

## *A personal selection of the best books for curious minds.*

### FICTION

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Dodie Smith

#### *The Hundred and One Dalmatians*

When the villainous Cruella de Vil kidnaps their puppies, Pongo and Missis set out on a daring rescue across the English countryside. The original novel is wittier and stranger than the film.

Arthur Ransome

#### *Swallows and Amazons*

The Walker children set sail on a lake in the summer holidays, camping on an island and waging a pretend war against the local Amazons. A story about freedom, self-reliance, and the outdoors.

C.S. Lewis

#### *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

Four children step through a wardrobe into the frozen land of Narnia, ruled by the White Witch. There they meet Aslan, and everything changes.

Rudyard Kipling

#### *The Jungle Book*

Mowgli, a boy raised by wolves in the Indian jungle, must learn the law of the pack and survive the hatred of the tiger Shere Khan.

Joan Aiken

#### *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase*

In an alternative Victorian England overrun by wolves, cousins Bonnie and Sylvia must outwit the sinister new governess, Miss Slighcarp, who has designs on the family fortune.

Eva Ibbotson

#### *Journey to the River Sea*

Orphaned Maia is sent to live with distant relatives in Brazil, where the Amazon rainforest opens up a world of wonder and the relatives turn out to be less welcoming than she hoped.

E. Nesbit

#### *Five Children and It*

Five brothers and sisters discover a Psammead — a sand-fairy — in a gravel pit. It grants them a wish a day, each of which goes spectacularly wrong before sunset.

Frances Hodgson Burnett

#### *The Secret Garden*

Orphaned Mary Lennox arrives at her uncle's Yorkshire manor, where she discovers a walled garden locked for ten years. As she brings the garden back to life, she and the household begin to heal.

Susan Cooper

#### *Over Sea, Under Stone*

On holiday in Cornwall, the Drew children find an ancient manuscript in the attic that leads them into a quest connected to King Arthur. The first book in the Dark Is Rising sequence.

Philip Pullman

#### *Northern Lights*

In a world where every person's soul lives beside them as an animal daemon, Lyra Belacqua sets off on a journey to the frozen North to rescue kidnapped children and uncover her father's research into a mysterious substance called Dust.

Roald Dahl

### *Danny the Champion of the World*

Danny lives quietly with his father, a filling-station owner, until he discovers his father's secret life as a poacher. Together they hatch an audacious plan to outsmart the local landowner.

Richmal Crompton

### *Just William*

Eleven-year-old William Brown, permanently scruffy and full of schemes, wreaks havoc in his middle-class village. His plans never work out as intended, but the chaos is the point.

Astrid Lindgren

### *Pippi Longstocking*

Pippi is nine years old, lives alone with a horse and a monkey, and is the strongest girl in the world. She does whatever she likes, to the delight of her neighbours and the despair of all adults.

Norton Juster

### *The Phantom Tollbooth*

Bored Milo drives through a magic tollbooth and arrives in a land where he must rescue the princesses Rhyme and Reason. A wordplay-filled adventure that makes learning feel like the best kind of game.

Louise Fitzhugh

### *Harriet the Spy*

Harriet M. Welsch follows a spy route after school every day, recording her observations about everyone in her notebook. When her classmates find the notebook, the fallout is swift and painful.

E.B. White

### *Charlotte's Web*

Wilbur the pig is destined for the slaughterhouse until his friend Charlotte, a grey spider, begins writing words in her web to save his life. A story about friendship, loyalty, and the cycle of life.

Michael Morpurgo

### *War Horse*

Joey, a farm horse, is sold to the British cavalry in 1914 and shipped to France. Told from Joey's perspective, the story follows him through the battlefields of the First World War.

Arthur Conan Doyle

### *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*

Twelve of Holmes's most celebrated cases, from A Scandal in Bohemia to The Adventure of the Copper Beeches. Holmes observes what everyone else overlooks, and Watson writes it all down.

Erich Kästner

### *Emil and the Detectives*

When Emil is robbed on the train to Berlin, he recruits a group of local children to follow the thief through the city. A classic of German children's literature, full of resourcefulness and teamwork.

E.L. Konigsburg

### *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs Basil E. Frankweiler*

Claudia and her brother Jamie run away from home and hide in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, where they become caught up in the mystery of an angel statue.

Philippa Pearce

### *Tom's Midnight Garden*

Sent to stay with his aunt and uncle, Tom discovers that when the old grandfather clock strikes thirteen, the back door opens onto a sunlit Victorian garden — and a girl called Hatty.

Penelope Lively

### *The Ghost of Thomas Kempe*

When James moves into an old cottage in Oxfordshire, he accidentally releases the ghost of a 17th-century sorcerer who starts causing trouble and blaming it on James.

Michelle Magorian

### *Goodnight Mister Tom*

Young William Beech, evacuated from wartime London, is billeted with gruff old Tom Oakley in the countryside. Gradually, the boy and the old man transform each other's lives.

Nina Bawden

### *Carrie's War*

Carrie and her brother Nick are evacuated to a Welsh mining town during the war, where they are caught between two households and a family secret that ends in an unforgettable act of destruction.

