaks, the back alleys of European cities, the goldfields of the Klondike, or the forgotten trails of Amazon jungles and African savannah. Protagonists could interact with mercenaries, merchant marines, Third World warlords, revolutionaries, narcotics kingpins, and soldiers. Action and adventure stories can easily overlap with other genres, such as **fantasy fiction**, **historical fiction**, **science fiction**, **spy fiction**, and **war fiction**. Homer's *The Odyssey* (8th BC), Miguel de Cervantes's *The Adventures of Don Quixote de la Mancha* (1605), Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Alexandre Dumas's *The Three Musketeers* (1844), Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1872), Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped* (1886), H. Rider Haggard's *She* (1887), Rudyard Kipling's *The Man Who Would Be King* (1888), Anthony Hope's *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1894), Jack London's *The Call of the Wild* (1903), Edgar Rice Burroughs's *Tarzan of the Apes* (1912), Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *Southern Mail* (1929), Alistair Maclean's *Ice Station Zebra* (1963), and Kenneth Robeson's *The Man of Bronze* (1964) are classic examples.

The late 1960s and the 1970s saw an explosion of action and adventure fiction (sometimes called "Men's Adventure") that was a continuation of the earlier James Bond craze. These later paperback novels still featured spies, but focused more on organized crime and vigilantism. Crusading protagonists were often Vietnam veterans who had suffered a personal tragedy at the hands of a criminal syndicate and used their combat skills to strike back. This trend largely changed to military and counterespionage themes in the 1980s, as main characters took the fight to terrorists and Communist agents. Nick Carter's *Killmaster* series (1964-1990), Warren Murphy and Richard Sapir's *The Destroyer* series (1971-ongoing), and Don Pendleton's *The Executioner* series (1969-ongoing) began the trend. This subset of novels has been mostly replaced by the **thriller** genre.

Common Elements

Exciting action sequences
High stakes
Bold decisions
Risk taking

Danger
Intrigue
Mystery

Benefits of Reading

Draws a reader into worlds they may never explore
Allows readers to see places they may

never visit
Gives readers a spark of adventure

Modern Literary Examples

<i>7 Deadly Wonders</i> (2006) by Matthew Reilly
<i>Argentine Deadline</i> (1982) by Gar Wilson
<i>The Barrabas Run</i> (1983) by Jack Hild
<i>Brotherhood of the Rose</i> (1984) by David Morrell
<i>The Chinese Bandit</i> (1975) by Steven D. Becker
<i>Criminal Investigation Detachment</i> (2006) by Don Bendell
<i>Deadly Reunion</i> (1984) by Mike McCray
<i>The Death Merchant</i> (1971) by Joseph Rupert
<i>Firefox</i> (1977) by Craig Thomas
<i>Force Nine</i> (1986) by Robin Moore
<i>The Genesis Code</i> (1997) by John Case
<i>The Hard Corps</i> (1986) by Chuck Bainbridge
<i>The Heracles Commando</i> (1989) by Edward McGhee

<i>Holes</i> (1998) by Louis Sachar
<i>Jaws</i> by Peter Benchley (1974)
<i>Last of the Breed</i> (1986) by Louis L'Amour
<i>The Lost Sisterhood</i> (2015) by Anne Fortier
<i>Night Over the Solomons</i> (1986) by Louis L'Amour
<i>The Ninety-Nine</i> (1984) by Jeffrey Ahearn
<i>The Ninja</i> (1980) by Eric Van Lustbader
<i>Payback</i> (1989) by J. C. Pollock
<i>Point of Impact</i> (1993) by Stephen Hunter
<i>Pronto</i> (1993) by Elmore Leonard
<i>Raise the Titanic!</i> (1976) by Clive Cussler
<i>Razor</i> (1988) by Barry Sadler
<i>Red Storm Rising</i> (1986) by Tom Clancy and Larry Bond
<i>Sahara</i> (1992) by Clive Cussler

<i>Tower of Terror</i> (1982) by Dick Stivers

<i>Vortex</i> (1991) by Larry Bond

<i>Wild Life</i> (2019) by Molly Gloss
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