

BARTON

LIBRARY

Dare to know

Fantasy Fiction

Fiction in which magic and extraordinary characters are integral to the story.

A genre in which the elements that are introduced could not occur in the contemporary world as humans know it. Fantasy is the oldest genre of literature with roots in mythology and folklore that are thousands of years old. While settings can include other planets or undiscovered dimensions, most often the stories take place in a world that is medieval in tone. Architecture, clothing, language, and technology resemble to some degree the European Middle Ages. Allegories and archetypes are conventional features of fantasy literature. Fantasy is normally distinguished from **science fiction** or **horror fiction**, but the themes of the genres do sometimes overlap. The *Vetala Panchavimshati* (ca. 11th century AD), Chrétien de Troyes's *Yvain, the Knight of the Lion* (ca. 1100), the *Ulster Cycle* (ca. 12th century), and the *Völsunga* saga (ca. 13th century) are early influential works. Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), George MacDonald's *Phantastes* (1858) and *Lilith* (1895), Lord Dunsany's *The King of Effland's Daughter* (1924), Hope Mirrlees's *Lud-in-the-Mist* (1926), and Mervyn Peake's *Titus Groan* (1946) are classic examples.

Common Elements

Magic or witchcraft
Sorcerers, wizards, or witches
Mythical or supernatural creatures
Plants and substances with magical

properties
Direct and indirect appearances of gods, spirits, and demons
Symbolism and allusions

Benefits of Reading

Expands the readers' imaginations without restrictions
Encourages readers to creatively approach problems and devise innovative solutions
Allows readers a respite from stress and difficulties
Permits readers to enter a magical world

full of wonder and adventure
Allows readers to reflect on metaphorical or allegorical parallels between reality and fantasy
Stimulates hope in readers that good shall triumph over evil
Inspires readers to dream and to strive

Modern Literary Examples

<i>The Blue Sword</i> (1982) by Robin McKinley
<i>The Bone Season</i> (2013) by Samantha Smith

<i>Circe</i> (2018) by Madeline Miller
<i>The Darkness That Comes Before</i> (2004) by R. Scott Bakker
<i>The Eyre Affair</i> (2001) by Jasper Fforde

<i>Graceling</i> (2008) by Kristin Cashore
<i>The Grace of Kings</i> (2015) by Ken Liu
<i>Gate of Ivrel</i> (1976) by C. J. Cherryh
<i>The Gospel of Loki</i> (2015) by Joanne M. Harris
<i>Kushiel's Dart</i> (2002) by Jacqueline Carey
<i>The Language of Thorns</i> (2017) by Leigh Bardugo
<i>The Library at Mount Char</i> (2015) by Scott Hawkins
<i>The Lies of Locke Lamora</i> (2006) by Scott Lynch
<i>The Lightning Thief</i> (2005) by Rick Riordan
<i>Little, Big</i> (1981) by John Crowley
<i>Lord Foul's Bane</i> (1977) by Stephen R. Donaldson
<i>The Night Circus</i> (2010) by Erin Morgenstern
<i>On a Pale Horse</i> (1983) by Piers Anthony
<i>Ready Player One</i> (2011) by Ernest Cline
<i>Red Queen</i> (2015) by Victoria Aveyard
<i>Retribution Falls</i> (2011) by Chris Wooding
<i>The Ring of Fire</i> (1979) by Shirley

Rousseau Murphy
<i>The Rise of Magicks</i> (2019) by Nora Roberts
<i>The Rook</i> (2012) by Daniel O'Malley
<i>Scar Night</i> (2007) by Alan Campbell
<i>The Scorpio Races</i> (2011) by Maggie Stiefvater
<i>Shadow of the Fox</i> (2018) by Julie Kagawa
<i>A Stranger in Olondria</i> (2013) by Sofia Samatar
<i>Theft of Swords</i> (2011) by Michael J. Sullivan
<i>The Time Traveler's Wife</i> (2003) by Audrey Niffenegger
<i>Traitor's Blade</i> (2014) by Sebastian De Castell
<i>Who Fears Death</i> (2010) by Nnedi Okorafor
<i>The Witching Hour</i> (1990) by Anne Rice
<i>Witchmark</i> (2019) by C. L. Polk
<i>The Wood Wife</i> (1996) by Terri Winding
<i>The Year of the Witching</i> (2020) by Alexis Henderson
<i>Zothique</i> (1970) by Clark Ashton Smith