

# WTBBL Recommended Reads: Past & Present



Do you remember your favorite childhood book with a wistful nostalgia or sentimental longing to rediscover the tales and stories that captivated you? Unlike Peter Pan, we're all subject to growing up and often leave the wonder and fascination of "kid's books" behind. But what

if the very hungry caterpillar went on to become a food critic, and how would George, the curious little monkey, get along in today's world? Did any of us learn the lessons in *The Lorax*, or consider how Snow White may have played out in Renaissance Italy? Take your inner child on a new journey these Recommended Reads of books [loosely] related to a book from our childhood.

If you enjoyed ***The Lorax*** by Dr. Seuss ([DB031231](#)), you might enjoy ***The Story of More: How We Got to Climate Change and Where to Go From Here*** by Hope Jahren, 2020. ([DB098827](#))

We may not have a little orange fella drop out of the sky and tell us not to cut down truffula trees, but we do have scientists like Hope Jahren here to help us understand our environmental impact and give us hope. Jahren takes us through the science behind the key inventions of our society that, even as they help us, poison what may prove to be the only life-bearing planet within ten light years. As she explains the current and projected consequences of global climate change, from superstorms to rising seas, we are empowered by her recommended actions that we all can take to fight back.  
– Paraphrased from the Publisher.

If you enjoyed ***A Wrinkle in Time*** by Madeline L'Engle ([DB09768](#), [BR09403](#), [LP021944](#)), you might enjoy ***Kindred*** by Octavia E. Butler, 1979. ([DB016072](#))

At first glance one might assume that time travel ties these two books together, but once you go deeper, both grapple with ties of familial relationships and moral responsibilities we may owe family members.

A young Black woman in the 70s is drawn repeatedly back in time to the antebellum plantation of her forebears. Here amidst the cruelties of slavery she becomes the protector and teacher of the plantation owner's son, who she knows will become her own great-grandfather. – NLS

If you enjoyed ***Curious George*** by Margaret Rey ([DB047946](#), [BR012910](#)), you might enjoy ***Fuzz: When Nature Breaks the Law*** by Mary Roach, 2022. ([DB105210](#), [BR023940](#))

The hijinks of the little monkey Curious George bring to mind the antics of real-world animals who sometimes adventure outside the written laws and rules that humans have set.

Join author Mary Roach as she teams up with animal-attack forensic investigators, human-elephant conflict specialists, bear managers, and more, as she encounters jaywalking moose, breaking-and-entering bears, trespassing squirrels, and terrorizing leopards in this exploration of human-wildlife conflict. When it comes to “problem” wildlife, she finds humans are more often the problem – and the solution. Fascinating, witty, and

humane, “Fuzz” offers hope for compassionate coexistence in our ever-expanding human habitat. – Paraphrased from the publisher

If you enjoyed ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar*** by Eric Carle ([DB024609](#), [BR012015](#)), you might enjoy ***The Best American Food Writing 2021*** ed. by Silvia Killingsworth, 2021. ([DB105606](#))

Eric Carle’s adorable little insect chomps his way through plums, cheese, sausage, and other foods, before metamorphosing into a beautiful butterfly. Much like the caterpillar’s enthusiasm for food, *The Best American Food Writing 2021* celebrates the joy of food and eating.

“A year that stopped our food world in its tracks,” writes Gabrielle Hamilton in her introduction, reflecting on 2020. The stories in this edition of *Best American Food Writing* create a stunning portrait of a year that shook the food industry, reminding us of how important restaurants, grocery stores, shelters, and those who work in them are in our lives. – From the Publisher

If you enjoyed ***The Adventures of Winnie the Pooh*** by A.A. Milne ([DB048132](#), [BR016417](#)), you might enjoy ***Buzz: The Nature and Necessity of Bees*** by Thor Hanson, 2018. ([DB091783](#))

A.A. Milne's classic children's character, Winnie the Pooh, is adorably addicted to honey. But with no bees, there'd be no honey!

Join biologist Thor Hanson as he guides you through the wonderful world of bees. Starting with the evolution

of earth's most powerful pollinator, the symbiotic relationship between plants and bees, and the roles bees play in our daily lives. Environmental concerns and the importance of bee conservation efforts are included (Spoiler: without bees, there will be no coffee, your favorite fruits, and....possibly.....no us) – From a WTBBB Librarian

If you enjoyed ***The Jungle Book*** by Rudyard Kipling ([DB040928](#), [BR016413](#), [LP017013](#)), you might enjoy ***The Devourers*** by Indra Das, 2016. ([DB085101](#))

The classic stories of Mowgli, the orphaned boy growing up in the jungles of India, features talking animals who teach lessons and look out for their “man-cub.” But what if the jungle wasn’t filled with friendly creatures, but with monsters instead?

