

STEVE'S FANTASY READING LIST

This list isn't an attempt to cover the entire Fantasy genre — there are entire books devoted to that, and none of them succeed, for obvious reasons. It's simply a list of books I recommend, to show the influences over my approach to the genre and, hopefully, to introduce other lovers of Fantasy to some works they haven't had the pleasure of encountering yet. There are a lot of very successful Fantasy novels and series that aren't listed here because I just plain don't like 'em. As always, if you have a question or comment, this sort of discussion is great for the Message Boards here on the site!

I often describe the stories listed here as belonging to some category (such as "Epic Fantasy" or "Swords And Sorcery"). For information on how I define these categories, please refer to *Defining Fantasy*, an essay available in the Articles section of my website.

Variou. The mythologies of the world. From the Arthurian epics, to Greek tales and romances, to Norse sagas, and beyond, the legends, myths, and folktales of the world are a rich mine of fantastic themes, events, and creatures — many as yet untapped for fiction or gaming purposes.

Abercrombie, Joe. The "First Law" Trilogy (*The Blade Itself*, *Before They Are Hanged*, *The Last Judgment Of Kings*). An intriguing and well-written Fantasy tale focusing on the actions of several characters in a mostly gritty, Low Fantasy, world and the parts they play in events that shake the world. Although like much modern Fantasy it's far longer than it really needs to be, it's an engaging read from beginning to end. Abercrombie has written several other novels and stories in this setting as well.

Adams, Richard. *Watership Down*. A delightful Fantasy depicting the quest of several rabbits to find a new, safe home. Contains an interesting rabbit mythology (complete with folktales) and fictional language.

Adams, Robert, ed. *Barbarians*. A enjoyable collection of short stories on the title subject; inspirational and fun.

Anderson, Poul. *The Broken Sword*. A Norse epic-like Fantasy chronicling the adventures of Valgard the Changeling, a mighty warrior.

—*Three Hearts And Three Lions*. A Crossworlds Fantasy in which an engineer from Earth finds himself in a Northern European-style Fantasy realm where he takes on a paladin-like role.

—*Operation Chaos* (and oft-anthologized excerpt, "Operation Salamander"). An Urban Fantasy in which magic is common (for example, it's studied at universities and used by the military).

Anthony, Piers. *Battlecircle*. Actually a Post-Apocalyptic novel, and thus more in the realm of Science Fiction, this collection of three shorter novels (*Sos The Rope*, *Var The Stick*, *Neq The Sword*) features an intriguing warriors' dueling culture that would adapt well to Fantasy settings.

Asimov, Isaac. *The Magical Worlds Of Fantasy* anthologies. These fine collections of short stories, each centered around a theme (*Spells*, *Wizards*, *Witches*, *Curses*, and so on), are full of entertaining reading.

Asprin, Robert. The "Thieves' World" anthologies. The first of the "shared world" short story collections that later proliferated throughout Fantasy literature, these books depict the city of Sanctuary and its many intriguing inhabitants. The first two are by far the best in my opinion, though all the volumes in the series that I've read (I stopped after the fourth or fifth book, if memory serves) have stories worth reading.

Barker, M. A. R. *The Man Of Gold*, *Flamesong*, *Lord Of Tsámra*, *Prince Of Skulls*, and *A Death Of Kings*. These books, set in Professor Barker's wonderfully detailed world of Tékumel — the first setting ever published by TSR, shortly after the publication of a little game called *Dungeons & Dragons* — depict a world completely different from most "generic Western Europe"-style Fantasy settings. The influences are more Indian, Chinese, Mayan, and Babylonian than European, but regardless of how strange it may at first seem, Tékumel captivates and entertains.

Barnitz, Charles. *The Deepest Sea*. A quasi-historical Low Fantasy novel about the adventures of an Irish Viking in the eighth century. Contains lots of little details readers and gamers will enjoy.

Bischoff, David, et al. *A Personal Demon*. An enjoyable, light-hearted Urban Fantasy novel about a college professor who summons a succubus.

