

# Love FANTASY Fiction? Try these titles...

## *Early Riser* by Jasper Fforde

Every Winter, the human population hibernates. During those bitterly cold four months, the nation is a snow-draped landscape of desolate loneliness, devoid of human activity. Well, not quite.

Your name is Charlie Worthing and it's your first season with the Winter Consuls, the committed but mildly unhinged group of misfits who are responsible for ensuring the hibernatory safe passage of the sleeping masses. You are investigating an outbreak of viral dreams which you dismiss as nonsense; nothing more than a quirky artefact born of the sleeping mind. When the dreams start to kill people, it's unsettling. When you get the dreams too, it's weird. When they start to come true, you begin to doubt your sanity.

But teasing truth from the Winter is never easy: You have to avoid the Villains and their penchant for murder, kidnapping and stamp collecting; ensure you aren't eaten by Nightwalkers, whose thirst for human flesh can only be satisfied by comfort food; and sidestep the increasingly less-than-mythical WinterVolk. But so long as you remember to wrap up warmly, you'll be fine.

## *A Discovery of Witches* by Deborah Harkness

Deep in the stacks of Oxford's Bodleian Library, young scholar Diana Bishop unwittingly calls up a bewitched alchemical manuscript in the course of her research. Descended from an old and distinguished line of witches, Diana wants nothing to do with sorcery; so after a furtive glance and a few notes, she banishes the book to the stacks. But her discovery sets a fantastical underworld stirring, and a horde of daemons, witches, and vampires soon descends upon the library. Diana has stumbled upon a coveted treasure lost for centuries—and she is the only creature who can break its spell.

## *The Deepest Blue: Tales of Renthia* by Sarah Beth Durst

Life is precious and precarious on the islands of Belene. Besieged by a capricious ocean full of malicious spirits, the people of the islands seek joy where they can. Mayara, one of the island's fearless oyster divers, has found happiness in love. But on the day of her wedding to the artist Kelo, a spirit-driven storm hits the island with deadly force.

To save her loved ones, Mayara reveals a dangerous secret: she has the power to control the spirits. When the storm ends, she is taken into custody by the queen's soldiers and imprisoned with other women like her.

They vary in age and social status, but to many they are heroes who will aide the country or witches that will sacrifice themselves trying. No matter who they are, the women are sent to a terrifying place—an island filled with bloodthirsty nature spirits, and left without food, water, shelter, or any tools except their own instincts and magic. Whoever survives the Island of Testing will be declared heirs to the queen. But no matter if she wins or loses, Mayara knows that the life she dreamed of is gone.

### ***88 Names by Matt Ruff***

John Chu is a "sherpa"--a paid guide to online role-playing games like the popular Call to Wizardry. For a fee, he and his crew will provide you with a top-flight character equipped with the best weapons and armor, and take you dragon-slaying in the Realms of Asgarth, hunting rogue starships in the Alpha Sector, or battling hordes of undead in the zombie apocalypse. Chu's new client, the pseudonymous Mr. Jones, claims to be a "wealthy, famous person" with powerful enemies, and he's offering a ridiculous amount of money for a comprehensive tour of the world of virtual-reality gaming. For Chu, this is a dream assignment, but as the tour gets underway, he begins to suspect that Mr. Jones is really North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un, whose interest in VR gaming has more to do with power than entertainment.

### ***For the Wolf by Hannah F. Whitten***

As the only Second Daughter born in centuries, Red has one purpose-to be sacrificed to the Wolf in the Wood in the hope he'll return the world's captured gods.

Red is almost relieved to go. Plagued by a dangerous power she can't control, at least she knows that in the Wilderwood, she can't hurt those she loves. Again.

But the legends lie. The Wolf is a man, not a monster. Her magic is a calling, not a curse. And if she doesn't learn how to use it, the monsters the gods have become will swallow the Wilderwood-and her world-whole.

### ***Highfire by Eoin Colfer***

In the days of yore, he flew the skies and scorched angry mobs. Now he hides from swamp tour boats and rises only with the greatest reluctance from his La-Z-Boy recliner. Laying low in the bayou, this once-magnificent fire breather has been reduced to lighting Marlboros with nose sparks, swilling Absolut in a Flashdance t-shirt, and bingeing Netflix in a fishing shack. For centuries, he struck fear in hearts far and wide as Wyvern, Lord Highfire of the Highfire Eyrie. Now he goes by Vern, but his glory days are about to come back!

