

# BARTON

## LIBRARY

*Dare to Know*

### Apocalyptic Fiction

*Fiction set in a world or civilization after a catastrophic event (e.g., nuclear war, alien invasion, pandemic, environmental collapse), sometimes also including the period immediately preceding the event.*

A sub-genre in which a doomsday scenario, such as a pandemic virus, astronomical event, or nuclear holocaust, has devastated the world. The nature of the disaster shapes the setting, the plot, and the actions of the characters. For instance, a nuclear cataclysm will cause radioactivity and its effects on survivors to be a significant factor. Characters confronting an invasion by a technologically superior extraterrestrial race may deal with the planned eradication or enslavement of humanity, the harvesting of people as a food or fuel source, the seizure of the planet's natural resources, or the complete obliteration of the world. Besides describing the actual event, some authors have explored humanity's reaction.

Apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic fiction often focuses on the fall of civilization by a terrifying event or entity, and the emergence from the ashes of a dark and dangerous replacement. People may face tremendous hardships and be forced to commit barbarities in order to endure, including cannibalism. Stories may or may not end with humanity's victory. This sub-genre can blend with **horror fiction**, especially with stories that feature vampires or zombies. Apocalyptic fiction has an age-old history, a flood myth forming a thematic portion of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (7th century BC). More modern examples include Jean-Baptiste Cousin de Grainville's *Le Dernier Homme* (1805 AD), Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* (1826), Richard Jeffries's *After London* (1885), Camille Flammarion's *La Fin du Monde* (1893), M. P. Shiel's *The Purple Cloud* (1901), Arthur C. Clarke's *Rescue Party* (1945) and *Childhood's End* (1953), George R. Stewart's *Earth Abides* (1949), William Tenn's "The Liberation of Earth" (1950), Robert A. Heinlein's *The Puppet Masters* (1951), John Wyndham's *The Day of the Triffids* (1951), Jack Finney's *The Body Snatchers* (1955), Peter George's *Red Alert* (1958), Edgar Pangborn's *Davy* (1964), and John W. Campbell Jr.'s *The Ultimate Weapon* (1966).

### Common Elements

Community
Destruction of ecosystems
Dystopian societies
Bleak and hopeless future
Deadly plagues
Extraterrestrial attack

Alien infiltration
The struggle to survive
Human nature
Metaphorical representations of current threats and tensions

### Benefits of Reading

Allows readers to examine mankind's strengths and foibles
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Depicts to readers stories of humans stripped of humanity
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Assists readers in facing their own fears
Permits readers to confront the idea of death on a massive scale
Relates to readers cautionary tales of losing everything that is held dear

Reaffirms to readers why life and society are important
Satisfies readers' often subconscious wish to start over
Encourages readers to consider who they are on the inside

### Modern Literary Examples

<i>The 5th Wave</i> (2013) by Rick Yancey
<i>Acts of Vanishing</i> (2017) by Fredrik T. Olsson
<i>Afterland</i> (2020) by Lauren Beukes
<i>Anthropocene Rag</i> (2020) by Alexander Irvine
<i>Aurora</i> (2022) by David Koepp
<i>The Book of Koli</i> (2020) by M. R. Carey
<i>Crimson Phoenix</i> (2021) by John Gilstrap
<i>CyberStorm</i> (2013) by Mathew Mather
<i>The Earth Remembers</i> (1989) by Susan Torian Olan
<i>Edge of Collapse</i> (2021) by Kyla Stone
<i>Footfall</i> (1985) by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle
<i>Fractured State</i> (2016) by Steven Konkoly
<i>The Harrows of Spring</i> (2016) by James Howard Kunstler
<i>The Ice Orphan</i> (2022) by Kathleen O'Neal Gear
<i>Lagoon</i> (2015) by Nnedi Okorafor
<i>Last One at the Party</i> (2021) by Bethany Clift

<i>The Last Policeman</i> (2012) by Ben H. Winters
<i>The Lost Puzzler</i> (2019) by Eyal Kless
<i>Lucifer's Hammer</i> (1977) by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle
<i>Notes from the Burning Age</i> (2021) by Claire North
<i>Out of the Dark</i> (2010) by David Weber
<i>Parable of the Sower</i> (1993) by Octavia E. Butler
<i>Rage</i> (2011) by Matthew J. Costello
<i>The Revivalists</i> (2022) by Christopher M. Hood
<i>The Road</i> (2006) by Cormac McCarthy
<i>The Savior's Game</i> (2017) by Sean Chercover
<i>Station Eleven</i> (2015) by Emily St. John Mandel
<i>Time Stands</i> (2018) by Dana Fredsti and David Fitzgerald
<i>The Wolf Road</i> (2016) by Beth Lewis
<i>The Wolves of Winter</i> (2018) by Tyrell Johnson