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Dare to Know

In addition to the recognized sub-genre, historical fiction can be organized into several informal subsets:

Family Sagas

This subset features plots that chronicle the lives of a family, or a number of interconnected families, over a period of time. In contrast to multi-period epics, which focus on the setting or era, family sagas often explore the clan's subtleties, relationships, and struggles on an epic scale, as they navigate historical events, changes of social circumstances, the ebb and flow of personal fortunes, and other challenges over several generations. Noteworthy examples include Maxim Gorky's *The Artamonov Business* (1925), Riccardo Bacchelli's *The Mill on the Po* (1950), John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* (1952), and Vladimir Nabokov's *Invitation of a Bezar* (1969).

Common Elements

Romance
Family dynamics

Grand perspective

Modern Literary Examples

<i>The Bastard</i> (1974) by John Jakes
<i>Bellefleur</i> (1980) by Joyce Carol Oates
<i>Evergreen</i> (1978) by Belva Plain
<i>Fall of Giants</i> (2010) by Ken Follett
<i>North and South</i> (1982) by John Jakes
<i>Salt Houses</i> (2017) by Hala Alyan
<i>Shadows of the Pomegranate Tree</i> (1992) by Tariq Ali

<i>The Song of the Sun God</i> (2022) by Shankari Chandran
<i>The Thorn Birds</i> (1977) by Colleen McCullough
<i>A Thousand Splendid Suns</i> (2007) by Khaled Hosseini
<i>The Turner House</i> (2015) by Angela Flourney

Historical Military Fiction

A subset in which **war fiction** is blended with **historical fiction**. The protagonist's story is depicted amidst actual events of a specific conflict and the true-life figures involved. The distinctive element is that the setting takes place in a historical era, usually one occurring at least fifty years before the time of publication. Rather than entirely drawing on personal experience, authors of military historical fiction must create their characters, dialogue, plots, and settings through research. The best writers consult as many primary and secondary sources as possible to achieve an authentic and reasonably accurate novel. However, various amounts of creative license may be employed to account for an incomplete historical record or to satisfy the demands of the story. William Shakespeare's *Henry V* (c. 1599), James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (1869), Stephen Crane's *Red Badge of Courage*

(1895), Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* (1936), Rosemary Sutcliff's *The Eagle of the North* (1954), Robert Penn Warren's *Wilderness* (1961), and Richard McKenna's *The Sand Pebbles* (1962) are well-known examples.

Common Elements

Brotherhood in war
Heroism
Sacrifice
Duty
Loyalty

Honor
Epic battles
Period social mores
Military hierarchy

Modern Literary Examples

<i>The Barefoot Brigade</i> (1982) by Douglas C. Jones
<i>Corelli's Mandolin</i> (1994) by Louis de Bernières
<i>The Day of the Jackal</i> (1971) by Frederick Forsyth
<i>Eagle in the Snow</i> (1970) by Wallace Breem
<i>Enigma</i> (1995) by Richard Harris
<i>Faded Coat of Blue</i> (1999) by Owen Parry
<i>Gates of Fire</i> (1998) by Stephen Pressfield
<i>The Gates of Rome</i> (2003) by Conn Iggulden
<i>Gods and Generals</i> (2005) by Jeff Shaara
<i>The Iron Lance</i> (1998) by Stephen R. Lawhead
<i>The Killer Angels</i> (1974) by Michael Shaara
<i>The Last Kingdom</i> (2004) by Bernard Cornwell
<i>The Lieutenants</i> (1982) by W.E.B. Griffin

<i>Lion of Ireland</i> (1980) by Morgan Llewelyn
<i>Night Soldiers</i> (1988) by Alan Furst
<i>The Parisians</i> (2019) by Marius Gabriel
<i>Pride of Carthage</i> (2005) by David Anthony Durham
<i>Red Sky</i> (2022) by Tom Young
<i>The Scarlet Thief</i> (2013) by Paul Fraser Collard
<i>Sharpe's Rifles</i> (1988) by Bernard Cornwell
<i>The Song of Achilles</i> (2011) by Madeline Miller
<i>The Song of Troy</i> (1998) by Colleen McCullough
<i>The Ten Thousand</i> (2001) by Michael Curtis Ford
<i>Under the Eagle</i> (2000) by Simon Scarrow
<i>Warriors of God</i> (2001) by James Reston Jr.

Multi-Period Epics

Similar to family sagas, this subset follows a region, a people, or events over several decades. Often, the setting acts as a central character, and multi-period epics can demonstrate the similarities and differences between the present and the past, and the changes imposed on a specific place over time. A key distinction is that scenes alternate between past and present, and the historical narrative informs later characters' situations in meaningful ways. Different protagonists may be connected across time by an object (e.g., safety-deposit key, diary, heirloom, artwork), a place (e.g., a city, a home) or an inciting event (e.g., war, revolution, estrangement) that unlocks a long-hidden secret, thematically brings parallel journeys together, or examines familial, political, and cultural legacies. These books may be written as a single volume or stretch across several volumes. James Michener's *The Source* (1965) is a highly regarded example.

Common Elements

Contemporary and historical subplots
Linkage of characters across time periods

Discovery of secrets

Modern Literary Examples

<i>The Book of Speculation</i> (2015) by Erika Swyler
<i>The Cloister</i> (2018) by James Carroll
<i>Court of Lions</i> (2017) by Jane Johnson
<i>The Glass Palace</i> (2001) by Amitav Ghosh
<i>The House Girl</i> (2013) by Tara Conklin
<i>The House at Riverton</i> (2009) by Kate Morton
<i>I Was Anastasia</i> (2018) by Ariel Lawhon
<i>Juliet</i> (2010) by Anne Fortier
<i>A Long Time Gone</i> (2014) by Karen White
<i>The Last Painting of Sara de Vos</i> (2016) by Dominic Smith
<i>The Mapmaker's Children</i> (2015) by

Sarah McCoy
<i>Mitla Pass</i> (1988) by Leon Uris
<i>The Necklace</i> (2017) by Claire McMillan
<i>Next Year in Havana</i> (2018) by Chanel Cleeton
<i>Orphan Train</i> (2013) by Christina Baker Kline
<i>Paris</i> (2013) by Edward Rutherfurd
<i>A Paris Apartment</i> (2014) by Michelle Gable
<i>Stolen Beauty</i> (2017) by Laurie Lico Albanese
<i>Those Who Save Us</i> (2004) by Jenna Blum
<i>The Women of Chateau Lafayette</i> (2021) by Sarah Stephanie Dray