Boyer, Elizabeth. *The Sword And The Satchel*. A novel set in a world heavily influenced by Norse saga and legend. Boyer has done several others in the same style (*The Thrall And The Dragon's Heart*, *The Elves And The Otterskin*) which are also good light reads.

Bradley, Marion Zimmer. *Lythande*. A collection of short stories about a mercenary magician with a dangerous secret. Fun light Swords And Sorcery fare, with some interesting ideas for wizards' organizations, spells, and the like.

Brooks, Terry. *The Sword Of Shannara*. Although an obvious pastiche of *The Lord Of The Rings*, this novel contains some details and characters that I still remember fondly. Many sequels and prequels were later published.

Brust, Steven. The "Vlad Taltos" series (*Jhereg* and its progeny, including *Yendi*, *Teckla*, and *Taltos*). Focusing on an unusual protagonist — Vlad Taltos, an assassin also accomplished in witchcraft — these novels contain lots of bits and ideas easily adapted to gaming. (In fact, I've always suspected it had at least some of its roots in a gaming campaign.)

—*The Phoenix Guard*. A Fantasy take on *The Three Musketeers* — fun to read, with a lot of nice High Fantasy touches.

Butcher, Jim. The “Harry Dresden” novels, beginning with *Storm Front*. Excellent Urban Fantasy, full of intriguing ideas and characters.

Cabell, James Branch. The *Chronicles Of Fabled Poictesme*, also known as “The Biography Of The Life Of Manuel” (modern reprintings typically include the following volumes: *Figures Of Earth*, *The Silver Stallion*, *Domnei*, *The High Place*, *Something About Eve*, *Jurgen*, and *The Cream Of The Jest*). These stories are set in, or relate to, the Fantasy realm of Poictesme, its most famous ruler Dom Manuel, and his descendants. They sometimes seem rather slow and dry to modern readers, but contain many delightful characters and observations.

Carter, Lin, ed. The *Ballantine Adult Fantasy* series. In the Sixties and Seventies, Carter was responsible for reviving many long-forgotten Fantasy gems (including the works of Cabell, Dunsany, Lovecraft, Smith, and many others) through this series. The various volumes in it, and the numerous short story anthologies Carter put together (such as *Kingdoms Of Sorcery*, *Realms Of Wizardry*, *Golden Cities Far*, and *The Young Magicians*), are well worth reading.

—*Kellory The Warlock*. A novel about the personal quest for vengeance of a crippled barbarian who becomes a powerful wizard. The magic system in particular is interesting.

—*Lost Worlds*. A collection of the best of Carter’s short stories, full of wondrous Fantasy images, characters, and inspirational ideas.

Correia, Larry. The “Monster Hunter International” series of novels. An entertaining series of novels about a modern-day organization that hunts monsters for bounties. The series is particularly known (and praised) for the details it shows about firearms and MHI’s tactics, but is still plenty of fun to read even if you’re not interested in guns or militaria. The setting’s tailor-made for gaming and should provide any GM or player with lots of ideas for similar Urban Fantasy campaigns. The official roleplaying game for the setting, published by Hero Games, is extraordinarily well-written. ;)

Crichton, Michael. *Eaters Of The Dead*. The book on which the movie *The 13th Warrior* was based, an attempt to re-tell the Beowulf saga in a more modern way.

Coe, David B. *The Lon Todyn Chronicles*. This trilogy of novels (*The Children Of Amarid*, *The Outlanders*, *Eagle-Sage*), about a society of wizards with bird familiars, features an unusual magic system and many other intriguing concepts.

Coyne, John. *Hobgoblin*. A horror novel centered around a role-playing game based on Irish legend and myth.

deCamp, L. Sprague. The *Reluctant King* trilogy (*The Goblin Tower*, *The Clocks Of Iraz*, and *The Unbeheaded King*). Funny, enjoyable stories about a former king of many skills who’s on the run from a kingdom that wants to behead him.