### ***The Hike by Drew Magary***

When Ben, a suburban family man, takes a business trip to rural Pennsylvania, he decides to spend the afternoon before his dinner meeting on a short hike. Once he sets out into the woods behind his hotel, he quickly comes to realize that the path he has chosen cannot be given up easily. With no choice but to move forward, Ben finds himself falling deeper and deeper into a world of man-eating giants, bizarre demons, and colossal insects.

On a quest of epic, life-or-death proportions, Ben finds help comes in some of the most unexpected forms, including a profane crustacean and a variety of magical objects, tools, and potions. Desperate to return to his family, Ben is determined to track down the "Producer," the creator of the world in which he is being held hostage and the only one who can free him from the path.

### ***The Immortals* by Jordanna Max Brodsky**

The Relentless One, the Bearer of the Bow, the Untamed.....those are only a few of the names Selene DiSilva's answered to over the years. But these days she's content to work in secret, defending the women of Manhattan from the evils of men. She's reclusive, stubborn, and deeply unfriendly to everyone but her dog. But when a woman's mutilated body washes up in Riverside Park wearing a laurel wreath, Selene finds that she can no longer hide in the shadows.

### ***The Outcasts of Time* by Ian Mortimer**

December 1348. With the country in the grip of the Black Death, brothers John and William fear that they will shortly die and go to Hell. But as the end draws near, they are given an unexpected choice: either to go home and spend their last six days in their familiar world, or to search for salvation across the forthcoming centuries – living each one of their remaining days ninety-nine years after the last.

John and William choose the future and find themselves in 1447, ignorant of almost everything going on around them. The year 1546 brings no more comfort, and 1645 challenges them still further. It is not just that technology is changing: things they have taken for granted all their lives prove to be short-lived.

As they find themselves in stranger and stranger times, the reader travels with them, seeing the world through their eyes as it shifts through disease, progress, enlightenment and war. But their time is running out – can they do something to redeem themselves before the six days are up?

### ***Ordinary Monsters* by J.M. Miro**

England, 1882. In Victorian London, two children with mysterious powers are hunted by a figure of darkness — a man made of smoke.

Sixteen-year-old Charlie Ovid, despite a lifetime of brutality, doesn't have a scar on him. His body heals itself, whether he wants it to or not. Marlowe, a foundling from a railway freight car, shines with a strange bluish light. He can melt or mend flesh. When two grizzled detectives are recruited to escort them north to safety, they are forced to confront the nature of difference, and belonging, and the shadowy edges of the monstrous.

What follows is a journey from the gaslit streets of London, to an eerie estate outside Edinburgh, where other children with gifts—the Talents—have been gathered. Here, the world of the dead and the world of the living threaten to collide. And as secrets within the Institute unfurl, Marlowe, Charlie and the rest of the Talents will discover the truth about their abilities, and the nature of the force that is stalking them: that the worst monsters sometimes come bearing the sweetest gifts.

### ***Babel, Or the Necessity of Violence: An Arcane History of the Oxford Translators' Revolution* by R.F. Kuang**

1828. Robin Swift, orphaned by cholera in Canton, is brought to London by the mysterious Professor Lovell. There, he trains for years in Latin, Ancient Greek, and Chinese, all in preparation for the day he'll enroll in Oxford University's prestigious Royal Institute of Translation — also known as Babel.

Babel is the world's center of translation and, more importantly, of silver-working: the art of manifesting the meaning lost in translation through enchanted silver bars, to magical effect. Silver-working has made the British Empire unparalleled in power, and Babel's research in foreign languages serves the Empire's quest to colonize everything it encounters.

Oxford, the city of dreaming spires, is a fairytale for Robin; a utopia dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge. But knowledge serves power, and for Robin, a Chinese boy raised in Britain, serving Babel inevitably means betraying his motherland. As his studies progress Robin finds himself caught between Babel and the shadowy Hermes Society, an organization dedicated to sabotaging the silver-working that supports imperial expansion. When Britain pursues an unjust war with China over silver and opium, Robin must decide: Can powerful institutions be changed from within, or does revolution always require violence? What is he willing to sacrifice to bring Babel down?