

WTBBL Recommended Reads: Starring Older Adults



Show some love to all our grandmothers, grandfathers, and elders in general! From the silly and comical, to the serious and heartfelt, these are stories of people, real or fictional, living out their best lives when others may think they've passed their "best-by" date. After all, who's to say how one **should** live out their golden years? Take a look at some of the possibilities with these recommended reads!

The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas by Gertrude Stein, 1933. ([DB015041](#))

The American writer uses her trusted friend, lover, and companion, Alice B. Toklas, as a vehicle for her own biography. She tells of her childhood in California, her years at medical school in Baltimore, and especially her eventful life in Paris, where she knew and influenced many artists and writers. – Book Description from NLS

Pour une autre histoire et biographie de Gertrude Stein, regardez Les guerres que j'ai vues [DBG18877](#)

The Librarianist by Patrick deWitt, 2023. ([BR025013](#), [DB116100](#))

A retired librarian's monotonous life in Portland, Oregon changes after encountering a confused elderly woman on his daily walk one day. Upon returning her to her senior center, he begins volunteering and connects with a community of strange peers. Reflecting upon his melancholy upbringing, early childhood adventures, and heartbreak, he begins to connect with new friends and meets a ghost from his past. – Book Description from Library Staff

Howl's Moving Castle by Diana Wynne Jones, 1986. ([DB025892](#))

Sophie has the great misfortune of being the eldest of three daughters, destined to fail miserably should she ever leave home to seek her fate. But when she unwittingly attracts the ire of the Witch of the Waste, Sophie finds herself under a horrid spell that transforms her into an old lady. Her only chance at breaking it lies in the ever-moving castle in the hills: the Wizard Howl's castle. To untangle the enchantment, Sophie must handle the heartless Howl, strike a bargain with a fire demon, and meet the Witch of the Waste head-on. Along the way, she discovers that there's far more to Howl—and herself—than first meets the eye. – Book Description from Goodreads

The 100-Year-Old-Man Who Climbed Out the Window and Disappeared by Jonas Jonasson, 2012. ([BRG03348](#), [DB075820](#), en Español [DBG16992](#))

After a long and eventful life, Allan Karlsson ends up in a nursing home, believing it to be his last stop. The only problem is that he's still in good health. A big celebration is in the works for his 100th birthday, but Allan really isn't interested. So he decides to escape. He climbs out the window in his slippers and embarks on a hilarious and entirely unexpected journey. – Book Description from NLS

We Spread by Iain Reid, 2022. ([DB113859](#))

Penny, an artist, has lived in the same apartment for decades, surrounded by the artifacts and keepsakes of her long life. She is resigned to the mundane rituals of old age, until things start to slip. Before her longtime partner passed away years earlier, provisions were made, unbeknownst to her, for a room in a unique long-term care residence, where Penny finds herself after one too many “incidents.” Initially, surrounded by peers, conversing, eating, sleeping, looking out at the beautiful woods that surround the house, all is well. She even begins to paint again. But as the days start to blur together, Penny—with a growing sense of unrest and distrust—starts to lose her grip on the passage of time and on her place in the world. Is she succumbing to the subtly destructive effects of aging, or is she an unknowing participant in something more unsettling? – Book Description from the Publisher

The Old Woman with the Knife by Byeong-Mo Gu, 2022. ([DB112653](#))

At sixty-five, Hornclaw is beginning to slow down. She lives modestly in a small apartment, with only her aging dog, a rescue named Deadweight, to keep her company. There are expectations for people her age—that she'll retire and live out the rest of her days quietly. But Hornclaw is not like other people. She is an assassin. Double-crossers, corporate enemies, cheating spouses—for the past four decades, Hornclaw has killed them all with ruthless efficiency, and the less she's known about her targets, the better. But now, nearing the end of her career, she has just slipped up. An injury leads her to an unexpected connection with a doctor and his family. But emotions, for an assassin, are a dangerous proposition. As Hornclaw's world closes in, this final chapter in her career may also mark her own bloody end. – Book Description from the Publisher

Nanaville : Adventures in Grandparenting by Anna Quindlen, 2019. ([DB095647](#))

Before blogs even existed, Anna Quindlen became a go-to writer on the joys and challenges of family, motherhood, and modern life, in her nationally syndicated column. Now she's taking the next step and going full nana in the pages of this lively, beautiful, and moving book about being a grandmother. Quindlen offers thoughtful and telling observations about her new role, no longer mother and decision-maker but secondary character and support to

the parents of her grandson. She writes, “Where I once led, I have to learn to follow.” Eventually a close friend provides words to live by: “Did they ask you?”. – Book Description from the Publisher

The Curious Charms of Arthur Pepper by Phaedra Patrick, 2016. ([BR021656](#), [DB085718](#))

Sixty-nine-year-old Arthur Pepper lives a simple life. He gets out of bed at precisely 7:30 a.m., just as he did when his wife, Miriam, was alive. He dresses in the same gray slacks and mustard sweater vest, waters his fern, Frederica, and heads out to his garden. But on the one-year anniversary of Miriam's death, something changes. Sorting through Miriam's possessions, Arthur finds an exquisite gold charm bracelet he's never seen before. What follows is a surprising and unforgettable odyssey that takes Arthur from London to Paris and as far as India in an epic quest to find out the truth about his wife's secret life before they met--a journey that leads him to find hope, healing and self-discovery in the most unexpected places. – Book Description from Goodreads

Vera Wong's Unsolicited Advice for Murderers by Jesse Sutanto, 2023. ([DB113039](#))

Vera Wong, owner of Vera Wong's World-Famous Tea House, is a widow ignored by her son and the owner of a tea shop frequented by a single customer daily. Her routine life is changed when she discovers a dead body in her tea shop one morning, and she takes it upon herself to solve the mystery of his death. After all, what is a police force compared to a determined Chinese mother with nothing but time on her hands. – Book Description from Library Staff

Death in Her Hands by Ottessa Moshfegh, 2020. ([DB099691](#), en Español [DB105228](#))

A novel of haunting metaphysical suspense about an elderly widow whose life is upturned when she finds a cryptic note on a walk in the woods, “Her name was Magda. Nobody will ever know who killed her. It wasn’t me. Here is her dead body.” But there is no body to be found. Deeply shaken, and alone, she becomes obsessed with solving the mystery and begins imagining who Magda was, and who may have motive for murder. Her imaginings seem to manifest in the real world, and as the fog of mystery begins to lift, a

menacing certainty settles that ultimately makes her question everything about her new home. – Book Description from Library Staff

Erotic Stories for Punjabi Widows by Balli Kaur Jaswal, 2017. ([DB092278](#))

Nikki has spent most of her life distancing herself from the traditional Sikh community. After her father's death she takes a job teaching a creative writing course in the heart of the Punjabi community. When one of the women students brings a book of erotica to class, Nikki uses it as the basis for helping these modest women unleash creativity by telling their own stories. – Book Description from OCLC WorldCat

The Last Days of Ptolemy Grey by Walter Mosley, 2010. ([DB072324](#))

Ninety-one years old and suffering from dementia, Ptolemy Grey lives in squallor. When his great-grandnephew and helper is murdered, seventeen-year-old Robyn steps in. She finds a doctor who offers a drug that will temporarily improve Ptolemy's memory, and Ptolemy seizes the chance to aid his family. – Book Description from NLS