—*The Fallible Fiend*. The story of a rational demon forced to obey some rather unusual human masters.

—*The Tritonian Ring*. A Swords And Sorcery story in a setting derived from Greek myth, chronicling the adventures of Prince Vakar of Poseidonis.

deCamp, L. Sprague and Fletcher Pratt. *The Complete Compleat Enchanter*. A collection of Crossworlds Fantasy stories about Harold Shea, a professor who works magic and finds himself in all sorts of unusual situations as a result.

—*The Land Of Unreason*. Another Crossworlds Fantasy about a human diplomat kidnapped into Faerie.

deLint, Charles. Pretty much his entire body of work, including *Moonheart*, *Greenmantle*, *Trader*, *Someplace To Be Flying*, *Spirits In The Wires*, *Moonlight And Vines*, and many more. DeLint is one of the modern masters of the Urban Fantasy subgenre, and many of his works are worth reading.

Donaldson, Stephen. *The Chronicles Of Thomas Covenant The Unbeliever* (a trilogy consisting of *Lord Foul’s Bane*, *The Illearth War*, and *The Power That Preserves*). The “hero” of these novels, Thomas Covenant, a leper and probably the greatest anti-hero and most dislikeable protagonist in Fantasy, is an annoying whiner and a rapist. But the Land (the setting in which the stories take place) and many of the other characters are quite enjoyable, making this Crossworlds Epic High Fantasy worth reading despite Covenant’s teeth-grating conduct. The sequel trilogy isn’t nearly as interesting.

—*The Mordant’s Need* duology (*The Mirror Of Her Dreams*, *A Man Rides Through*). Like the Covenant trilogy, these books tell a Crossworlds tale about a person from our world who travels to a Fantasy realm to find out she possesses immense powers she doesn’t understand and can’t control. However, the heroine is much more likeable than Covenant, and the story is a marvelously complex mystery. The setting features a unique magic system based around mirrors.

Dunsany, Lord. Pretty much everything he wrote. Edward John Moreton Drax Plunkett, the eighteenth Baron Dunsany was, besides being a fantasist, a veteran of the Boer War and World War I, a safari hunter, and a playwright (he once had five plays running simultaneously on Broadway). His Fantasy — typically short stories contained in collections like *Time And The Gods*, *Beyond The Fields We Know*, *The Gods Of Pegana*, and *At The Edge Of The World*, but also novels such as *The King Of Elfland’s Daughter* and *The Charwoman’s Shadow* — is wondrous, whimsical, evocative, heroic, fantastical, and thoroughly enjoyable. His stories, written with a distinctive language and tone, and often anthologized, range from High Fantasy (“The Sword Of Welleran,” “The Hoard Of The Gibbelins,” “The Fortress Unvanquishable, Save For Sacnoth”), to unusual Urban Fantasy (“The Coronation Of Mr. Thomas Shap,” “The Wonderful Window,” “The Three Sailors’ Gambit”), to many others that aren’t quite classifiable — they are simply Dunsany. Readers interested in becoming more familiar with his work should start, if they can, with the excellent (and beautifully illustrated) collection *Gods, Men, And Ghosts*, the more recently printed *The Hashish Man*, or the Fantasy Masterworks collection *Time And The Gods*.

Eddings, David. *The Belgariad*. This Epic Fantasy in five books contains a lot of starkly-drawn archetypical characters and makes interesting use of different human races instead of a variety of demi-human species.

Eddison, E. R. *The Worm Ouroboros*. A long, dry tale of the adventures of four heroes in a conflict between Demonland and Witchland. Many of the characters are quite picturesque.

Eisenstein, Phyllis. *Sorcerer's Son*. An enjoyable Fantasy tale featuring some unusual forms of magic, including ring-based demon conjuration and magic related to spiders, spinning, and weaving.

