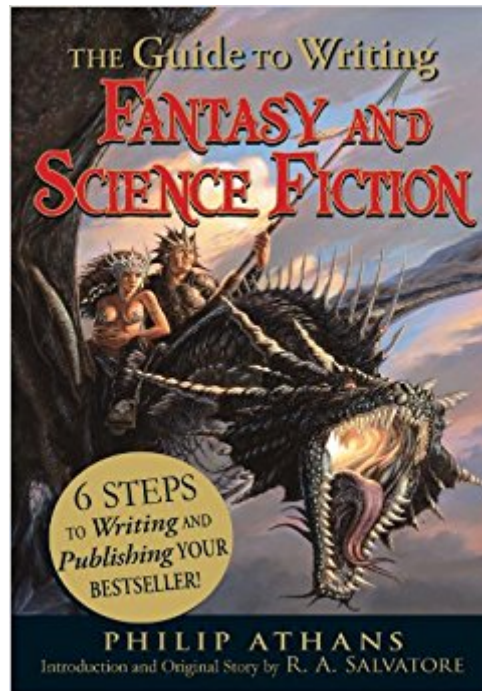


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The Guide To Writing Fantasy And Science Fiction: 6 Steps To Writing And Publishing Your Bestseller!



Synopsis

Science fiction and fantasy is one of the most challenging--and rewarding!--genres in the bookstore. But with New York Times bestselling author Philip Athans and fantasy giant R. A. Salvatore at your side, youâ™ll create worlds that draw your readers in--and keep them reading! Just as important, youâ™ll learn how to prepare your work for todayâ™s market. Drawing on his years of experience as one of the most acclaimed professionals in publishing, *Wizards of the Coast* Edited by Athans explains how to set your novel apart--and break into this lucrative field. From devising clever plots and building complex characters to inventing original technologies and crafting alien civilizations, Athans gives you the techniques you need to write strong, saleable narratives. Plus! Athans applies all of these critical lessons together in an unprecedented deconstruction of a never-before-published tale by the one and only R. A. Salvatore! There are books on writing science fiction and fantasy, and then thereâ™s this book--the only one you need to create strange, wonderful worlds for your own universe of readers!

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Customer Reviews

Pros: A good section on world building, some nice tips on the business side of writing, wisdom from different authors, a great short story by R.A. Salvatore. Cons: Not in-depth enough in the sections on characters and plot, a little too much promotion. I was pretty disappointed in the first couple of sections of this book. While the advice given was solid and it was presented in an authoritative, yet humble way, it wasn't nearly specific enough to actually tell me anything. If a topic is worth bringing up at all in a book, it is worth devoting more than a paragraph to it. And yet, many of the tips this book has to give on story and character are given barely a paragraph of very general information -- and that's after the author has quoted another writer and plugged R.A. Salvatore yet again (was it really necessary to promote this man's books on every other page?). The book's tips on world building are much more specific and much more useful and since world building is the main way in which writing a fantasy/science fiction novel is different from writing any other type of novel, this is a good thing. The book gives excellent tips on all the different little things you'll have to think of when writing in the genre, some of which aren't immediately obvious, such as systems of weights and measures. The rest of the book was also strong, with some good information on the nuts and bolts of writing such as how to avoid anachronisms and some good information on the appropriate way to approach agents and editors. As a side note, the short story at the end of this book, "Hugo Mann's Perfect Soul" by R.A. Salvatore is excellent -- one of the best pieces I've read by that author.

Longtime Wizards of the Coast editor and fantasy author Philip Athans is certainly qualified to write a guide to writing Fantasy and Sci Fi. He has gone through the entire process as an author but, more importantly, he has seen what works--and what doesn't--from behind an editor's desk. He puts his experience to good effect, recruiting R.A. Salvatore to provide both the introduction and an original short story, telling frequent war stories, interviewing industry contacts, regularly alluding to his favorite genre works, and engaging in ongoing brainstorming efforts to show us how each piece is done. In resistance to the current trend to focus on the business side of getting a book published, Athans devotes about 8x more space to the actual craft (hard to sell a book that isn't very good). Which makes the guide much more interesting to someone who, like me, is more interested in reading about the writing of fantasy and Sci Fi than actually writing it. Genre and sub-genre definitions are likely as not to produce 4 opinions from 3 geeks, but Athans manages to put together a genre and sub-genre guide that I find myself returning to far more often than the rest of the book. He starts with a few basic definitions: "fantasy is fiction that depends on magical or supernatural elements not specifically meant to scare you--if it scares you, at least as its primary goal, it's horror. If the magical elements are replaced with imagined technologies, it's science fiction." Fantasy gets

divided into Epic Fantasy, High Fantasy, Sword & Sorcery, Dark Fantasy, Contemporary Fantasy, Historical Fantasy, and Erotic Fantasy. Sci Fi is divided into Hard Science Fiction, Military Science Fiction, Space Opera, Slipstream, Cyberpunk, Steampunk, and Alternate History.

I purchased this book, naturally, because I want to write a fantasy novel. I wanted a book to teach me how to write fantasy, not one that teaches me how to write a book (I already have a very excellent book for this: *Writing Fiction For Dummies*). This book does exactly that. If you're interested in writing sci-fi, just about everything I say in this review will still apply to you. The information is fairly balanced for both. Though there are a couple chapters that seem more heavily balanced toward fantasy writing, they are worth reading if you're writing sci-fi because concepts they deal with are the exact same as you will find in writing sci-fi. So what's different about writing a novel and writing fantasy, and why do you need a book for this? Well, first of all, keep in mind this is written by Philip Athans, who is the Managing Editor for *Wizards of the Coast*, and he also writes his own fantasy. That's important to note because editors, in the writing world, are experts at finding what's wrong in your writing (such as anachronisms). They're going to be the ones who, in the end, tell you what you can and can't do. One biggest rules in writing is listen to your editor. Don't confuse this paragraph as meaning he's a bossy editor in this book, though. He's very modest about it. This book is a high-level guide to writing fantasy and sci-fi. It deals a lot with the polishing over in your fantasy world and narrative.

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