This is the story of the Vukodlaks, bloodthirsty shape-shifters living in the shadows of the jungles of India. Told through multiple perspectives, visions, and eras, we follow the raw and gritty story of the propagation of the line, their lust, and violence. As much as *The Jungle Book* is about moving between worlds and freedom, authority and obedience, and the law of the jungle, *The Devourers* forces us to confront what makes a man, and what makes a monster. – From a WTBBB Librarian

If you enjoyed ***Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*** by the Brothers Grimm ([DB018633](#)), you might enjoy ***Mirror, Mirror*** by Gregory McGuire, 2003. ([DB057764](#))

A dramatic retelling of a classic story in a new land, with new characters known for their proficiency in poisons, in which you can expect the unexpected. This novel is a revisionist version of the fairytale set in early 16th century rural Italy and featuring the historical Borgia family, with Lucrezia Borgia in the role of the Evil Queen. Seven-year-old Bianca de Nevada lives among the rolling hills and valleys of Tuscany and Umbria at Montefiore where she spends her days cosseted by an earthy cook, and a priest. One day, a noble entourage makes its way up the winding slopes to the farm, including Cesare Borgia and his sister, the lovely and vain Lucrezia. When Bianca is left under Lucrezia's care, Lucrezia plots a dire fate for the young girl in the woods below the farm... – Compiled by a WTBBB Librarian.

If you enjoyed ***The Fairy Tales of Hans Christian Andersen*** ([DB044585](#)), you might enjoy ***Six Crimson Cranes*** by Elizabeth Lim, 2021. ([DB104326](#))

Based on “The Wild Swans” from Hans Christian Andersen, this book provides a fresh retelling of six brothers cursed by magic, and a sister determined to save them.

Shiori, princess of Kiata, has a secret: Forbidden magic runs through her veins. On the morning of her betrothal ceremony, she loses control, and it forestalls the wedding she never wanted-- but it also attracts the



ire of Raikama, her stepmother. Using a dark magic of her own, Raikama banishes the princess, turns her brothers into cranes, and warns Shiori that for with every word that escapes her lips, one of her brothers will die. – Paraphrased from the Publisher

If you enjoyed ***Strega Nona*** by Tomie DePaola ([DB044296](#), [BRC00887](#)), you might enjoy ***Garden Spells*** by Sarah Addison Allen, 2007. ([DB065395](#), [BR024574](#))

Both stories feature food and witches; what's not to love? *Strega Nona* feeds her village with a never-ending supply of pasta from her magic cauldron, while the Waverley Family charms and bespells using ingredients from their enchanted garden.

Generations of Waverleys tended to their garden. Their history was in the soil, and so were their futures. Except for the rebellious sister, Sydney, who fled home and the family years before. The prodigal daughter returns home, with her own daughter in tow, and chaos in her wake. Now Claire, a successful caterer who's reputation is built from the nasturtiums that aid in keeping secrets, and pansies that make children thoughtful, and snapdragons that discourage unwanted ardor, must heal the wounds of the past to protect her, and the family's, future. – Paraphrased from the publisher

If you enjoyed **Charlotte's Web** by E.B. White ([DB074950](#), [BR017770](#), [LP016022](#)), you might enjoy **Poems & Sketches of E.B. White** by E.B. White, 1981. ([DB017465](#))

*Charlotte's Web* conveys a profound infatuation for life by a colorful cast of unforgettable characters. This collection of poems, essays, satire, and other short pieces, both fictional and autobiographical, showcase the author's wit, craft, and whim outside of children's literature. A doting farmer, from a simple background, White disliked a lot of attention, and was known for avoiding unknown persons visiting him by ducking out of fire escapes! – From a WTBBB Librarian

If you enjoyed the **Little House** books by Laura Ingles Wilder, you might enjoy **Pioneer Girl: the Annotated Autobiography** by Laura Ingles Wilder, 1930. ([DB080323](#))

When you've read all the *Little House* series and still just can't get enough, read the story that inspired these beloved children's books. Originally an unpublished manuscript that provided Rose Wilder Lane, her daughter, editor and, later, ghostwriter, the material for the Laura Ingalls Wilder books, this autobiography details the 16 years the Wilder family spent moving from Kansas to Missouri, onto Wisconsin and Minnesota, then Iowa before returning to Minnesota, and out in the Dakota Territory. – Compiled by a WTBBB Librarian



If you read **Jane Eyre** by Charlotte Brontë ([DB047868](#), [BR010514](#)), you might enjoy **Wide Sargasso Sea** by Jean Rhys, 1966. ([DB023148](#), [BRC00784](#))

Pivotal to the story of *Jane Eyre* is the mad woman in the attic who is revealed to be Rochester's first wife when he attempts to marry Jane. Later, she succeeds in her attempt at arson on the estate and loses her life in the resulting blaze. But what really is her story? In this postcolonial and feminist prequel to the classic novel, we meet Antoinette Cosway, a child and Creole heiress in Jamacia, and follow her into a conflicted and broken marriage. Through misunderstandings, good intentions gone awry, retaliation, and grim determination, we land in the dark of the attic with Antoinette, who has lost her name to "Bertha," thousands of miles away from home, family, and love, with only one spark of hope for freedom. – From a WTBBBL Librarian

Forced to read **Shakespeare** in school? Prefer laser blasters, aliens, and outer space instead? Give **William Shakespeare's Star Wars** series by Ian Doescher a try! (Start with [DB103737](#) and [BR024075](#))

It's science fiction as you've never read it before! Rejoin the Jedi in the fight for freedom of the galaxy and balance of the force, in authentic metre and verse of a Shakespearean play. So follow us, over hill, over dale, thorough bush, thorough brier, over park, over pale, thorough flood, and through fire, to a Galaxy Far Far Away.... – From a WTBBBL Librarian