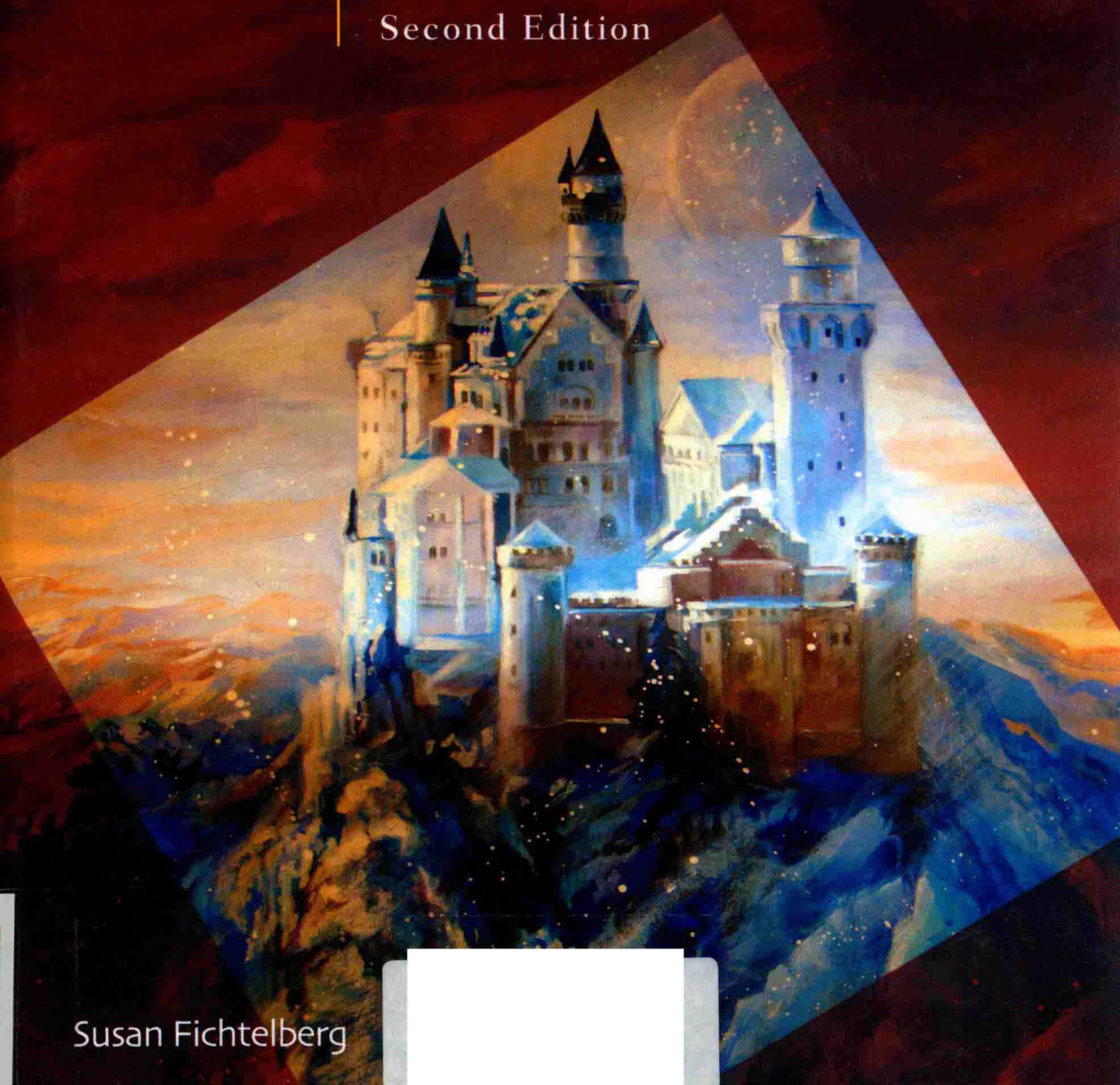




# Encountering Enchantment

A Guide to Speculative  
Fiction for Teens

Second Edition



Susan Fichtelberg

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# **Encountering Enchantment**

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## **A Guide to Speculative Fiction for Teens**

**Second Edition**

**Susan Fichtelberg**

**Genreflecting Advisory Series**

**Diana Tixier Herald, Series Editor**



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*For Savannah,  
the daughter of my heart.*

