



Finding a Good Read

A column to help you find intriguing books

Erin

Naming names

‘What’s in a name?’ might be one of the most famous quotes in the English language.

Sometimes the answer is ‘very little’ - heroes and villains could have any name and still be great characters.

Sometimes, however, a well-chosen name can deliver some of the greatest and most memorable stories we have.



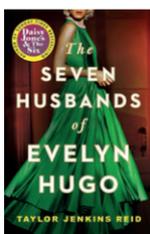
Good drama never gets old

Classic but by no means dull, these are tales of love, war, murder, revenge and some very questionable first wives.

As *Jane Eyre* (Charlotte Brontë), *Anna Karenina* (Leo Tolstoy) and *Rebecca* (Daphne du Maurier) manage complicated relationships, *Emma* (Jane Austen) works to smooth the path of love for those around her.

Madame Bovary (Gustave Flaubert), *Moll Flanders* (Daniel Defoe), *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (Thomas Hardy), *David Copperfield* (Charles Dickens) and *Nicholas Nickleby* (Charles Dickens) all battle to make their way in the world in the face of very difficult circumstances.

The party planning concerns in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* are a little more glamorous while *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Oscar Wilde) shows the dark side of a debauched life.



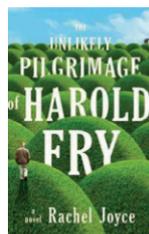
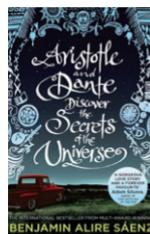
Making it work

The settings might be more modern but the challenges of social pressures, difficult men and impossible life choices remain the same.

Sophie's Choice (William Styron) and *Hamnet* (Maggie O'Farrell) study the intense distress of losing a child. *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine* (Gail Honeyman) uses dark humour to look at loneliness and manage past trauma.

On a much lighter note, *Bridget Jones's Diary* (Helen Fielding) and *Queenie* (Candice Carty-Williams) offer hilarious social commentary alongside dating dramas.

The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo (Taylor Jenkins Reid) also depicts a protagonist looking for a soulmate in different places, but elevates issues of dating into those of multiple marriages.



Unconventional connections

Young love helps to bring freedom to the main characters in *Eleanor & Park* (Rainbow Rowell) and *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* (Benjamin Alire Sáenz).

Music and film-making bond the characters in *Nick & Norah's Infinite Playlist* (Rachel Cohn & David Levithan), *Daisy Jones & The Six* (Taylor Jenkins Reid) and *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* (Jesse Andrews).

Older men take risks and form new bonds in *A Man Called Ove* (Fredrik Backman) and *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* (Rachel Joyce), while *The Rosie Project* (Graeme Simsion) details an unusual love story.

Boys just want to have fun (and food)

Stories of children dealing with adult problems, and having some big adventures as they do it, appeal to readers of all ages.

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Mark Twain) depict serious mischief in the American South. Huckleberry Finn's story was more recently reimagined by Percival Everett in his book *James*.

The protagonists in *Oliver Twist* (Charles Dickens), *Kim* (Rudyard Kipling), *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Roald Dahl) and *James and the Giant Peach* (Roald Dahl) fight off hunger with their quick wits, good luck, and some oversized fruit.

Murder, mystery and magic

Frankenstein (Mary Shelley) and *Dracula* (Bram Stoker) are names that immediately conjure up images from nightmares and hundreds of adaptations.

Toni Morrison's *Sula* and *Beloved* are more modern but still quite creepy.

Carrie (Stephen King), *Circe* (Madeline Miller), *Coraline* (Neil Gaiman) and *Matilda* (Roald Dahl) remind readers never to underestimate wronged women and girls.

On the lighter side of things, the *Percy Jackson* (Rick Riordan) and *Harry Potter* (J.K. Rowling) series both bring thrills with less associated horror.

With thanks to PRG and Give a Book volunteer Erin.



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