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Unicorns and Spaceships and Vampires, Oh My!

One Hundred Suggested Fantasy, Horror, and Science Fiction Writers in The Sampson-Livermore Library

Compiled and annotated by Jean Sexton

- Adams, Douglas. *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. Contained in *The Ultimate Hitchhiker's Guide*, this exceptionally funny book is light-hearted SF at its best.
- Adams, Richard. *Watership Down*. Animal fantasy that will leave you looking at rabbits in an entirely different light.
- Anderson, Poul. *Three Hearts and Three Lions*. Throw a 20th century engineer into a fantasy setting and you find a light-hearted fantasy romp.
- Anthony, Piers. *On a Pale Horse*. First book in the Incarnations of Immortality series, this has philosophy, humor, and a good story to recommend it.
- Asimov, Isaac. *Foundation*. Asimov is one of SF's biggest names. His robot series is legendary and a very loosely based *I, Robot* movie garnered attention.
- Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid's Tale*. A look at a not-distant possible future of a monotheocratic United States and the role of women in that society.
- Beagle, Peter S. *A Fine and Private Place*. Contained in *The Fantasy Worlds of Peter Beagle*, this is an exploration of love, death, and life. No one who reads this book will ever forget the raven.
- Bear, Greg. *Blood Music*. The transformation of man through microbiology, in some ways this book resembles Clarke's *Childhood's End* (annotated below).
- Bester, Alfred. *The Demolished Man*. A crime caper set in the future when telepaths can prevent crime, this book won the very first Hugo Award given to the best SF of the year.
- Blish, James. *A Case of Conscience*. What if there were a planet and a group of beings with no original sin? Is it the work of God or the Adversary?
- Bloch, Robert. *The Opener of the Way*. The first short story collection of an acknowledged master of horror. Lovecraftian for the most part, with a dose of Egyptology.
- Bradbury, Ray. *The Martian Chronicles*. Which Bradbury book should be listed first? Close runners up were *Fahrenheit 451* and *Something Wicked This Way Comes*. This one is classic human-centered early science fiction.

Bradley, Marion Zimmer. *Lady of Avalon*. Provides the background to *The Mists of Avalon* with strong female characters and a large scoop of magic.

Brin, David. *Startide Rising*. Part of the Uplift series, this SF book focuses on the uplifted dolphins and their ship.

Brooks, Terry. *Magic Kingdom for Sale—Sold!* A lawyer decides to purchase a magic kingdom. The problem is not everyone thinks he should be king.

Brunner, John. *Stand on Zanzibar*. Not a particularly easy read, but a rewarding one, Brunner's vision is all too close to reality.

Bujold, Lois McMaster. *Barrayar*. A good introduction to the Vokosigan series. Romance, adventure, and humor—this book has it all.

Burroughs, Edgar Rice. *A Princess of Mars*. Science fiction meets romantic adventure and blends into a fabulous story.

Card, Orson Scott. *Ender's Game*. Probably the most famous of Card's books, this is a fine example of military SF. *Seventh Son* is a good introduction to his fantasy. Card lives in Greensboro, N.C.

Chant, Joy. *Red Moon and Black Mountain*. A richly detailed world, a cosmic struggle between good and evil.

Cherryh, C.J. *The Paladin*. Martial arts fantasy in a medieval Oriental setting. A look at the forming of a teacher-student bond.

Clarke, Arthur C. *Childhood's End*. Contained in *Across the Sea of Stars*, this novel explores the role of humanity in the future.

Clement, Hal. *Mission of Gravity*. A fascinating story where 15-inch-long aliens must help humans recover a spacecraft.

Davidson, Avram. *The Phoenix and the Mirror*. Was Virgil a mage? Here the answer is yes and Renaissance Europe is populated with fantastical creatures.

Delany, Samuel R. *Stars in My Pocket like Grains of Sand*. Beware—this is a book that people either love or hate passionately. Stylistically written, the language is complex, but many people find it worth the work.

Dick, Philip K. *The Man in the High Castle*. Alternative history where the U.S. and Britain lost World War II.

Dickson, Gordon R. *Tactics of Mistake*. Contained in *Three to Dorsai!* this is an accessible entry to the Dorsai series exploring the difference one person can make in the world. For Dickson's light-hearted fantasy try *The Dragon and the George*.

Donaldson, Stephen R. *The Mirror of Her Dreams*. Better have the sequel handy because the first book is a cliffhanger. Mordant needs a hero and Terisa Morgan is pulled from New York City to save another world. But is she really the chosen one?

Drake, David. *Vettius and His Friends*. Best known for his military SF, this heroic fantasy has its roots in classical literature. The author lives in Chapel Hill, N.C.

Ellison, Harlan. *Deathbird Stories*. One of the seminal collections of short stories. There's a mixture of horror, fantasy, and science fiction so there is something for everyone.