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# Introduction

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*Dealing with the impossible, fantasy can show us what may be really possible. If there is grief, there is the possibility of consolation; if hurt, the possibility of healing; and above all, the curative power of hope. If fantasy speaks to us as we are, it also speaks to us as we might be.*

—Lloyd Alexander, Children's Book Council Archives  
(1996–2002)

*Fantasy is a literature of ideals and passion.*

—Tamora Pierce, *The Cat's Meow* (December 2005)

Tales of wizards and mages, dragons and unicorns, swords and sorcery have soared to the height of popularity with readers of all ages, especially young adults, since the advent of the boy wizard Harry Potter and his education at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. While fantasy has enjoyed golden ages before, notably in the mid-1960s with the paperback publication of Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings and followed later with the works of Lloyd Alexander, Susan Cooper, Ursula Le Guin, and then Robin McKinley, no works of fantasy have been as widely read by young and old as Harry Potter.

This phenomenon has caused the publishing industry to unleash a tidal wave of fantasy for those eager to read about more worlds imbued with magic. The Twilight saga by Stephenie Meyer ignited interest in vampire tales, which in turn increased the popularity of all kinds of paranormal explorations of the world. Most recently, The Hunger Games novels plunged readers into a dystopian world that made them crave more novels about a future gone wrong. This heightened not only the popularity of dystopian fiction, but also that of other varieties of science fiction. The ten years since the publication of the first edition of *Encountering Enchantment* have seen a veritable explosion of speculative fiction titles for teens. This bibliography seeks to guide readers and librarians through the many remarkable realms of imagination revealed in works of fantasy. Also included are fantasy's sister genres, science fiction and paranormal, which encompass the fantastic and the impossible in different ways. Collectively, they are all referred to as speculative fiction. The crucial element for them all is their speculative nature. They all ponder the question "What if . . .," but they employ a variety of imaginative elements to answer it. Distilled to the most basic ideas, fantasy answers the question with magic, science fiction with scientific extrapolation, and paranormal with dark beings and powers. Although the approach of each genre is



distinct, they share certain similarities. Because these kinds of imaginative literature stretch so far beyond the boundaries of what is known, they require the willing suspension of disbelief, beyond that required for realistic fiction; they feature stories with strong plots; and they speculate on myriad possibilities unrestricted by reality. The variety each provides within these parameters may seem infinite. This guide aims to help you navigate these genres and ultimately put books into the hands of young adults—books that will usher them into worlds of wonder.

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## Purpose and Audience

The purpose of this book is twofold: to assist with reader's advisory service and to aid in collection development. It will help librarians wend their way through the forest of books flourishing in the marketplace today. It will aid reader's advisers in locating titles for readers who want something that is just like the book they have recently read, who are assigned a work of genre fiction for school, and who are looking for something new. It will help in deciding what to purchase by providing organized information on works in genres that appeal to teens. Since this is a collection development tool as well as a genre guide, very few out-of-print titles are listed. Books that are available as e-books only are included when they are part of a series whose newer titles are still in print.

While this is a guide through the multiple subgenres of speculative fiction, it is not intended to be comprehensive or academic in nature. There are many works that do this admirably, which are listed in the Resources section. The primary audience for this book includes public and school librarians, educators, booksellers, and anyone who enjoys recommending books.

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## Defining "Young Adult"

For the purposes of this book, "young adult" is defined as grades 6–12. This includes upper middle grade titles (sixth, seventh, and eighth grades) as well as novels for high school students. What twelve-year-olds enjoy reading can be significantly different than what sixteen-year-olds enjoy reading. In some libraries the children's department purchases books for readers through grade 7, in some through grades 5. The blurring of the lines between what is children's literature and what is young adult literature can be clearly seen in the age groups referred to by the American Library Association's Children's Section (ALSC), which awards the Newbery Medal, and its Young Adult Section Library Services Association (YALSA), which gives the Printz Award. Among its criteria for considering books for the Newbery Medal, ALSC states on its Web site, "Children are defined as persons of ages up to and including fourteen and books for this entire age range are to be considered." In its statement of eligibility for the Printz Award, YALSA states on its Web site, "To be eligible, a title must have been designated by its publisher as being either a young

adult book or one published for the age range that YALSA defines as ‘young adult,’ i.e., 12 through 18.” Since the reading interests clearly overlap, books reviewed for grades 5–8 have also been considered for inclusion.

