

"The trouble is that we have a bad habit, encouraged by pedants and sophisticates, of considering happiness as something rather stupid. Only pain is intellectual, only evil interesting."

"This is the treason of the artist: a refusal to admit the banality of evil and the terrible boredom of pain. If you can't lick `em, join `em. If it hurts, repeat it. But to praise despair is to condemn delight, to embrace violence is to lose hold of everything else."

Ursula K. Le Guin, about 'The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas'

The Rise of Cozy Fantasy

Lots of books qualify as comfort reads - but what makes cozy distinctive is that it offers sanctuary.

By Sarah Beth Durst (www.sarahbethdurst.com)

Published on July 9, 2024

<https://reactormag.com/the-rise-of-cozy-fantasy/>

There are plenty of older novels that, if they came out today, would be called cozy fantasy (to name just two: *Howl's Moving Castle* by Diana Wynne Jones and *Dealing With Dragons* by Patricia C. Wrede).

Why So Much Cozy? Thoughts on Jam, Cheese, and the Rise of Cozy Fantasy

By Sarah Beth Durst | July 19, 2024 | 2:30am

<https://www.pastemagazine.com/books/fantasy-books/cozy-fantasy-trend-explained-spellshop-author>

"What's cozy fantasy?"

"I have about twelve different answers to the second question, and they're all true. Cozy fantasy is like Lord of the Rings, but you never leave the Shire. Cozy fantasy is like cozy mystery but with magic instead of murder. Cozy fantasy is a type of comfort read, a subset of optimistic fantasy, that is characterized by low stakes and high emotional resonance. Cozy fantasy is a vibe."

The House in the Cerulean Sea (2020) by TJ Klune - a sweet found-family romance about an orphanage full of quirky, magical kids. It was followed soon after by

Legends and Lattes (2022) by Travis Baldree, in which a tired-of-battle orc opens a coffeeshop,

and

The Very Secret Society of Irregular Witches (2022) by Sangu Mandanna, about an isolated witch who becomes a tutor to three young children, breaking every rule of her coven in the process.

Soon after, they were joined by

Emily Wilde's Encyclopaedia of Faeries (2023) by Heather Fawcett, the first in a cozy series about a curmudgeonly scholar and her Fae prince.

Can't Spell Treason Without Tea (2024) by Rebecca Thorne, about a warrior and a wizard who defy a cruel queen in order to open a teashop; *The Honey Witch* by Sydney J. Shields, about a honey witch cursed to never find love; and *Dreadful* by Caitlin Rozakis, about a formerly evil wizard who has lost his memory.

This summer, my book, *The Spellshop*, came out. It's about a rogue librarian and her best friend, Caz, a sentient spider plant, who take on the low-stakes market of illegal spellmaking and the high-risk business of starting over. It's full of stolen spellbooks, winged cats, quirky new friends, merhorses, raspberry jam, and a kind neighbor with a smile like the sun coming out from behind the clouds over a stormy sea.

And this fall,

The Teller of Small Fortunes (2024) by Julie Leong will come out - it's about an immigrant fortune teller who accidentally finds herself a family (and invents fortune cookies in the process).

I'm obviously only mentioning a few. There are many more. And there are many non-cozy books that include a cozy fantasy element, such as

Lore of the Wilds (2024) by Analeigh Sbrana and

The Enchanted Hacienda (2023) by J.C. Cervantes.

Comments:

davep1:

Thinking about cozy fantasy, I would offer Pratchett's *Discworld* as an example. While it's focused on funny rather than cozy, the books are all about promoting empathy, tolerance, and kindness, and almost all end with hope.

DigiCom:

3 months ago

I wonder... has anyone ever tried cozy sci-fi?

DharmaGirl:

I am a fan of *Mindtouch* by M. C. A. Hogarth. Slow pace and found family. But just enough

struggle to keep you invested in the characters. There is a death scene that is difficult in the bitter sweet way rather than scary. The characters find comfort in each other, so I as the reader find comfort as well.

Old Cozy F & SF:

Zenna Henderson's stories about **The People** (1950s – 70s):

*The People Collection, or
Ingathering: The Complete People Stories of Zenna Henderson*

Stardust (1998) – Neil Gaiman

A Civil Campaign (1999) - Lois McMaster Bujold (NB Not a good place to start the Vorkosigan series!)

The Goblin Emperor (2014) – Katherine Addison (aka Sarah Monette, who is definitely NOT cosy.)

Becky Chambers' Wayfarers series:

1. *The Long Way to a Small, Angry Planet* (2015)
2. *A Closed and Common Orbit* (2016)
3. *Record of a Spaceborn Few* (2018)
4. *The Galaxy, and the Ground Within* (2021)

YOUTUBE

“reading cozy fantasy books to see what the hype is about” (32:47, Baldree, Klune, Mandanna) – The Book Leo:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nC9pR7CR-VM&ab_channel=TheBookLeo

“A GUIDE TO COZY FANTASY BOOKS ~ series and standalone book recs” - Elliot Brooks (31:50, includes Kiki, Baldree, Kingfisher, Fawcett, Addison):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPvYtPu5IMw&ab_channel=ElliotBrooks

(PS Elliot Brooks has another channel - <https://www.youtube.com/@fullmetaanalysis> - where she discusses video games, manga, adaptations, comics, etc , which includes discussions of 17 (so far) Studio Ghibli films. One of those 17 is LOVE STUDIO GHIBLI? READ THESE BOOKS ~ like this try that” - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZZwNWSHFQg&list=PLMgrIOhaTZkQGhiC6eDpNf-kWXTogk6Lr&index=6&ab_channel=FullMetaAnalysis)

“i wrote a cozy fantasy novel & here are my experiences with the process” (15:59) - Autumn Ashleigh:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=id-0PkkFhN8&ab_channel=AutumnAshleigh

"Legends and Lattes and the Rise of Cozy Fantasy" (9:27) – Ben DeHart:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B49XgSO2BX0&ab_channel=BenDeHart

"A Rant About Cozy Fantasy" (22:29, includes Fawcett, Chambers, Penner) – Liene's Library (NB Her favourite book is Joe Abercrombie's "The First Law"):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1DV3kkmc-SM&ab_channel=Liene%27sLibrary

"Cozy Fantasy Books for Cold Winter Nights | If You Liked Legends and Lattes, Read These Books! (Baldree, Klune, Kingfisher, Gaiman, Wynne Jones, Mandanna, ...)- Alexandra Roselyn

Liene, the lady who ranted about Cozy Fantasy, has posted another video on the subject:

NOT "cozy fantasy" but FANTASY THAT'S COZY

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rF59iY3SjHw&ab_channel=Liene%27sLibrary

In it she reviews & recommends fantasy books that have cozy elements, but that are not 'cozy fantasy' as it has become known.

If you find that she maybe speaks a bit too fast, like many youtubers seem to do, adjust the playback speed via the cog icon at bottom right to 75%.