Erikson, Steven. The “Malazan Book of the Fallen” series. This vast Epic Fantasy — ten extremely thick books plus quite a few related stories, novellas, and novels, totalling over 11,000 pages and 3.3 million words — grew out of a world created for a roleplaying campaign. The elaborate novels depict a High Fantasy world complete with clashes of empires, a strange magic system, ancient curses and prophecies, numerous intelligent races, battle wizardry, thieves, assassins, and much more that readers will enjoy.

Farland, David. The “Runelords” books (beginning with *The Runelords*, appropriately enough). An intriguing Fantasy world where nobles can get direct grants of power from their subjects, becoming superhuman in some unusual ways. The stories do a good job of “realistically” addressing the aspects of the magic system.

Fox, Gardner. The “Niall of the Far Travels” stories. These Swords And Sorcery stories were printed in early issues of *Dragon Magazine*. While not specifically associated with any given RPG, they have lots of ideas and details GMs could adapt for their own games.

Garner, Alan. *The Weirdstone Of Brisingamen*. A sort of Cross-worlds Fantasy/Urban Fantasy about an ancient war between the forces of Good and Evil in the English countryside, in which two children become involved. The sequel, *The Moon Of Gomrath*, is not as good, and Garner's other Fantasy novels aren't worth tracking down.

Garrett, Randall. *Too Many Magicians*. A strange sort of Urban Fantasy in which the Plantagenets still rule in the Sixties and Lord Darcy, Chief Investigator for His Royal Highness, uses magic to perform detective work and solve mysteries.

Goldman, William. *The Princess Bride*. The basis for the equally wonderful movie of the same name.

Haggard, H. Rider. *Erik Brighteyes*. Although best known for his Victorian adventure stories, such as *King Solomon's Mines* and *She*, Haggard also wrote this excellent Fantasy story in the style of Viking epics.

Hardy, Lyndon. *Master Of The Five Magics*. This superb novel, about the quest of the apprentice Alodar to win the hand of Queen Vendora, drives the plot through Alodar's need to learn about each of five different magical crafts — Thaumaturgy, Alchemy, Magic, Sorcery, and Wizardry. Each of the crafts is so well-defined and delineated that the magic system is highly inspirational for GMs and could easily be adapted to gaming on its own.

A sequel, *Secret Of The Sixth Magic*, isn't nearly as good; another, *Riddle Of The Seven Realms*, is no good at all.

Herbert, Frank. *Dune*. Although a Science Fiction novel, this epic story contains so many Fantasy-like elements — semi-mystical cults, strange powers, bizarre creatures, prophecy, assassination — that any Fantasy gamer can easily gather lots of ideas from it.

Howard, Robert E. Various, particularly the stories of Conan and Kull. Howard in many ways defined the Swords And Sorcery subgenre with his stories of the barbarian Conan, who later became King of Aquilonia, and Kull the Conqueror, ruler of Valusia. Much of Howard's other Fantasy fiction, such as the tales of Bran Mak Morn, Cormac Mac Art, and Solomon Kane, is also worth reading.

Jones, Diana Wynne. *The Tough Guide To Fantasyland*. A whimsical (and decidedly British) examination of common Fantasy tropes, in an encyclopedia format.

Kay, Guy Gavriel. *The Fionavar Tapestry* trilogy (*The Summer Tree*, *The Wandering Fire*, *The Darkest Road*), *Tigana*, *The Lions Of Al-Rassan*, *A Song For Arbonne*, the *Sarantine Mosaic* duology (*Sailing To Sarantium* and *Lord Of Emperors*), *The Last Light Of The Sun*, and other works. Possibly the best fantasist currently writing today, Kay creates lush, richly detailed, lavishly realized Fantasy settings and characters. The *Fionavar Tapestry*, his first (and probably least interesting) work, is an Epic Fantasy, but the rest of his work qualifies more as Low Fantasy (some, such as *Lions*, has no magic at all; others have a flavorful but uncommon magic). Any fan of Fantasy who hasn't read Kay's work owes it to himself to do so.

