Popular commercial fiction emerged in the nineteenth century, with serialised novels and sensational penny dreadfuls. Today it remains a multi-million-dollar industry giving pleasure to many, but it is also a field of growing interest for scholars and students of literature. This Companion covers the major developments in the history of popular fiction, with specially commissioned chapters on pulp fiction, bestsellers and comics and graphic narratives. The volume also examines the public and personal everyday contexts within which popular texts are read, highlighting the ways in which such narratives have circulated across a variety of constantly changing media, including theatre, television, cinema and new computer-based digital forms. Case studies from key genres – crime fiction, romance and Gothic horror – as well as a full chronology and guide to further reading make this collection indispensable to all those interested in this complex and vibrant cultural field.
THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO POPULAR FICTION

EDITED BY
DAVID GLOVER AND SCOTT MCCrackEN
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1. *Dream of the Rarebit Fiend* by Winsor McCay © Woody Gelman Collection, The Ohio State University Billy Ireland Cartoon Library & Museum.  

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Unfortunates and hypertext; gender and technoculture; Alan Hollinghurst and homosexual identity; Judith Butler and the politics of unintelligibility. She is currently in the early stages of working on her third book, tentatively entitled Queer, Pulp, and the Politics of Unintelligibility.

BRENDA R. SILVER is Mary Brinsmead Wheelock Professor at Dartmouth College and Adjunct Professor of English at Trinity College Dublin, where she teaches in the M.Phil. programme in Popular Literature. Her publications include Virginia Woolf Icon (1999), Virginia Woolf’s Reading Notebooks (1983), and, with Lynn Higgins, Rape and Representation (1991), as well as essays on Charlotte Brontë, E. M. Forster, John le Carré, Marilyn Monroe, hypertext, and online communities. She is currently working on a study of Virginia Woolf and representations of AIDS, as well as pursuing the debate about computer games as art introduced in her chapter in this volume.

ERIN A. SMITH is Associate Professor of American Studies and Literature and Associate Director of the Gender Studies Program at the University of Texas at Dallas. She is the author of Hard-Boiled: Working-Class Readers and Pulp Magazines (2000). She is currently working on a book about religious bestsellers called What Would Jesus Read?: Scenes of Religious Reading and Writing in Twentieth-Century America.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>1814</td>
<td>Walter Scott, <em>Waverley</em></td>
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| 1842 | Eugène Sue, *Les Mystères de Paris* begins publication as a serial in *Le Journal des débats*  
Mudie’s Circulating Library founded (UK) |
| 1845 | G. W. M. Reynolds, *The Mysteries of London*  
George Lippard, *Quaker City; or, The Monks of Monk Hall* |
| 1850 | Public Libraries Act enables cities and towns in England and Wales to provide libraries financed out of local taxation and marks beginning of public library movement in Europe and North America |
| 1860 | Beadle’s Dime Novels begin publication in weekly pamphlet format (USA) |
| 1870 | 80% literacy rate in England and Wales |
| 1877 | Beadle’s Half Dime Library launched featuring Western outlaw hero Deadwood Dick (USA) |
| 1880 | Lew Wallace, *Ben Hur* |
| 1881 | George Newnes launches *Tit-Bits*, a new miscellany-style weekly sold for a penny (UK) |
| 1887 | Arthur Conan Doyle publishes the first Sherlock Holmes novella, *A Study in Scarlet*  
Berne Convention on international copyright |
| 1891 | International Copyright Act |
| 1893 | Sarah Grand, *The Heavenly Twins* |
| 1894 | George du Maurier, *Trilby*  
End of the dominance of the three-volume novel and its replacement by cheaper single volumes (UK) |
| 1895 | *The Bookman* issues monthly lists of the ten novels selling the most copies in the shortest period of time (USA)  
Invention of the cinematograph by Auguste and Louis Lumière (France)  
H. G. Wells, *The Time Machine* |
| 1896 | Richard F. Outcault, ‘The Yellow Kid’ in the *New York World* becomes the first modern comic strip (including panels and speech balloons)  
Frank A. Munsey re-brands *The Golden Argosy* as a pulp magazine, *The Argosy* (USA) |
## Chronology

