

## FANTASY

### Five Author Challenge<sup>1</sup>

As originally conceived by Joyce Saricks  
Updated 8/05

**Stephen R. Donaldson:** Donaldson is a classic world building Fantasy writer. His works almost always take place in worlds parallel to Earth. He is best known for his Chronicles of Thomas Covenant series and its two sequel series (The last of which was begun in 2004). The Covenant story began in *Lord Foul's Bane* (1977) as Thomas is reluctantly drawn from Earth into a conflict in another world, The Land. In addition to his hero, Donaldson has created a host of believable characters, and placed them in a carefully crafted world. As is common in the genre, Donaldson's books are long. He meticulously builds a world and then builds the action and conflict to a peak. Fans love his detailed settings and his memorable characters.

**Raymond Feist:** Feist describes his works in the following telling statement, "I don't write fantasy, I write historical novels about an imaginary place." Feist has written over a dozen books, set in different worlds; however, his is best known for his books that take place in Midkemia. Midkemia is a setting for many of Feist's novels, but the Riftwar Saga which begins with *The Magician* is his most beloved. This series explores the destiny of two young apprentices -- one to a magician and the other to a swordsman -- joined in the battle of light against dark. There are wizards and elves, sympathetic characters, intricate plots and a bit of Science Fiction thrown in for good measure. Feist also does not shy away from darker fantasy like in *Faerie Tale*. Feist also uses his talents in the computer gaming industry where a number of his worlds have been used as the background for epic, fantasy computer games. There is a reason Feist has sold millions of books which are read all over the world; he writes adventure/quest fantasy with detailed worlds and lots of stock fantasy character types that keep fantasy fans coming back for more.

**Neil Gaiman:** Gaiman is the current master of dark, literary fantasy. Drawing upon his background as a renowned graphic novelist, most notably for Marvel and his Sandman Series, Gaiman writes stand alone fantasy novels that are rich in detail and plot twists. No matter the format, Gaiman's works are all deeply imbued with fantastic, mythic, folkloric, gothic, and dreamlike storytelling. His novels always involve a normal person being drawn into another world, usually a world that was hiding just below the surface of the real world. For example in *American Gods*, a great American novel turned on its head, a young man just out of prison is placed in the middle of a war between the old gods who accompanied immigrants to America and the gods of the postmodern world--gods of the Internet, television, credit cards, and so on. *Neverwhere* is a novelization of a series Gaiman had written for television, in which, in typical fantasy fashion, a normal mortal becomes drawn into an Otherworld (this one existing in the sewers of London), where he must help save a young woman from assassination. Besides his numerous novels and graphic novels, Gaiman has also written a Young Adult novel and a children's picture book.

**Terry Goodkind:** Goodkind is most famous for his epic fantasy series Sword of Truth. His novels are pure sword and sorcery with dragons, wizards, good vs. evil, and a young protagonist trying to uncover his own magic powers and save the world. The first book is *The Wizard's First Rule* (1994). And that rule is, "People are stupid and will believe almost anything." Goodkind's series became an

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<sup>1</sup> With help from NoveList

immediate bestseller. Goodkind's series revolves around its hero, Richard Cypher, his emotions and his dilemmas, which helps to propel the overall theme of his series which is to decipher from reality the knowable truth. It should be noted that Goodkind does not believe he is writing "world building" fantasy where the characters are the vehicles used to explore the worlds the author creates. Rather, Goodkind's stories focus on people, because we live in a world of people, full of people problems and people questions.

**Stephen King's Dark Tower Series:** King, the masterful horror storyteller has an atmospheric dark fantasy series in which Roland, the world's last gunslinger, tracks an enigmatic Man in Black toward a forbidding dark tower, fighting forces both mortal and other-worldly on his quest. This series has many of the trademark King storytelling techniques, but specifically the titles in this series are moody books, comprised of short sentences, terse dialogue, a desert landscape, and a haunted hero on an obscure mission, surely an antiquist, rather than the traditional quest.