Kurtz, Katherine. The “Deryni” novels, in five trilogies (*The Chronicles Of The Deryni*, *The Legends Of Camber Of Culdi*, *The Histories Of King Kelson*, *The Heirs Of Saint Camber*, and *The Childe Morgan Trilogy*), plus miscellaneous other works (*The Deryni Archives*, *King Kelson's Bride*, and *Deryni Magic*). Set in a Fantasy world based primarily (though not exclusively) on the medieval British Isles, and featuring a powerful faux Roman Catholic Church, these wonderful novels present intriguing, elaborate characters involved in various political, religious, and social intrigues and incidents. Most of the main characters are Deryni, gifted with the ability to practice magic (primarily in the form of psionic-like mental powers), and often shunned or discriminated against because of it. A GM looking to run a campaign based on the maneuverings of kingdoms, churches, nobles, and armies instead of small groups of adventurers conducting quests couldn't find a better way to prepare for his game than to read these novels.

LeGuin, Ursula. *The Earthsea Trilogy* (*A Wizard Of Earthsea*, *The Tombs Of Atuan*, and *The Farthest Shore*). Set in the archipelago world of Earthsea, these novels are worth examining just to look for ideas on how to tell stories based around groups of islands instead of large continents. The fascinating and highly detailed magic system, easily re-created for gaming if you like, just makes them all the more worthy to sit on any Fantasy lover's shelf. The additional books written for the same setting in more recent years (*Tehanu*, *The Other Wind*, *Tales Of Earthsea*) aren't nearly as interesting, but do contain many interesting details about the setting.

Leiber, Fritz. The “Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser” series (*Swords And Deviltry*, *Swords Against Death*, *Swords In The Mist*, *Swords Against Wizardry*, *The Swords Of Lankhmar*, and *Swords And Ice Magic*). These Swords And Sorcery classics, featuring the strong barbarian Fafhrd and the wily thief (and sometimes hedge-wizard) the Gray Mouser, contain plenty of entertaining stories and ideas. Leiber’s world of Nehwon, and particularly the large and fascinating city of Lankhmar, have inspired many GMs as they created their own worlds. An additional book of stories about the pair, *The Knight And Knave Of Swords*, published many years later, isn’t nearly as good as the earlier collections, but has a few gems.

Lewis, C. S. *The Chronicles Of Narnia* (*The Lion, The Witch, And The Wardrobe*, *Prince Caspian*, *The Voyage Of The Dawn Treader*, *The Silver Chair*, *The Horse And His Boy*, *The Magician’s Nephew*, and *The Last Battle*). The greatest stories of the Crossover Fantasy subgenre, these books, written for children but still utterly entertaining for adults, transport young people from our world to the Fantasy realm of Narnia — a land of dryads, Deep Magic, talking beasts, and the enchanted lion Aslan. They contain a heavy element of Christian allegory, but this doesn’t detract from them in the slightest.

Lovecraft, Howard Phillips. Various stories, including the “Cthulhu Mythos” cycle of stories. Though more Horror than Fantasy, these chilling tales, by the greatest of America’s horror writers, contain plenty of elements gamers can adapt to Fantasy, including terrifying alien gods and weird magic items, and have inspired countless authors to write similar tales.

Martin, George R.R. *The Song Of Ice And Fire* series. Although marred by the author’s frequent inclusion of sex scenes and his predilection for killing off characters, these books are an enjoyable more-or-less Low Fantasy saga with lots of borrowable ideas for gaming campaigns centered around politics and warfare.

Mayhar, Ardath. Various, including *The Seekers Of Shar-Nuhn* and “Thurigon Agonistes.” Intriguing short stories, often with a Dunsanian flavor, and full of interesting ideas and scenes.

McCaffrey, Anne. *The Harper Hall Trilogy* (*Dragonsong*, *Dragonsinger*, *Dragondrums*) and McCaffrey’s other Pern novels. Although McCaffrey’s later Pern books are more appropriately classified as Science Fiction, the early works, particularly the wonderful Harper Hall novels, are so close to being Fantasy that they belong on this list. The Harper Hall books focus on Menolly, a young musical prodigy who happens to end up with nine fire lizards (miniature dragons) as pets.