1897  Bram Stoker, *Dracula*
1898  H. G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds*
1900  97% literacy rate in England and Wales
1902  ‘Best-seller’ comes into everyday Anglophone usage
1905  Winsor McCay’s comic strip *Little Nemo in Slumberland* (USA)
      Edgar Wallace, *The Four Just Men*
      Hindi translation of G. W. M. Reynolds, *The Mysteries of the Court of London*, first of fifty-four volumes (India)
1908  Mills & Boon founded as a general fiction publisher; specialises in romance
      *c. early 1930s (UK)*
1912  Edgar Rice Burroughs, *Tarzan of the Apes*
      Zane Grey, *Riders of the Purple Sage*
      Street & Smith’s first issue of *Detective Story Magazine*
1915  Zane Grey, *The Lone Star Ranger*
      John Buchan, *The Thirty-Nine Steps*
1919  Max Brand, *The Untamed*
      Street & Smith launch *Western Story Magazine* (USA)
1920  Agatha Christie, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*
1923  Barbara Cartland, *Jig-saw*
1926  Hugo Gernsback launches SF pulp magazine *Amazing Stories* (USA)
      Joseph T. Shaw, *Black Mask* magazine pioneers hard-boiled crime fiction (USA)
      *Book-of-the-Month Club* (USA)
1927  Warner Brothers releases *The Jazz Singer*, first feature film with synchronised dialogue (USA)
1929  *The Funnies*, the first full-colour comic book published by Dell (USA)
      Hergé, *Tintin au pays des Soviets* (Belgium)
      Dashiell Hammett, *Red Harvest*
1935  Allen Lane’s *Penguin* paperback series (UK)
1936  Margaret Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind* (one million copies sold in the first year of US publication)
      Regular public television broadcasting begins in the UK
1938  Daphne du Maurier, *Rebecca*
      Orson Welles radio adaptation of Wells’s *War of the Worlds* (USA)
1939  Pocket Books, first major US mass-market paperback imprint
      Raymond Chandler, *The Big Sleep*
1945  Maurice Duhamel, *La Série Noire* hard-boiled crime series (France)
1947  *Fotoromanzi* (narratives composed of photographs) appear in the Italian magazine *Grand Hotel* selling one million copies per week
      Mickey Spillane, *I, the Jury*
      Tereska Torres, *Women’s Barracks*
1949  *Harlequin* founded as a paperback publishing imprint; specialises in romance
      *c. early 1950s (Canada)*
1952  Jim Thompson, *The Killer Inside Me*

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1953 | Hachette, *Livre de Poche* paperbacks
1954 | Commercial television begins in the UK
1955 | 45 million television sets in US households (a rise of 14.5 million from 1954)
1957 | Harlequin acquires North American distribution rights for Mills & Boon
1961 | Harold Robbins, *The Carpetbaggers’ Spacewar!* Pioneer computer game
1964 | Chester Himes, *Cotton Comes to Harlem*
1965 | Arthur Hailey, *Hotel*
1966 | Jacqueline Susann, *The Valley of the Dolls*
1969 | Mario Puzo, *The Godfather*
1970 | Erich Segal, *Love Story*
1971 | Peter Blatty, *The Exorcist*
1972 | Art Spiegelman publishes early short graphic narrative using ‘Maus’ material
1973 | Keiji Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen* first appears in *Weekly Shōnen Jump* magazine (Japan)
1974 | Peter Benchley, *Jaws*
1975 | Will Crowther, *Adventure*, first text adventure game (USA)
1980 | Nintendo handheld video game *Game & Watch* (Japan)
1984 | Black Lizard hard-boiled crime imprint (USA)
1986 | Rupert Murdoch founds Fox Broadcasting Company (USA)
1988 | Thomas Harris, *The Silence of the Lambs*
1989 | Nintendo *Game Boy* new handheld video game console (Japan)
1990 | Michael Crichton, *Jurassic Park*
1991 | Alexandra Ripley, *Scarlett* (sequel to *Gone with the Wind*) sells two million copies in its first year of US publication
1993 | The World Wide Web launched
1994 | Robert James Waller, *The Bridges of Madison County* sells over four million copies in first year of US publication
1995 | Jeff Bezos founds Amazon.com

‘Bridget Jones’s Diary’ appears as an anonymous newspaper column
Chronology

1996 Helen Fielding, Bridge Jones’s Diary
Oprah’s Book Club (USA)

1991 Henning Mankell, Mörder up an ansikte (Sweden; English trans. Faceless Killers, 1997)

1997 Grand Theft Auto video game series (UK)
J. K. Rowling, Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone
‘Weblog’ coined; shortened to ‘blog’ c. 1999

1998 Japanese manga comics estimated to sell 4.6 million copies per day
The first portable e-book readers, Rocket ebook and SoftBook, become available

2000 Stephen King releases his novella Riding the Bullet solely in digital file format
Chris Ware, Jimmy Corrigan

2003 Marjane Satrapi, Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood
Dan Brown, The Da Vinci Code

2005 ‘Belle de Jour’, The Intimate Adventures of a London Call Girl
Stieg Larsson, Män som hatar kvinnor (Sweden; English trans. The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, 2008)

2007 Amazon launches Kindle in the USA, a portable e-book reader with two-way communication between bookseller and consumer