

## CLASSIC BOOK LIST

### Fantasy & Science Fiction

#### **20,000 Leagues Under the Sea – Jules Verne**

Taken prisoner aboard the rogue submarine Nautilus in 1873, a French professor of marine biology travels an underwater world with his captors, while discovering the philosophy and technical knowledge of the vessel's strange Captain Nemo--Latin for "no one."

#### **1984 – George Orwell**

"Thought Police," "Big Brother," "Orwellian" -- These words have entered our vocabulary because of George Orwell's classic dystopian novel, 1984. The story of one man's nightmare odyssey as he pursues a forbidden love affair through a world ruled by warring states and a power structure that controls not only information but also individual thought and memory, 1984 is a prophetic, haunting tale.

#### **Alice's Adventures in Wonderland – Lewis Carroll**

Beloved classic describes a little girl's adventures in a topsy-turvy land underground and her encounters with such improbable characters as the White Rabbit, March Hare and Mad Hatter, the sleepy Dormouse, grinning Cheshire Cat, Mock Turtle, and the dreadful Queen of Hearts.

#### **A Christmas Carol – Charles Dickens**

This engrossing tale relates Ebenezer Scrooge's ghostly journeys through Christmases past, present, and future and his ultimate transformation from a harsh and grasping old miser to a charitable and compassionate human being.

#### **A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court – Mark Twain**

Hank Morgan finds himself transported back to England's Dark Ages — where he is immediately captured and sentenced to death at Camelot. Fortunately, he's quick-witted, and in the process of saving his life he turns himself into a celebrity — winning himself the position of prime minister as well as the lasting enmity of Merlin.

#### **Brave New World – Aldous Huxley**

"Community, Identity, Stability" is the motto of Aldous Huxley's utopian World State. Here everyone consumes daily grams of soma, to fight depression, babies are born in laboratories, and the most popular form of entertainment is a "Feelie," a movie that stimulates the senses of sight, hearing, and touch. Huxley foreshadowed many of the practices and gadgets we take for granted today.

#### **Dune – Frank Herbert**

The sweeping tale of a desert planet called Arrakis, the focus of an intricate power struggle in a byzantine interstellar empire. Arrakis is the sole source of Melange, the "spice of spices." Melange is necessary for interstellar travel and grants psychic powers and longevity, so whoever controls it wields great influence. The troubles begin when stewardship of Arrakis is transferred by the Emperor from the Harkonnen Noble House to House Atreides. The Harkonnens don't

want to give up their privilege, though, and through sabotage and treachery they cast young Duke Paul Atreides out into the planet's harsh environment to die. There he falls in with the Fremen, a tribe of desert dwellers who become the basis of the army with which he will reclaim what's rightfully his.

### **Frankenstein – Mary Shelley**

The world's most famous monster comes to life in this 1818 novel, a tale that combines Gothic romance and science fiction to tell of a young doctor's attempts to breathe life into an artificial man. Despite the doctor's best intentions, the experiment goes horribly wrong.

### **The Illustrated Man – Ray Bradbury**

In an ingenious framework, Bradbury presents himself as a nameless narrator who meets the Illustrated Man--a wanderer whose entire body is a living canvas of exotic tattoos. What's even more remarkable, and increasingly disturbing, is that the illustrations are themselves magically alive, and each proceeds to unfold its own story.

### **The Martian Chronicles – Ray Bradbury**

From "Rocket Summer" to "The Million-Year Picnic," Ray Bradbury's stories of the colonization of Mars form an eerie mesh of past and future. Written in the 1940s, the chronicles drip with nostalgic atmosphere--shady porches with tinkling pitchers of lemonade, grandfather clocks, chintz-covered sofas. But longing for this comfortable past proves dangerous in every way to Bradbury's characters--the golden-eyed Martians as well as the humans.

### **Ringworld – Larry Niven**

A new place is being built, a world of huge dimensions, encompassing millions of miles, stronger than any planet before it. There is gravity, and with high walls and its proximity to the sun, a livable new planet that is three million times the area of the Earth can be formed. We can start again!