McKillip, Patricia. *The Three Stars* (or “Riddlemaster”) trilogy (*The Riddlemaster Of Hed*, *Heir Of Sea And Fire*, *Harpist In The Wind*). A rich story about a simple man who possesses great power he doesn’t understand, and how he learns what it means and how to use it. The setting has a lot of subtle, flavorful magic and a heavy Celtic/Welsh influence in the names and history. Not only is the story itself excellent, but many of the details — riddles and their place in society, Great Shouts, the word-locking of grimoires, the role of harpists — might influence your own stories or game campaigns.

—*The Forgotten Beasts Of Eld*. Although not as good as the Three Stars trilogy, this novel about a lonely young woman and her magical animal companions is worth reading for the same reasons.

Millennium. The *Fantasy Masterworks* series. This collection, an imprint of the British publisher Gollancz, has brought back into print dozens of Fantasy classics that have long been hard to find, sometimes with valuable scholarly commentary accompanying each volume. If you have trouble finding any of the older works referenced in this Bibliography, try the Fantasy Masterworks series.

Mohan, Kim, ed. *Dragontales*. This anthology of Fantasy short stories, associated with but never published in *Dragon Magazine*, contains many wonderful tales. A couple of the stories relate to the *Dungeons & Dragons* game (directly or indirectly), but most do not.

Moon, Elizabeth. *The Deed Of Paksennarion* trilogy (*Sheepfarmer’s Daughter*, *Divided Allegiance*, and *Oath Of Gold*). An enthralling series of books about a young woman who becomes a paladin after first learning to fight as a member of a mercenary company. The *Dungeons & Dragons* references — dark elves, paladins and their warhorses, evil cults, and more — make it obvious the books grew out of Fantasy roleplaying.

—The “Paladin’s Legacy” series. Several novels (five as of this writing) that pick up right where *The Deed Of Paksennarion* leaves off. Although the lack of the strong and intriguing central character of Paks (who only appears occasionally in these books) makes them not quite as good, they’re still engaging Fantasy stories, and excellent examples of a world focused on relatively small-scale military and political conflicts in a world where magic is relatively rare.

Moorcock, Michael. The “Elric of Melniboné” stories (*Elric Of Melniboné*, *Sailor On The Seas Of Fate*, *Weird Of The White Wolf*, *The Vanishing Tower*, *The Bane Of The Black Sword*, and *Stormbringer*). These excellent Swords And Sorcery novels are set in a detailed and intriguing world unlike any other in Fantasy — one populated with strange races, creatures, and gods usually aligned with one of two cosmic forces, Law or Chaos. The protagonist is Elric, a powerful sorcerer and the last emperor of Melniboné, an island realm whose powerful magics, alliances with extradimensional entities and gods, and armada of dragons have allowed it to rule the world for millennia. Melniboné’s time is coming to an end as the upstart “Young Kingdoms” assert their independence and prerogatives. Elric, blessed (or perhaps cursed) with something his countrymen lack — a conscience — is also cursed with albinism and weakness, which he can only keep at bay with potent drugs. His dependence on drugs ends when he obtains the powerful magic sword Stormbringer, whose black, rune-encrusted blade can steal the souls of those he kills and feed their energy to him in the form of greater strength and endurance. Shackled by necessity to an evil sword that’s as likely, with its malevolent intelligence and will, to kill his friends as his enemies, and driven by ancient pacts to serve Arioch lord of Chaos, Elric finds himself doing evil and working harm despite his best intentions. He’s a fascinating and intriguing character, one of the most original and evocative in all Fantasy, and Moorcock tells his story wonderfully. Later novels about Elric (*The Fortress Of The Pearl*, *The Riddle Of The Rose*) generally lack the appeal of the earlier stories.

