

## A Reader's Guide to Fantasy

*Michael Franklin, Baird Searles, Beth Meacham*  
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**Michael Franklin, Baird Searles, Beth Meacham : A Reader's Guide to Fantasy** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Reader's Guide to Fantasy:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A fine introduction to the best of fantasy up to the early 1980sBy MuzzlehatchThe fantasy genre had just begun its long climb to the high level of popularity it enjoys now when this book was published in 1982. I would date the real beginning of the ascension to 1977, when Terry Brooks and Stephen R. Donaldson published the first volumes of their lengthy (and still continuing, as of 2010) series, and when the first of the many posthumous volumes of Tolkien's Middle-Earth histories, THE SILMARILLION, was released and became a huge bestseller. Fantasy had arrived! And it's only gotten bigger in the decades since. So what's the point of taking a look at this long out-of-print, out-of-date volume? Well, primarily, to remind the curious reader that fantasy literature already had a rich and varied history over the decades - even centuries - prior to the 1970s; and perhaps to offer a corrective to the notion that we live in the greatest era for the genre. So much of what we've seen in the past few decades has been Tolkien-derived "epic" quest-fantasy - some of it great, some of it not so great - there's been other stuff of course, but the blueprint provided by LOTR has been a powerful and I think limiting one. In earlier years, this wasn't the case, and the variety of authors and works surveyed here, even in the limited space this book provides, is instructive to those who think that fantasy is - or should be - just dwarves and trolls and Dark Lords and such. The book is divided into several sections; there's a "Seven League Shelf" of the authors' favorite books, a brief history of the genre from William Morris to the date of publication, a listing of series, a breakdown of various representative

books into subgenres such as "There and Back Again" (someone from the "real" world entering faerie, and returning) and "Bambi's Children" (animal fantasies), and most importantly and most space-intensive, a guide to the principal authors in the field, who are given anywhere from a paragraph to a couple of pages for their lives and works and importance to the field to be discussed. Because there are no other reviews here, and not much info on this book to be found elsewhere, I beg your indulgence as I list all the authors discussed: Lynn Abbey - Richard Adams - Joan Aiken - Lloyd Alexander - Hans Christian Anderson - Poul Anderson - Piers Anthony - Robert Asprin - J.M. Barrie - L. Frank Baum - Peter S. Beagle - Charles Beaumont - John Bellairs - Stephen Vincent Bent - Algernon Blackwood - James Blish - Robert Bloch - Hannes Bok - Jorge Luis Borges - Ray Bradbury - K.M. Briggs - Terry Brooks - Fredric Brown - Mildred Downy Broxon - John Brunner - James Branch Cabell - Moira Caldecott - Ramsey Campbell - John Dickson Carr - Lewis Carroll - Lin Carter - Robert W. Chambers - Joy Chant - Vera Chapman - B.J. Chute - Susan Cooper - Basil Copper - Juanita Coulson - Aleister Crowley - John Crowley - Avram Davidson - L. Sprague DeCamp - Samuel R. Delany - August Derleth - Graham Diamond - Peter Dickinson - Gordon R. Dickson - Stephen R. Donaldson - Lord Dunsany - Edward Eager - E.R. Eddison - Phyllis Eisenstein - Harlan Ellison - Charles G. Finney - Jack Finney - E.M. Forster - Gardner F. Fox - Paul Gallico - Alan Garner - Jane Gaskell - Elizabeth Goudge - Kenneth Grahame - Roland Green - H. Rider Haggard - Isidore Haiblum - Linda Haldeman - Neil Hancock - Paul Hazel - Robert A. Heinlein - William Hope Hodgson - E.T.A. Hoffmann - Robert E. Howard - Dahlov Ipcar - Eric Iverson - John Jakes - M.R. James - Tove Jansson - Diana Wynne Jones - Carol Kendall - Stephen King - Rudyard Kipling - Richard Kirk - Katherine Kurtz - Tanith Lee - Sheridan LeFanu - Ursula K. LeGuin - Friz Leiber - C.S. Lewis - David Lindsay - Hugh Lofting - Frank Belknap Long - H.P. Lovecraft - Brian Lumley - George MacDonald - Arthur Machen - Patricia McKillip - Robin McKinley - John Masefield - Richard Matheson - William Mayne - A. Merritt - Hope Mirrlees - Richard Monaco - Michael Moorcock - C.L. Moore - John Morrissey - William Morris - H. Warner Munn - Robert Nathan - Edith Nesbit - Larry Niven - Diana Norman - Elizabeth Norman - Joan North - Andre Norton - Andrew Offutt - Alexi Cori Panshin - Mervyn Peake - Edgar Allan Poe - Tim Powers - Fletcher Pratt - E. Hoffman Price - Richard Purtill - Seabury Quinn - Hugh C. Rae - Tom Reamy - Joanna Russ - Fred Saberhagen - Felix Salten - Robert Silverberg - Clark Ashton Smith - David C. Smith - Thorne Smith - Nancy Springer - Robert Stallman - James Stephens - Mary Stewart - Bram Stoker - Peter Straub - Theodore Sturgeon - Thomas Burnett Swann - Ruth Plumly Thompson - James Thurber - J.R.R. Tolkien - P.L. Travers - Karl Edward Wagner - Hugh Walker - Evangeline Walton - Manly Wade Wellman - H.G. Wells - Robert Westall - T.H. White - Leonard Wibberly - Oscar Wilde - Charles Williams - Austin Tappan Wright - Chelsea Quinn Yarbro - Roger Zelazny Whew!