Ian Serraillier

### *The Silver Sword*

When their parents are taken by the Nazis, four children make their way across war-torn Europe from Warsaw to Switzerland, carrying a silver letter-opener as their only link to their father.

Judith Kerr

### *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit*

Based on Kerr's own childhood, this is the story of Anna and her family's flight from Berlin in 1933, leaving behind toys, friends, and the pink rabbit of the title.

Leon Garfield

### *Smith*

Twelve-year-old Smith is a pickpocket in the streets of 18th-century London. When he steals a document from an old gentleman, he becomes entangled in a dark mystery that puts his life in danger.

Geoffrey Trease

### *Cue for Treason*

Peter Dodd escapes Cumberland and joins a company of players in Elizabethan England, where he uncovers a plot against Queen Elizabeth — with the help of a fellow actor who is not what they seem.

Michelle Paver

### *Wolf Brother*

Six thousand years ago, a boy and a wolf cub are left alone in the forest after a demon bear kills the boy's father. Together, they must find a way to destroy the bear. The first book in the Chronicles of Ancient Darkness series.

## MYTHS, LEGENDS & RETELLINGS

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Roger Lancelyn Green

### *Tales of the Greek Heroes*

From Perseus and the Gorgon to the voyage of Jason and the Argonauts, these are the Greek myths retold for younger readers with all their original drama intact.

Roger Lancelyn Green

### *King Arthur and His Knights of the Round Table*

The complete Arthurian cycle — from the sword in the stone to the last battle — retold in clear, vivid prose that brings the medieval world to life.

Geraldine McCaughrean

### *The Orchard Book of Greek Myths*

Sixteen of the best-known Greek myths, including Theseus and the Minotaur, Persephone, Icarus, and King Midas, retold in short, lively chapters with full-colour illustrations.

Padraic Colum

### *The Children's Homer*

A retelling of the Iliad and the Odyssey in a single flowing narrative. Colum's prose has a bardic quality that rewards being read aloud.

T.H. White

### *The Sword in the Stone*

The young Arthur — known as the Wart — is educated by the magician Merlyn, who transforms him into a fish, a hawk, a badger, and other animals to teach him the lessons he will need as king.

Rosemary Sutcliff

### *The Eagle of the Ninth*

Young Roman centurion Marcus sets out beyond Hadrian's Wall to discover what happened to the Ninth Legion and to recover the Legion's lost eagle standard from the Pictish tribes of Caledonia.

## POETRY

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T.S. Eliot

### *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*

Fourteen poems about cats with names like Macavity, Mr Mistoffelees, and Bustopher Jones. Written by Eliot for his godchildren, and later the basis for the musical Cats.

Robert Louis Stevenson

### *A Child's Garden of Verses*

Sixty-five poems about the world as seen by a child — shadows on the wall, the land of counterpane, going up in a swing, and the lamplighter making his rounds at dusk.

Charles Causley

### *Collected Poems for Children*

Ballads, songs, and story-poems by one of England's finest 20th-century poets. Causley's work is rooted in Cornwall, the sea, and the rhythms of folk tradition.

Ted Hughes

### *Season Songs*

Poems following the cycle of the year, from spring lambs to Christmas. Hughes writes about the natural world with an intensity and precision that make each season feel new.

Walter de la Mare

### *Peacock Pie*

Poems that shift between the ordinary and the strange — fairies, moonlight, and empty houses alongside tea, sleep, and Sunday mornings. De la Mare's ear for sound is extraordinary.

Edward Lear

### *The Complete Nonsense and Other Verse*

The Owl and the Pussycat, the Jumblies, the Dong with a Luminous Nose, and more than two hundred limericks. Lear made nonsense an art form.

Hilaire Belloc

### *Cautionary Tales*

Rhyming stories about naughty children who meet exaggerated fates — Matilda, who told lies and was burned to death, and Jim, who ran away from his nurse and was eaten by a lion.

Seamus Heaney & Ted Hughes

### *The Rattle Bag*

An anthology of poems from all periods and traditions, arranged alphabetically by title. Selected by two of the greatest poets of the 20th century, it is the best introduction to poetry there is.

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#### NON-FICTION & MEMOIR

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Gerald Durrell

### *My Family and Other Animals*

The young Gerald Durrell and his eccentric family move to Corfu in the 1930s, where he collects scorpions, geckos, and snakes while his siblings argue, write, and fall in love.

Roald Dahl

### *Boy*

Dahl's own account of his childhood, from the sweet shop on the way to school to the horrors and friendships of English boarding school. These are the real experiences that fed his fiction.

Anne Frank

### *The Diary of a Young Girl*

The diary Anne Frank kept while in hiding with her family in Amsterdam from 1942 to 1944. Vivid, thoughtful, and full of life, it remains one of the most widely read books in the world.

David Attenborough

### *Adventures of a Young Naturalist*

Adapted from Attenborough's early travel writings, this follows his first expeditions to Sierra Leone, Guyana, Indonesia, and Paraguay in search of rare animals for London Zoo.

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