

# BARTON

## LIBRARY

*Dare to know*

### Humorous Fiction

*Fiction that focuses on comical or highly unlikely situations.*

A genre in which stories seek to amuse the reader, although this is a subjective goal depending on a reader's sense of humor and point of view. The primary focus is to provoke surprise and laughter by subverting what is common. This sense of inconsistency is at the core of comedy. Humorous fiction may exaggerate the unexpected, the bizarre, or the ironic for comic effect, often with subtlety and carefully crafted narratives. Authors writing in this genre can highlight the absurdities, strangeness, and hilarity of life while still exploring darker topics, and achieving complexity of theme and depth of character. Protagonists might find themselves in strange, unique, or distressing circumstances, but humor offers an insight into the characters' experiences. Thus, the reader may gain a deeper understanding of how the characters are affected. Henry Fielding's *The History of Tom Jones* (1749), Henry James's *The Europeans* (1878), Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat* (1889), George Grossmith and Weedon Grossmith's *The Diary of a Nobody* (1892), Mark Twain's *The American Claimant* (1892), E. M. Forester's *A Room with a View* (1908), P. G. Wodehouse's "Extricating Young Gussie" (1915), Richard Gordon's *Doctor in the House* (1952), Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim* (1954), Peter De Vries's *The Tunnel of Love* (1954), and Terry Southern's *The Magic Christian* (1954) are classic examples.

### Common Elements

Wit
Absurdity
Slapstick comedy
Satire

Farce
Parody
Spoofs

### Benefits of Reading

Provides readers with an escape from an unpleasant reality
Gives readers a therapeutic opportunity to calm and recharge their minds

Entertains readers with an amusing story
Permits readers to laugh at themselves
Allows readers to change the way they think and act through humor

### Modern Literary Examples

<i>Anatomy Lesson</i> (1983) by Phillip Roth
<i>Bridget Jones's Diary</i> (1996) by Helen Fielding
<i>Breakfast of Champions</i> (1973) by Kurt Vonnegut
<i>A Confederacy of Dunces</i> (1980) by John

Kennedy Toole
<i>Confessions of a Domestic Failure</i> (2017) by Bunmi Laditan
<i>Dear Girls Above Me</i> (2013) by Charlie McDowell
<i>Elegies for the Brokenhearted</i> (2010) by

Christie Hodgen
<i>Has Anyone Seen My Toes?</i> (2022) by Christopher Buckley
<i>Me Talk Pretty One Day</i> (2000) by David Sedaris
<i>Modern Lovers</i> (2016) by Emma Straub
<i>The Monkey Wrench Gang</i> (1975) by Edward Abbey
<i>My (Not So) Perfect Life</i> (2017) by Sophie Kinsella
<i>The People We Hate at the Wedding</i> (2017) by Grant Ginder
<i>Piggly Wiggly Christmas</i> (2010) by Rob Dalby
<i>Rachel's Holiday</i> (1998) by Marian Keyes
<i>Standard Deviation</i> (2017) by Katherine

Helny
<i>Thank You, Goodnight</i> (2015) by Andy Abramowitz
<i>Today Will Be Different</i> (2016) by Maria Semple
<i>Tom, Dick, and Debbie Harry</i> (2002) by Jessica Adams
<i>A Walk in the Woods</i> (1998) by Bill Bryson
<i>The Wangs vs. the World</i> (2016) by Jade Chang
<i>When You Are Engulfed in Flames</i> (2008) by David Sedaris
<i>White Noise</i> (1985) by Don DeLillo
<i>Wilt</i> (1976) by Tom Sharpe