

# FURTHER READING:

GLIMPSES OF THE  
EXTRAORDINARY:

A READER'S GUIDE TO

SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY

This website was created by Spring Lea Henry to help readers connect with beloved books. The site includes bibliographies, descriptions of the various types of science fiction and fantasy, links to great online resources, book reviews, and a list of some great reasons to read science fiction and fantasy. The titles featured at this site are directly linked to Amazon.com for easy purchase.

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## A Reader's Guide to the Fantasy Theme:

*Epic Fantasy*



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## CHARACTERISTICS OF EPIC FANTASY:

- Story is often structured as a traditional hero myth with a noble protagonist, less powerful helpers, magical equipment, wizened adviser, and almost impossible tasks. Includes elements such as The Call to Adventure and The Tragic Flaw.
- Magic may or may not be present in the story. Sword and sorcery books will have it; traditional knight's tales will not.
- Story is often long and may take several books to tell completely. Some stories spawn spin-off series following future or past generations or other parts of the realm.
- Multiple important sub-plots support major plot events. Sometimes there is no "main" plot, but rather several parallel stories of equal importance.
- Antagonist may possess supernatural powers and almost always is perceived as larger-than-life.
- Conquering the protagonist or completing the quest appears to be insurmountable at the outset. Often, the protagonist begins the story as being the least likely person to accomplish the task.

## SOME MAJOR CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS:

- Robert Jordan: His Wheel of Time books have become best-sellers despite their phenomenal length.
- David Eddings: This creator of several high fantasy epics is regarded as one of the top authors in the genre.
- Brian Jacques: The heroes of his books are mice, but they do not suffer for valor.
- J.R.R. Tolkien: The classic books set in Middle Earth have been capturing the hearts of readers for many years.
- Terry Goodkind. This author of the Sword of Truth series is a master epic fantasy writer.
- Terry Brooks: The Shannara books have been compared with the Middle Earth stories.
- Philip Pullman: *His Dark Materials* is a story that spans several books, multiple dimensions, and challenges conventional thinking about religion.

## RECOMMENDED STARTER BOOKS:

- *The Meri* by Maya Kaathryn Bonhoff. The first of a three part series, this first book introduces characters and places that only become more real with each book.
- *Alana* by Tamora Pierce. This book follows a young girl who disguises herself as a boy in order to become a knight. It is the first in a quartet.
- *Shadows Over Lyra* by Patricia C. Wrede. This three-in-one volume details the people and legends in the land of Lyra. Epic fantasy at its best.
- *Dragon's Blood* by Jane Yolen. The first of three books in a series about young people and their dragons.
- *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien. First in the Middle Earth series about a hobbit, his journey, and a magic ring.
- *Magie's Pawn* by Mercedes Lackey. A young man tries to find his way in the world after the love of his life is killed.
- *Eragon* by Christopher Paolini. A young man finds a dragon's egg, and it sets his life on a course to save the world from evil... but at what cost?