Elric is but one incarnation of “the Eternal Champion.” Moorcock wrote about many others, including Corum Jhaelen Irsei (*The Swords Trilogy*) and Dorian Hawkmoon (*Hawkmoon*), and their stories are worth reading as well. Moorcock’s work is unparalleled in its use of alternate dimensions and planar travel; GMs thinking of running such campaigns should definitely give his work a look.

Morrissey, John. *The Iron Angel Trilogy* (*Ironbrand*, *Greymantle*, *Kingsbane*) and *The Time Of The Annihilator*. An obscure but wonderful Low Fantasy trilogy telling a story that spans hundreds of years. *Annihilator* is in the same style, but takes place in another time.

—the “Kedrigern” stories. Comedic Fantasy short stories about the hapless wizard Kedrigern and his friends. They’ve been collected in two volumes that also contain some other stories.

—the “Conhoon of the Three Gifts” stories. Charming and whimsical stories about an Irish wizard, his apprentice Kate O’Farrissey, and their various escapades. Sadly, these have not been collected.

Niven, Larry, et al. *The Magic Goes Away*, *The Magic May Return*. Two collections of short stories about a world with an ambient magic system, what happens when magicians use up all the mana, and the effects of magic’s slow return.

Powers, Tim. Pretty much his entire body of work, including *Last Call*, *On Stranger Tides*, *Expiration Date*, *The Anubis Gates*, and *Declare*. These masterpieces of Urban Fantasy, usually focusing on stories of the “hidden history” variety, provide plenty of ideas for plots, characters, and events Fantasy Hero GMs can use.

Rahman, Glenn. *Minarian Legends*. Originally published as a column in *Dragon Magazine*, and now available online and on CD-ROM, these colorful short stories chronicle the history and peoples of Minaria, the setting for the Fantasy wargame *Divine Right*.

Rothfuss, Patrick. *The Kingkiller Chronicle*. Although only two books of this trilogy (*The Name Of The Wind* and *The Wise Man’s Fear*) have been released as of early 2014, they’re the fascinating first-person story of the early life of Kvothe, a spellcaster, musician, and adventurer. Captivating from the first page to the last.

Saberhagen, Fred. *Empire Of The East*. A series of three books chronicling the efforts of a small group of rebels to overthrow a powerful empire in a world where magic has arisen in the wake of nuclear holocaust.

Saunders, Charles. *Imaro* and its sequels. A Swords And Sorcery novel set among Fantasy African tribes rather than a quasi-medieval European setting. Well-written, fun, and a good example of what can be accomplished by stepping beyond the “generic Western Europe” Fantasy mainstream.

Shetterley, Will and Emma Bull. The “Liavek” anthologies. Another “shared world” collection, this one focusing on the Arabian Nights-influenced world of Liavek. Among other unusual features, Liavek includes some gunpowder weapons and a magic system unlike any other in Fantasy.

Smith, Clark Ashton. Pretty much everything he wrote. A contemporary and colleague of H. P. Lovecraft, Smith wrote numerous Fantasy short stories during the era of the great Pulp magazines. Many are set in various worlds or lands he created (*Zothique*, *Hyperborea*, *Poseidonis*, *Averoigne*), others stand alone; most are Swords And Sorcery tales. They all possess a distinctive eerie quality that makes them fascinating reading.

Taylor, Keith. The “Bard” series (*Bard*, *Bard II*, and so forth). Enjoyable Low Fantasy novels set in a fictionalized Northern Europe of the first millennia. The protagonist is a bard who gets involved in many adventures. Flavorful and fun.

Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Lord Of The Rings* and related works (*The Hobbit*, *The Silmarillion*, *Unfinished Tales*, and the *History Of Middle-earth* series). Widely regarded as the greatest Fantasy novels ever written, and unquestionably the greatest Epic Fantasy story ever told, Tolkien’s work sets the standard by which all other Fantasy work is judged (to one degree or another). Without his influence, many of the works mentioned in this Bibliography might never have been written. For depth of detail about a setting and writing that inspires and enralls, Tolkien has no equal.