As you can see, it's a pretty huge and inclusive list, with room made for many writers better known in other fields and genres (Wells, Masefield, Crowley for example), writers of primarily children's fantasies (Barrie, Grahame, etc) and a few authors not writing in English (Borges). There are certainly lapses and surprising omissions - those that strike me as particularly notable are Mikhail Bulgakov, Italo Calvino, G.K. Chesterton, John Gardner, Franz Kafka, John Myers Myers and Isaac Bashevis Singer; though to be fair only Calvino and Chesterton strike me as among the very most important writers in terms of their contributions to this genre alone (Kafka is arguable I guess). It's also not stated, but apparent that the authors weren't interested in reaching back further than the mid-19th century, so none of the gothics from the Georgian era are represented, nor is Jonathan Swift here. But these are minor quibbles. This remains a valuable book for the coverage of many still-very-obscure writers, and for the passion and enthusiasm that principal author Baird Searles and his cowriters Beth Meacham and Michael Franklin brought to the project. Searles I know is dead now, and it seems that in this Internet era there is less interest and less obvious for such a volume, but I'd still be happy to see an updated and expanded edition. There's no replacing scholarship and the knowledge of professionals in projects as large as the cataloguing of a whole genre, and there are always plenty of great obscurities from the past that are waiting to be unearthed - and are more likely to be by the readers of works like this. I'd also highly recommend the same writers' A Reader's Guide to Science Fiction - also, like this book, long out of print and out of date, but still useful for those exploring the less-traversed byways of the genre's long history.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Engrossing review of the Fantasy field - up to 1982 By Watson McFestus Baird Searles and company do a great job with these capsule essays of seminal popular fantasy authors and their works. There's a few titles missing perhaps but the 3 authors love of the genre more than makes up for it. Reminds me of some of the review work of Lin Carter. A very worthy title. I note that our local library still has it in their reader's advisory section. Good job fiction librarians!

A Reader's Guide to Fantasy: A comprehensive source of writers and works from the magical to mystical to supernatural for every lover of fantasy

Contents include: Foreword by Poul Anderson. Chapter 1. Robert E. Howard, Howard Philips Lovecraft, J.R.R. Tolkien Co.: Profiles of hundreds of authors whose words both established classics exciting new arrivals, are currently available. Chapter 2. Ayesha to Zimiamvia: Sequels, trilogies, tetralogies, and series - woven around characters, worlds, or universes. Chapter 3. Beyond the Fields We Know, There And Back Again, That Old Black Magic: The major categories of fantasy - from adventures in magical realms, to stories of magic in our everyday lives, to tales of the supernatural. Chapter 4. The 7 League Shelf: The best of the old and new

from the finest writers. Chapter 5. Half My Daughter the Hand of My Kingdom: A complete list of prize-winning fantasy fiction. Chapter 6. Who Goes to the Wood Beyond the World: An authoritative history of fantasy - the literary beginnings, today's golden age and things to come. Author's notes.