Farmer, Philip José. *To Your Scattered Bodies Go*. The first book in the Riverworld series. Why has humanity been resurrected on a planet far from Earth?

Finney, Jack. *Time and Again*. Time travel and a love story set in New York City.

Frank, Pat. *Alas, Babylon*. Post World War III survival story, this book also is a time capsule look at Cold War thoughts and opinions.

Garrett, Randall. *Lord Darcy*. Alternative history on an Earth where magic works. Team up a forensic sorcerer and a man with brilliant skills of deduction, and you have a nice combination of mystery and fantasy with a good dose of humor.

Gibson, William. *Neuromancer*. The start of modern cyberpunk with its focus on the near future, virtual reality, and computers.

Haldeman, Joe. *The Forever War*. A look at a reluctant soldier fighting a senseless war set in the future.

Harrison, Harry. *Deathworld*. One man against a murderous world.

Heinlein, Robert A. *Stranger in a Strange Land*. Heinlein's one of the big three SF authors. This book gave the world the word "grok."

Henderson, Zenna. *Ingathering: The Complete People Stories of Zenna Henderson*. Gentle science fiction stories, usually featuring a teacher interacting with the aliens among us.

Herbert, Frank. *Dune*. One of the great SF classics, made into an average movie. Spawned a whole series of novels.

Holdstock, Robert. *Mythago Wood*. A primeval wood, a family's fascination with it, and interactions with archetypes makes this book a fulfilling read.

Howard, Robert E. *Conan*. The start of heroic fantasy. These are the original stories, not the highly reworked and re-edited versions so frequently seen today.

Hughart, Barry. *Bridge of Birds*. Follow the adventures of Master Kao Li and Number Ten Ox as they seek for a cure to a mysterious illness. First book in a series.

Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World*. A populace fascinated by mindless activities, drugged into happiness with everyone knowing his or her place. Is this our future?

Jones, Diana Wynne. *The Chronicles of Chrestomanci*. Chrestomanci is a powerful magician with nine lives and is a presence in each of the four novels.

Jordan, Robert. *The Eye of the World*. If you like them long, this saga, currently containing 10 books, is for you. Jordan creates an intriguing world with interesting characters.

Keyes, Daniel. *Flowers for Algernon*. Moving story of a man with an IQ of 68 and what happens when his wish to become smarter is granted.

King, Stephen. *Salem's Lot*. Vampires in Maine.

Koontz, Dean. *The Taking*. Aliens invade the world, the dead come to life, and people must try to survive.

Kurtz, Kathrine. *Deryni Rising*. Set in a world very like a medieval Europe, but with magic, this book sets the stage for many more in the series.

Lackey, Mercedes. *Arrows of the Queen*. A good introduction to the world of Valdemar with a strong female main character who comes of age.

Le Guin, Ursula K. *The Left Hand of Darkness*. This is an exploration of gender in an SF setting. Her best known fantasy series is set in the world of Earthsea.

Lee, Tanith. *Red as Blood*. Fairy tales, but with a dark twist.

Leiber, Fritz. *Night's Black Agents*. Fantasy, horror, and heroic fantasy short stories. This is notable in containing early stories about Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser, a couple of lovable rogues.

Levin, Ira. *Rosemary's Baby*. Horror, suspense, and the devil in middle-class America.

Lewis, C.S. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Don't be put off by the idea that this is a book for young adults. Its rich language, deep imagery, and the portrayal of the struggle between good and evil is accessible to people of all ages.

Lovecraft, H.P. *Tales*. This brand new collection of stories contains some of Lovecraft's best horror. Make sure that you have a nightlight before you go to bed.

MacAvoy, R. A. *Tea with the Black Dragon*. A quiet fantasy with a Zen feel, a touch of mystery, and a good love story.

Martin, George R. *Earth Abides*. Before Stephen King's *The Stand*, there was this book. This classic work deserves to be widely read.

McCaffrey, Anne. *Dragonflight*. Contained in *The Dragonriders of Pern*, this book is the introduction to the science fantasy world of Pern where brave and daring dragonriders keep the world from being destroyed.

McIntyre, Vonda N. *Dreamsnake*. A quest book, a mix of SF and fantasy, and a look at snakes that is unique.

McKillip, Patricia A. *The Riddle-Master of Hed*. Who will ever forget the pig stampede? Well-drawn characters and a complex search for identity are also hallmarks.

McKinley, Robin. *The Blue Sword*. An orphaned girl is carried off by the Hill-King and the story never slows down. Try *Sunshine* for a darker, more mature novel.

Miller, Walter M. *A Canticle for Leibowitz*. A travel through religion, science, and the decline and rise of civilization.

Moorcock, Michael. *Elric of Melniboné*. The first book in the Elric saga, this sword and sorcery classic has a unique albino hero who is supposedly sworn to Chaos, but often finds himself in the service of Law.

Moore, C.L. *The Best of C.L. Moore*. A collection of science fiction and fantasy, this book includes a story about Jirel of Joiry, one of the few female counterparts to Conan.

