



Finding a Good Read

A column to help you find intriguing books

Erin

Seasons

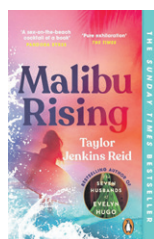
Summer sun, winter snow, crisp autumn leaves and spring flowers can all make the passing of a year feel magical. Ali Smith's *Seasons* series covers this beautifully.

Sadly, that's not usually the reality for the UK – often it feels like one long season of drizzle and greyness. Using books to conjure up images of warm beaches or icy lakes is a reliable way to entertain throughout the year.

Agatha Christie offers options for the whole year, including *Murder on the Orient Express*, *Hallowe'en Party* and *Evil Under the Sun*.

Mischief and mayhem arise in the worlds of *Bridgerton* and Jane Austen books when characters get together for 'The Season' of parties and matchmaking.

George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* epics focus on seasons lasting for years, giving terrible winters but amazing summers.



Summer

Teen excitement for the summer holidays makes it a great season for a coming-of-age story. *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* series (Ann Brashares) and *The Summer I Turned Pretty* trilogy (Jenny Han) are fun examples, while *Summer Sisters* (Judy Blume), *The Pursuit of Love* (Nancy Mitford) and *Sag Harbor* (Colson Whitehead) give more adult takes.

Italy often provides a gorgeous backdrop for a coming-of-age, from classic *A Room with a View* (E.M. Forster) to contemporary *Call Me By Your Name* (Andre Anciman) and *Love & Gelato* (Jenna Evans Welch).

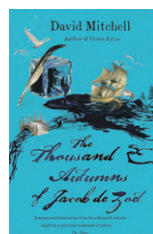
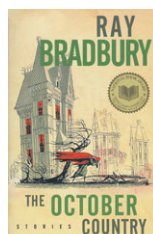
The Cousins (Karen McManus) and *Malibu Rising* (Taylor Jenkins Reid) ask readers to uncover summertime mysteries.

A different kind of suspense comes from the sweaty intensity of family drama played out in stifling heat. *The Lost Daughter* (Elena Ferrante), *Instructions for a Heatwave* (Maggie O'Farrell), and *Atonement* (Ian McEwan) deliver this superbly.

The sun shines on more sinister happenings in *The Talented Mr Ripley* (Patricia Highsmith), *Rebecca* (Daphne Du Maurier), and *The Beach* (Alex Garland), while *Prodigal Summer* (Barbara Kingsolver) and *To the Lighthouse* (Virginia Woolf) are more gently reflective.

For a lighter read, Emily Henry's books are often set in glorious summers including *People We Meet on Vacation* and *Beach Read*. *One Day*'s author David Nicholls portrays his characters' changing relationship in an annual visit to the same single summer's day.

The *Sweet Valley* series (Francine Pascal and others) exist in a permanent summer of cloudless California weather.



Autumn

With the summer over, it's back to boarding school in many of Enid Blyton's stories and for the *Harry Potter* characters.

Joining the witches and wizards for Halloween spookiness is *Practical Magic* (Alice Hoffman), *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (Washington Irving) and *The October Country* (Ray Bradbury).

Jane Eyre (Charlotte Brontë) and *Wuthering Heights* (Emily Brontë) reflect the misty Yorkshire moors of the Brontës' home, while *Autumn Light: Season of Fire and Farewells* (Pico Iyer) and *The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet* (David Mitchell) venture to Japan.

Winter

Northern Lights (Philip Pullman) and *Cold Enough for Snow* (Jessica Au) take readers on journeys through frozen landscapes.

The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe (C.S. Lewis) and *The Shining* (Stephen King) deal with evil in deep snow.

In the Midst of Winter (Isabelle Allende), *Lean Fall Stand* (Jon McGregor), and *Ethan Frome* (Edith Wharton) all have plots kicked off by major snowstorms.



Spring

Nature's spring awakening is mirrored in life awakenings for characters in *The Secret Garden* (Frances Hodgson Burnett) and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (D. H. Lawrence), while Italy charms again in *The Enchanted April* (Elizabeth von Arnim).

With a spring in their step, baby animals get up to all kinds of naughtiness in *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* and other Beatrix Potter books.

With thanks to PRG and Give a Book volunteer Erin



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