Vance, Jack. The “Dying Earth” series (*The Dying Earth*, *The Eyes Of The Overworld*, *Cugel’s Saga*, and *Rhialto The Marvellous*). If anyone can come close to matching Tolkien for evocative prose, it is Jack Vance, though his Fantasy is almost nothing like Tolkien’s. In Vance’s “Dying Earth” (our Earth, many aeons from now, as the sun slowly dies), everyone is venal and corrupt, the world is a strange and dangerous place, and quick wits take you further than skill with a blade. The magic system in particular is wonderful. In the early works, wizards had to memorize spells (a powerful wizard could memorize perhaps five of the potent incantations), and then re-memorize them after they were cast; this was the inspiration for the magic system in *Dungeons & Dragons*. Later works such as *Rhialto* depict wizards so powerful they enslave magical creatures called “sandestins” who can work virtually any effect the spellcaster can think of. In either case, the spells have wondrous, flavorful names — the Excellent Prismatic Spray, the Omnipotent Sphere, Lugwiler’s Dismal Itch — that only add to the already lush and amazing feel of the setting.

—*The Lyonesse Trilogy* (*Suldrun’s Garden* [also simply titled *Lyonesse*], *The Green Pearl*, *Madouc*). Set on the mythic island of Lyonesse before it sank into the sea, this series has a feel different from that of the *Dying Earth*, but is just as good (if not better). As in almost all of Vance’s works, cleverness and a good heart are what carry the hero forward, not strength of arm, skill with a sword, or the size of one’s army. Magic is not as commonplace, but is definitely there, and provides an excellent flavor for the setting.

No Fantasy fan should miss out on the joys of Vance’s wonderful writing. The only shame of it is that he’s spent so much time writing equally good Science Fiction that his Fantasy oeuvre is comparatively slight. Selections from his Science Fiction stories, such as *The Dragon Masters*, “The Moon Moth,” and “The Miracle Workers,” are worth reading for their Fantasy-like elements.

Wagner, Karl Edward. The “Kane” stories, including such novels and short story collections as *Bloodstone*, *Midnight Sun*, *Night*

Winds, Darkness Weaves, and Dark Crusade. Classic Swords And Sorcery tales in the Conan mold, but featuring a hero who's rather more complex than Conan. Great stuff.

Wellman, Manly Wade. The "John the Balladeer" stories. A sort of Urban Fantasy series set in the Appalachian Mountains in the mid-twentieth century, with all sorts of unusual creatures, haunts, and hexes. Excellent reading; decidedly different from typical Fantasy stories.

Wolfe, Gene. *The Book Of The New Sun.* This four-volume series (*Shadow Of The Torturer, Claw Of The Conciliator, Sword Of The Lictor, Citadel Of The Autarch*) plus a fifth volume (*The Urth Of The New Sun*) are, like Vance's work, set in a future so distant that Earth is virtually unrecognizable. The Low Fantasy story chronicles the life of Severian, an apprentice torturer who goes on to become the Autarch of the world. Complex, detailed, and rich with antique words rarely used in English anymore, the story repays repeated readings.

Zelazny, Roger. *Dilvish, The Damned.* This book tells the story of Dilvish, who fights his way back out of Hell to take revenge on those who've wronged him. Armed with potent spells and magical talismans, he overcomes many obstacles to achieve his goal. The enchanted items, spells, and monsters are all easily adapted to gaming. The second Dilvish novel, *The Changing Land*, isn't nearly as good.

—*Changeling and Madwand.* A Crossworlds Fantasy in which a boy from Earth is transplanted to a Fantasy realm (where he develops technology) and a boy from the Fantasy realm takes his place on Earth (where he learns magic). The depiction of magic, and how each practitioner views it somewhat differently, is interesting and fun.

—*Jack Of Shadows.* A wonderful story set in a future Earth that has stopped spinning, where magic rules the night side and science the day side. Jack and the other main characters are all powerful magical beings.