Myers, John Myers. *Silverlock*. Long a cult favorite, this book throws in literary allusions. Part of the fun in reading it has always been trying to track down the references. In addition, it is a nice adventure story and stands on its own merits.

Niven, Larry. *Ringworld*. This is the introduction to the Ringworld series. Very much for the people who like science in their SF.

Norton, Andre. *Witch World*. The first in a long series of novels, this focuses on the story of a person from this world entering that of a world where magic works.

Orwell, George. *1984: A Novel*. A classic dystopia set in a world where Big Brother is watching.

Peake, Mervyn. *The Gormenghast Trilogy*. This book pulls the reader into the dark and poetically painted world of Gormenghast. Gothic in feel, this is an important piece of fantasy.

Poe, Edgar Allan. *Selected Tales*. Great writer and effective at creating the frisson of horror down the spine.

Pohl, Frederick. *Gateway*. The first book in the Heechee series. This is an interesting mix of SF and psychology.

Pynchon, Thomas. *The Crying of Lot 49*. Paranoia inspiring, this is still a book that is quite funny and also makes the reader think.

Rice, Anne. *Interview with the Vampire*. Gothic literature at its best, this book almost single-handedly brought about a resurgence in vampire literature.

Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. The Harry Potter series is gaining in popularity and in complexity.

Russ, Joanna. *The Female Man*. A product of the 1970s, the story has held up well and there aren't many SF books with a librarian as one of the narrators.

Shelley, Mary W. *Frankenstein*. What is the responsibility of creator to the being he created? Frankenstein's Monster forces us to examine ourselves.

Silverberg, Robert. *The World Inside*. Gigantic high-rise buildings house billions of people. Floors of the building form cities and each city varies in culture. But are people happy in this utopia?

Simak, Clifford D. *City*. Did Man ever exist? Dog scholars debate the point.

Simmons, Dan. *Hyperion*. A tribute in part to *The Canterbury Tales*, this book can be disturbingly dark, but the character studies are worth exploring and you will want to have the sequel, *The Fall of Hyperion* close at hand.

Smith, Cordwainer. *The Rediscovery of Man*. This collection of short fiction reveals a dark and disturbing future. Dip in and out of the collection to enjoy it fully.

Stewart, Mary. *The Crystal Cave*. An Arthurian novel that tells the story of Merlin.

Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. Need more be said? The quintessential vampire.

Sturgeon, Theodore. *More than Human*. What happens when people combine skills and talents to become more than the sum of the parts?

Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. A professor at Oxford gave the world an enduring work of fantasy.

Verne, Jules. *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*. Written before submarines were invented, this book is quite different from the movie adaptations and focuses on how such a machine could actually function.

Vinge, Joan. *The Snow Queen*. Based loosely on Hans Christian Andersen's "The Snow Queen," this book moves the fairy tale forward in time and places the action on Tiamat. Rich characterizations with archetypes fleshes out the story.

- Vinge, Vernor. *True Names*. Predating interactive computer games and the Internet, this book has a remarkably accurate vision of virtual reality.
- Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughter-house Five*. Unstuck in time, the hero relives the experience of being a POW during World War II in Dresden, Germany.
- Weber, David. *On Basilisk Station*. Meet Honor Harrington, in the first adventure of what is to be a long military career, or so her fans hope. The story is based loosely on the problems in Napoleonic Europe, but moved to a future setting.
- Wellman, Manly Wade. *John the Balladeer*. A collection of short stories set in the North Carolina mountains, this is an excellent introduction to the novels about the same character. Wellman lived in Chapel Hill, N.C. for many years.
- Wells, H.G. *The Time Machine; The War of the Worlds*. Classic SF. The first is a time travel story, the latter is an alien invasion story.
- White, T.H. *The Once and Future King*. Gentle humor and interesting characters make this a fun retelling of the story of King Arthur, starting when Arthur was called Wart.
- Williams, Tad. *The Dragonbone Chair*. Kitchen-boy turned hero, evil king, and good younger prince are all staples of clichéd fantasy. This book rises above those clichés.
- Willis, Connie. *The Doomsday Book*. Crises in the 21st century and 14th century reveal much about the people of the future and past.
- Wolfe, Gene. *Shadow of the Torturer*. First book in the Book of the New Sun series, it follows the path of a failed torturer—one who showed mercy to a victim. Dense and demanding, it is a different form of fantasy than the typical Tolkienesque books.
- Wyndham, John. *The Day of the Triffids*. With most of the people on Earth blind, triffids (mobile and very poisonous plants) become a real threat to survival.
- Yolen, Jane. *Sister Light, Sister Dark*. A child whose mother dies three times, is Jenna the child long prophesized?
- Zelazny, Roger. *Lord of Light*. Science fantasy that brings in elements of Hinduism, Buddhism, and politics, all with a technological background.

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