

BARTON

LIBRARY

Dare to know

Paranormal Fiction

Fiction that features human characters that are often involved in the occult, witchcraft, spiritualism, psychic phenomena, vodou, etc., interacting with supernatural beings.

A genre in which supernatural creatures or talents exist outside the laws of the physical world. Such phenomena may be explained in time or be forever beyond the realm of scientific understanding. These elements are a key focus of the story. Stories might involve ghosts that haunt a particular house, woods, or ancient burial ground; the unknown of life after death; humans possessing psychic abilities; a curse or cursed objects; demonic forces and possession; satanic ritual; and the selling of one's soul to the devil. Characters may practice aspects of the occult or possess mysterious, secret knowledge and power that is supposedly attainable only through magical or supernatural means. They might read minds, speak with the dead, see the past or future, or be able to move objects telepathically. The emphasis is sometimes on defeating a paranormal threat, or understanding and righting some wrong that was committed in order to allow the spirits of the dead to rest. This genre is often seen as a blend of the **fantasy fiction**, **Gothic fiction**, and **horror fiction** genres. Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's *In a Glass Darkly* (1872) and William B. Seabrook's *The Magic Island* (1929) are classic examples.

Common Elements

Black magic
Wizardry
Fairies
Angels
Demons
Witches
Ghosts
Psychics
Esoteric brotherhoods

Communion with spirits
Shamans
Dream-weavers
Soothsayers
Seers
Conjurers
Fortune-tellers
Spiritualism
Psychic phenomena

Voodoo
Telekinetic powers
Telepathy
Mind control
Pyrokinesis
Clairvoyance
Children
Visions

Benefits of Reading

Allows readers to experience the known and the unknown
Introduces readers to different worlds and cultural lore
Challenges readers to question their own beliefs

Prompts readers to see the world in different ways
Presents readers with metaphors, symbolism, and parallels relevant to modern life
Inspires readers' creativity

Modern Literary Examples

<i>The Beautiful</i> (2019) by Renée Ahdieh	Elizabeth Allen
<i>Deadroads</i> (2014) by Robin Riopelle	<i>Our Share of Night</i> (2023) by Mariana Enríquez
<i>Dead Things</i> (2013) by Stephen Blackmoore	<i>Practical Magic</i> (1995) by Alice Hoffman
<i>Declare</i> (2000) by Tim Powers	<i>The Red Garden</i> (2011) by Alice Hoffman
<i>Firestarter</i> (1980) by Stephen King	<i>The Shining</i> (1977) by Stephen King
<i>Ghost Story</i> (1979) by Peter Straub	<i>Summoning</i> (2012) by Carol Wolf
<i>Hammers on Bone</i> (2016) by Cassandra Khaw	<i>A Time of Angels</i> (2003) by Patricia Schonstein
<i>The Historian</i> (2005) by Elizabeth Kostova	<i>Weavers</i> (2015) by Aric Davis
<i>The Mark</i> (2018) by Lee Mountford	<i>White Is for Witching</i> (2014) by Helen Oyeyemi
<i>Miserere</i> (2011) by Teresa Frohock	
<i>The Nightmare House</i> (2023) by Sarah	