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Subject: Reader's Guide to Fantasy

Posted by [Wmartin\[1\]\[2\]\[3\]](#) on Thu, 30 May 2013 04:30:17 GMT

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From: Will Martin -- DRXAL-RI

I've been looking at a book that readers of SF-Lovers should find of some interest. It is A READER'S GUIDE TO FANTASY, by Baird Searles, Beth Meacham, and Michael Franklin (1982, Facts on File publishers).

It is a survey volume, most of which is an alphabetical list of authors, with a discussion of their fantasy works. Minor authors get half a page or so; major ones get 3-4 pages. Other sections include lists of series, arranged by author and series name, and some lists of recommended reading and general discussion of the genre.

It's not the sort of thing that most people would find worth buying, but it is handy to get from the library and scan through. I made notes as I read it about books and series which sounded as if I would enjoy them. I then searched through the catalog in the library trying to find these books. Sadly, the St. Louis Public Library system was lacking most of the ones I wanted, and, annoyingly, they would have some of a series but not all (missing one or more out of the middle, which is inexplicable to me -- I could understand having the first or first few and then not having the rest, but not missing #3 out of a series of four, for example). I hope your library system is better!

The book is somewhat sloppily constructed. There are an annoying number of typos. The word "quest" is spelled "guest" repeatedly, for example. (Maybe typesetting from poor handwriting?) But an editor and proofreader should catch this stuff. Also, an appendix lists winners of various fantasy awards, yet not all those listed as winners are included in the author listings.

However, as a source of suggestions as to what you might like to read, it is useful. Since a lot of fantasy is aimed at children, it is sometimes hard to determine what an adult will enjoy reading. Having this sort of guide helps weed out authors or books you don't want to bother with, and gives hints to those

you might want to keep an eye out for at a used book store or a con.

Regards, Will

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