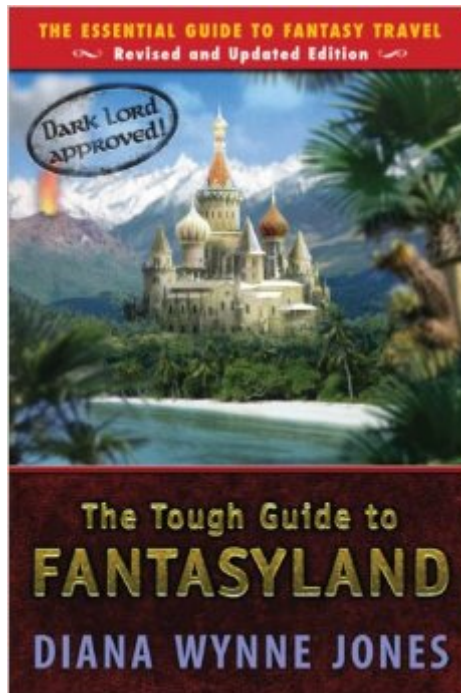


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# The Tough Guide To Fantasyland: The Essential Guide To Fantasy Travel



## Synopsis

Both a hilarious send-up of the clichés of the genre and an indispensable guide for writers, *The Tough Guide to Fantasyland* has been impossible to find for years. This is Diana Wynne Jones at her very best: incisive, funny, and wildly imaginative. This is the definitive edition of *The Tough Guide*, featuring a new map, an entirely new design, and additional material written for it by Diana Wynne Jones.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I think most of the negative reviews are from people whose tongue is not inserted properly in their cheek. Really, guys, who goes around COUNTING clichés and who can really catch every single one when it all comes down to it. This book is full of wicked humor and a skewering look at fantasy not to be missed. True fans of any genre are the ones that can laugh at it. This book is great because it tells writers exactly what clichés to avoid and points out funny facts. (Come to think of it, when HAS a fantasy character, a serious heroic one, mind you, ever worn socks? Tell me if you know!) Read it, be prepared for initial indignation, then laughter then get on with your life and for heaven's sake don't count how many times these tired clichés have been used! It spoils all the fun

If you like fantasy and have a sense of humor, get this book. Diana Wynne Jones knows whereof she speaks, and she hits many nails on the head. This is a delightful send-up of fantasy conventions and if you don't laugh out loud you will at least smile a lot. In view of the current resurgence of LOTR (thanks to the movie) this book should be sold in conjunction with *Bored of the*

Rings by the Harvard Lampoon, which I hear is being re-issued after many years. The two would make a nice gift set. Like another reviewer, I am sorry that even more items were not included--such as Knights--but one author cannot think of everything and the book -is- 300 pages long. It is fun to imagine what particular authors Ms. Jones might have had in mind as she wrote the different entries (although I don't suggest she is always being "author-specific".) In my own case, I am as it happens finishing up Elizabeth Moon's DEED OF PAKSENNARION, and the entry for "Female Mercenary" really had me chuckling. Hello, Paks! I hope someone sends copies of this masterpiece to R.J., T.G., and several other people who badly need to read it.

Read the latest Robert Jordan, David Eddings or Terry Brooks door-stop and decide that you could write a fantasy soap opera just as well? Or maybe those authors drive you insane and you want to turn the fantasy genre on its head? The solution to both of these tasks can be found in this strange book from Diana Wynne Jones, better known for writing original children's fantasies of her own. Her secret, contained herein, seems to have been a long study of fantasy literature, and noted what has become cliched. In this book, all the tropes are dissected and cross-referenced. A better title would have been "A Writer's Guide to Fantasy Schlock, with annotations." As a book to read straight through, it is not as rewarding. The entries are listed alphabetically, with small caps indicating a term with its own entry. Little icons appear in the margins--these don't mean anything per se, but are usually little graphic jokes on the text. The text itself is quite amusing, especially if one is familiar with the subject being pilloried. I wouldn't recommend this book to all, but fans of fantasy should find enough here for their monies worth of chuckles. Would-be writers will find this an indispensable reference work.

The Tough Guide To Fantasy Land by Diana Wynne Jones  
DAW Books, 1996  
Diana Wynne Jones has been for me, since an early age, a favorite. Her fantasy stories are entertaining, thoughtful and often unique. And now I know how she figured out how to give her stories their unique quality. She cataloged all the cliches of genre fantasy first then avoided using them until she put them in her /Tough Guide To Fantasy Land/. This book is a dictionary of every trope and cliché standard to the fantasy genre (OMT). With the pretense that all fantasy novels are actually tour guides of Fantasyland, Jones lists all the tourist traps, the sights and events one can expect while on their specific tour. The writer is Management and what you can expect is dictated by The Rules (which SMELL slightly of Campbell). Each entry is a wonderfully wicked stab at the pulp, cross-referenced and littered with Official Management Terms (OMT) which can be found in italics and every pulp

fantasy novel ever written. Jones informs that SOCKS are simply not worn but amazingly all BOOTS will be without SMELL even after being worn for weeks on end (and they won't wear out either). Fantasyland ECOLOGY is suspicious at best, with no insects or really animals at all except for LEATHERY-WINGED AVIANS who will attack near the beginning of the tour, which of course makes you wonder just what the Management is putting into the STEW (which is mostly all you'll eat). This book's only problem is a number of typos. It was an occasional distraction that I hope is fixed in later editions. If you have ever picked up a trilogy of fantasy (for most tours have three legs, if more they become EPICS), you're looking to write a genre fantasy novel, or just want to read them all in one volume, then this will leave you laughing, entertained and ready if you ever make your way through the misting mirror into Fantasyland.

The Tough Guide to Fantasyland is not a novel, but it does manage to tell a sort of story. Written as an amusing travel guide, the book assumes that you are a 'tourist' in a fantasy world. You are, of course, going on a quest, and you will meet all sorts of strange people, visit strange places, eat lots of stew (and probably save the world as well) before the tour is over. The strange people, places, and the details of your journey are all described in a humorous, deadpan style, and, through the guide, the main cliches of fantasy literature are clearly pointed out. This is why I think this book would be a good writing guide. If you're interested in writing fantasy, either as a pastime or as a job, this book will show you all the things you should definitely avoid, because they have been done to death already. It also shows some things that a good author might consider writing about, such as creating an ecology for their fantasyland. I myself have already put TTGTF to use, and looked up some tired fantasy concepts when I came across them in other books. Diana Wynne Jones's explanations of such cliches are always very enlightening, and often quite funny. My favorite parts, however, were probably the arbitrary and irrelevant quotes at the beginning of each section. I greatly enjoyed them. Some of the quotes are hilarious, and some of them are quite applicable to real life.

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