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## The Speculative Fiction Reader and the Value of Imaginative Literature

There is no such thing as “the reader,” of any kind of literature. Every person approaches reading as an individual. Nonetheless, some common traits can be observed. Generally, fantasy readers aren’t concerned with the age of the protagonist, as long as the story whisks them away into the world of the book. Science fiction readers usually want the science to be solid, and this often demands a complex story. Paranormal readers often want to experience shivers. For all, a strong, fast-paced plot is essential. While well-developed characters are important, there are few, if any, novels that are just character studies in young adult speculative fiction.

Critics often dismiss speculative fiction as merely escapist reading, and some may feel the need to steer young adult readers to more beneficial literary experiences. However, the quality of the literature is not dependent on the genre but on the writers, on how well the writers weave their words to create the tapestry of the tale. Any book that draws the reader into the story merits consideration, and since the object of reader’s advisory service is to provide the reader with a book that will capture his or her interest, no work should be dismissed simply because it’s genre fiction.

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## Diversity in Speculative Fiction

Diversity in children’s and young adult publishing (or the lack thereof) has become a much discussed topic. The Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC) has been tracking the number of titles by and about people of color since 1985. In 2013 the center estimated that only 10 percent of the books published were by or about people of color (<http://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp>). The numbers increased in 2014, perhaps due to the Twitter campaign #WeNeedDiverseBooks and the increased awareness that the discussion of the CCBC figures prompted. The Children’s Book Council has a diversity committee, and authors Malinda Lo and Cindy Pon have a Web site dedicated to discussing and promoting diversity in young adult literature (<http://www.diversityiny.com/>). In addition, the publisher Lee and Low, which is committed to publishing diverse books, maintains a blog on race, diversity, education, and children’s books (<http://blog.leeandlow.com>).

Speculative fiction has not escaped a lack of diversity, although it could be argued that many novels in the genre have no human characters at all; the diversity exists in the variety of species if not the variety of colors. Publishers of speculative fiction are

also moving toward publishing books with a more diverse cast of characters, and a selection of them is listed in Appendix D. More titles representing specific cultural groups can be accessed through the Subject Index.

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## Scope, Selection Criteria, and Methodology

This book casts a net over the many different types of speculative fiction and sifts the titles into categories that will help teens find the kind of books that interest them. The aim was to include as many different subgenres of speculative fiction, written for readers grades 6–12, as possible. Because readers are interested in a variety of material, a limited number of adult titles is included. Many of the titles written for adults feature teen protagonists. The books written for adults and for senior high students may encompass the full range of human experience. No attempt has been made to censor sexually explicit or violent material. Fantasy receives the most attention, because even with the rise in popularity of dystopian fiction and paranormal fiction, there is more fantasy published for these grades than science fiction or paranormal. The focus of this book is on titles published in the last ten years that are still in print. Older titles are included only when they are part of an ongoing series. Since short story collections often include stories that encompass a variety of subgenres, only those collections that are connected to a specific series of novels are included. Selections are based on professional reviews, best books lists, award winners, popularity with young adults, and the author's personal reading. Approximately 1,700 titles are included.

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## Organization

The books are presented by the subgenres deemed likely to coincide with the interests and query patterns of teen readers. Thus, the first chapter is on wizard fantasy. The enduring popularity of *Harry Potter* makes it beneficial to have other wizard stories on hand to recommend to fans. Sometimes the subgenres are divided into narrower categories, if the number of books published in that area demands it, as in the chapters on mythic fantasy and alternate and parallel world fantasy. Many titles can fit into more than one category. Professional resources and author judgment were used in deciding where to place the titles. Cross-referencing is used to indicate titles that fit into a multiplicity of categories. An extensive subject index provides additional access points readers can utilize to locate appropriate books.

