



Finding a Good Read

A column to help you find intriguing books

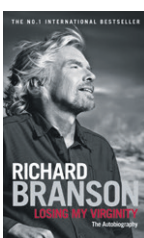
Sylvia

Tales of Triumph

Success stories can take many different forms: tales of rags to riches – or the discovery that there are more important things than money; accounts of recovery from addiction, or coming to terms with trauma.

Here are some very different stories but they all have things in common: determination, resilience and finding self-worth against the odds.

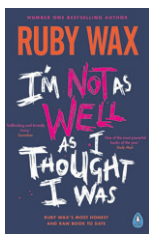
“ It’s a rollicking tale of his life on the streets and includes unforgettable characters including the Artful Dodger, vicious Bill Sykes and cunning Fagin. ”



Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens is the classic story of an orphan boy in Victorian London. It’s a rollicking tale of his life on the streets and includes unforgettable characters including the Artful Dodger, vicious Bill Sykes

and cunning Fagin, who runs a gang of thieving boys. It has been made into fantastic films and musicals but the book remains a must-read.

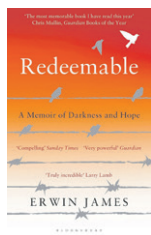
Virginity by Richard Branson is a ‘warts and all’ account of how the entrepreneur built an empire that ranged from records to railways and rockets, and from hotels to healthcare, all under his Virgin umbrella.



In Dolly Parton, Songteller: My life in Lyrics Dolly recounts her extraordinary life and the way she tells it through her music. One of 12 children, she was born ‘dirt poor’ in a one-room cabin in Tennessee. From there she has become a ‘country legend’ as a singer and songwriter who has sold over 100 million records worldwide and starred in films including 9 to 5, The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas and Steel Magnolias. Her business-savvy has enabled her to control her life and career and she has become an icon for women in the industry.

Ruby Wax is a very successful comedian. I’m Not as Well as I Thought I Was is sharp and witty but also a brutally honest account of her struggles with mental health. In the words of one review: ‘Not

only will this book make you feel less alone, it also might just change your life.’



Losing Me Finding Me is Viola Davis’s story of her life from childhood in Rhode Island to her award-winning career on Broadway and in Hollywood, in films such as Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom and The Woman King. She shares her experience of sexual abuse, racism and abortion, and shows how perseverance, forgiveness and a sense of self-worth have seen her through.

Redeemable, A Memoir of Darkness and Hope is a story of abjection and redemption. From the age of 27, Erwin James spent 20 years in prison on a life sentence. He was the motherless son of a violent alcoholic and drifted into crime at age 10 and in 1984 was convicted of two robbery murders. In prison he discovered education and found a way to recognise who he was but to also see how he could change. While still in prison he began writing a regular column for the Guardian newspaper which later became a book, A Life Inside. From 2016 until 2023 he was editor of Inside Time. He died in 2024.

With thanks to PRG and Give a Book volunteer Sylvia



Prison Reading Groups (PRG) was created in 1999 to set up, support and fund informal reading groups in prisons. We now support more than 60 groups in over 45 prisons nationwide. PRG is part of Give a Book.

TurningPages

Prisoners who can read teach prisoners who can't

If you would like more information on how to become involved, as either a Mentor or a Learner, contact the Reading Plan Lead in your prison (ask a Shannon Trust Mentor who this is) or write to:

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Shannon Trust

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Foster Mohammed Solicitors, Pure Office,
Broadwell Road, Oldbury B69 4BY
0121 647 1731 / 07341 925 543
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