**FANTASY**

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| **DEFINITION:** Fantasy is speculative fiction based on magic or myth. The plots usually emphasize journeys, whether psychological or physical, and stress the importance of human virtues through individual acts of courage, sacrifice, and kindness. Long-running series are very popular, an example being the Piers Anthony *Xanth* novels. Complex and internally consistent rules support the manifestation of magical beings and actions, but the appeal is to the reader's emotions, not intellect. |

**CHARACTERISTICS:** Mythical beasts abound, and everyday animals gain special powers (speech, telekinesis). Other universes exist, and magic is used to travel between them. Objects become filled with power and even personality, and conflict is often over possessing these swords, rings, cloaks, etc. The mythology of every culture is mined for ideas. A focus on the arts is common. They are plot-driven above all else, though the frame and setting build the fantasy world for the reader. Urban settings are the exception, not the rule.

**APPEAL:** Fantasy worlds are rich, and beautiful, and embrace the natural world. The characters are fluid, often transforming literally (from human to wolf) or figuratively (from goose girl to Queen). Emotional strengths are paramount: bravery, kindness, love. There is often a strong element of romance, or the satisfaction of finding one’s “proper” place in the world. The stories speak to a long history of human belief in myths and magic.

**SUBGENRES:***Arthurian:* the King Arthur myths, in historical or modern settings*; Epic:* Multi-volume series, “high” or formal language, complex cast of characters or races; *Games*: Based on role-playing games; *Historical:* A familiar time and place is infused with fantastic events; *Magic and Mages:* Quests, sword and sorcery, with the structure and rules of magic at the core; *Not-quite-horror:* Werewolves, vampires, and other demons integrated into human society, often with a mystery plot; *Urban Fantasy:* Magic and mythology in city settings.

**TRENDS:** The growing popularity of literary fantasy writers like Gregory Maguire and Haruki Marukami is blurring the line between genre and mainstream fiction. The success of fantasy in films such as *Lord of the Rings* is exposing a lot of people to stories they might never have read. Vampires are everywhere!

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| Classic Authors | Marion Zimmer Bradley, Edgar Rice Burroughs, J.R.R. Tolkien, T.H. White |
| Dark Fantasy | Anne Bishop, Laurell K. Hamilton, Kim Harrison, Anne Rice, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro |
| Dragons | Anne McCaffrey, Margaret Weis |
| Epic Fantasy | Terry Brooks, David and Leigh Eddings, Raymond E. Feist, Terry Goodkind, Robert Jordan, George R.R. Martin, Tad Williams |
| Humorous | Piers Anthony, Jasper Fforde, Christopher Moore, Terry Pratchett |
| Legends | J. Gregory Keyes, Steve Lawhead, Patricia McKillip, Gergory Maguire, Juliet Marillier, Rosalind Miles, Jack Whyte |
| Quest/Adventure | Louis McMaster Bujold, Robin Hobb, Guy Gavriel Kay, Dennis McKiernan, Mickey Zucker Reichert, R.A. Salvatore, Sharon Shinn |
| Urban Fantasy | Steven Brust, Charles DeLint, Neil Gaiman |