Books are listed alphabetically by author. When more than one author wrote the book, that book is listed under the primary author's name. The books written for grades 6–12 are accompanied by series and title annotations. The books written for adults have annotations for single titles, but only a series annotation for books in a series. The exception is books that were previously annotated in the first edition of *Encountering Enchantment*. For those annotations, please refer to that volume. The books are listed in publication order unless otherwise noted. This is because, especially in extensive fantasy series, prequels presume the reader has read the books

published first even though those books take place later in the chronological history of the imaginary world. While the prequel may come first chronologically, it will contain spoilers for the original volumes. (In particular, this is the case with The Chronicles of Narnia. It is actually a subject of fairly rigorous debate whether these books should be read in publication order or chronological order, especially since the publishers have renumbered the books. The author strongly recommends publication order.) Where the series is fully annotated, some plot details are divulged. The annotations are descriptive in nature to provide information about the main characters, the plot, and, where it is significant, the setting.

Since assisting in collection development is one of the aims of this volume, author, title, place of publication, publisher, copyright date, number of pages, and ISBNs for hardcover and paperback for in-print editions are provided. For books that were originally published in other countries, the publication information provided refers to the first U.S. edition. Many books have several different paperback editions. Where there was a choice, the author selected the mass market paperback, since this is the size that most appeals to teens. The author also selected the newest paperback edition available, since generally speaking, the newest paperbacks have the most appealing covers. Be advised, however, that books go out of print rapidly, especially paperbacks, and all ISBN information should be verified with the book supplier. Entries for books that are known to be out of print have "OP" where the ISBN would appear.

As in *Teen Genreflecting* by Diana Tixier Herald, reading levels are indicated as follows:

M middle school, grades 6–8


J junior high, grades 7–9

S senior high, grades 10–12

These are simply guidelines, based on professional reviews and author judgment, since one review source may give an age range of grades 5–8, while another says ages 12 and up. Teens should be free to select their own reading material and read what they are most interested in, regardless of assessed reading levels.


Books originally written for adults are indicated by **Adult** at the end of the annotation. If media versions of the material are available, they are labeled with the following symbols:


 e-book available to libraries

 audio version

 video version

LP large print

Titles that are fine selections for book clubs are indicated with . The titles were recommended in professional review journals such as *School Library Journal* and *Voice of Youth Advocates*. The author's professional experience also was taken into account.

Award winners are marked with the symbol , and the award is noted at the end of the annotation. Appendix E lists all the awards and the bodies responsible for giving them. The most frequently used award abbreviations are the following:

**ALAN** American Library Association Notable Children's Book

**BFYA** Best Fiction for Young Adults (initiated in 2011)

**BBYA** Best Books for Young Adults (used until 2010)

The best Web sites to check for award winners are the following:

- The Database of Award-Winning Children's Literature for children's and young adult awards: <http://www.dawcl.com/search.asp>
- The Science Fiction Award Database for speculative fiction awards: <http://www.sfadbd.com/>

Each chapter concludes with a list of the author's personal favorites in the subgenre.

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## Keeping Current with Speculative Fiction

So much speculative fiction is being published today that it's hard to stay current, especially since there are so many trilogies, quartets, and series. The professional review journal *The Voice of Youth Advocates* reviews the most speculative fiction for teens. Every year in April the journal publishes its "Best Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror" compilation. *Library Journal* also publishes a periodical column reviewing science fiction and fantasy written for adults. *Locus* is a periodical dedicated to science fiction, fantasy, and horror, and it publishes a large number of reviews as well as notices on what new books are under contract, what manuscripts have been turned in, and what books are about to be released. Its Web site, [www.locusmag.com](http://www.locusmag.com), also provides a directory link to a listing of the newest young adult works of speculative fiction.

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## Author Interviews

Four author interviews are interspersed throughout the bibliography to give readers another way to connect to the stories and their creators. Some of the authors have written many books; some are relatively new to writing books for young adults. All were gracious in giving of their time to this project and sharing their ideas. For each interview the author of this book asked some of the same questions and some questions unique to each author.

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## How to Use This Book

This book can be used to help spot areas of sparseness in your library's collection and provide suggestions about what materials can best increase the amount of material

available in that area. It can assist with reader's advisory by providing extensive lists of books that appeal to readers with specific interests, accessing needed titles either via the Table of Contents or the Subject Index. It can also be used by young adult readers to peruse the annotations and select books for themselves.

The book can also prove useful for becoming familiar with a wide variety of genre literature. Each subgenre is defined to help make clear where it fits in the spectrum of speculative fiction.

I hope this volume will both help readers discover fascinating titles on their own and provide librarians with the tools to build fine speculative fiction collections, so that readers really do "encounter enchantment."

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