### **Something Wicked This Way Comes – Ray Bradbury**

A masterpiece of modern Gothic literature, Something Wicked This Way Comes is the memorable story of two boys, James Nightshade and William Halloway, and the evil that grips their small Midwestern town with the arrival of a "dark carnival" one Autumn midnight. How these two innocents, both age 13, save the souls of the town (as well as their own), makes for compelling reading on timeless themes.

### **The Time Machine – H.G. Wells**

Classic science-fiction novel recounts the adventures of a hypothetical Time-Traveler who journeys into the future.

### **The War of the Worlds – H.G. Wells**

An unnamed protagonist, whose suburban London home is in the path of Martian invaders, provides a fast-paced, exceptionally realistic narrative of the invaders' fantastic appearances, sophisticated technology, and increasingly bloodthirsty advances.

## **African-American Classics – Fiction & Non-Fiction**

### **Autobiography of Malcolm X – Malcolm X as told to Alex Haley**

Biography, published in 1965, of the American black militant religious leader and activist who was born Malcolm Little. Written by Alex Haley, who had conducted extensive audiotaped interviews with Malcolm X just before his assassination in 1965, the book gained renown as a classic work on black American experience.

### **Black Boy – Richard Wright**

Richard Wright grew up in the woods of Mississippi, with poverty, hunger, fear, and hatred. Black Boy is his powerful account of his journey from innocence to experience in the Jim Crow South. It is at once an unashamed confession and a profound indictment—a poignant and disturbing record of social injustice and human suffering.

### **The Color Purple – Alice Walker**

Celie is a poor black woman whose letters tell the story of 20 years of her life, beginning at age 14 when she is being abused and raped by her father and attempting to protect her sister from the same fate, and continuing over the course of her marriage to "Mister," a brutal man who terrorizes her. Celie eventually learns that her abusive husband has been keeping her sister's letters from her and the rage she feels, combined with an example of love and independence provided by her close friend Shug, pushes her finally toward an awakening of her creative and loving self.

### **Invisible Man - Ralph Ellison**

An extremely powerful story of a young Southern black man, from his late high school days through three years of college to his life in Harlem. His early training prepared him for a life of humility before white men, but through injustices—large and small, he came to realize that he was an "invisible man". People saw in him only a reflection of their preconceived ideas of what he was, denied his individuality, and ultimately did not see him at all

### **The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass – Frederick Douglass**

Raised as a plantation slave, Douglass went on to become a writer, orator, and major participant in the struggle for African-American freedom and equality. In this engrossing narrative he recounts early years of abuse; his dramatic escape to the North and eventual freedom, abolitionist campaigns, and his crusade for full civil rights for former slaves.

### **Native Son – Richard Wright**

Bigger Thomas is a young black man in 1940s Chicago who accidentally kills the daughter of his wealthy white employer. He tries to frame the young woman's fiancée for the crime and attempts to extort ransom from the victim's family, but his guilt is discovered, and he is forced into hiding. After a terrifying manhunt, he is arrested and brought to trial.

### **Black Like Me – John Howard Griffin**

John Howard Griffin's groundbreaking and controversial novel about his experiences as a white man who transforms himself with the aid of medication and dye in order to experience firsthand the life of a black man living in the Deep South in the late 1950s is a mesmerizing tale of the ultimate sociological experiment.

### **The Souls of Black Folk – W.E.B. DuBois**

In this founding work in the literature of black protest, Du Bois eloquently affirms that it is beneath the dignity of a human being to beg for those rights that belong inherently to all mankind. He also charges that the strategy of accommodation to white supremacy would only serve to perpetuate black oppression.

### **Adventure & War Stories**

#### **The Count of Monte Cristo – Alexandre Dumas**

Falsely accused during the final days of Napoleon's reign, Edmond Dantès is imprisoned in the bleak Chateau d'If. After a hair-raising escape, he launches an elaborate plot to extract a bitter revenge against those who betrayed him.

#### **A Farewell to Arms – Ernest Hemingway**

The best American novel to emerge from World War I, A Farewell to Arms is the unforgettable story of an American ambulance driver on the Italian front and his passion for a beautiful English nurse.

#### **All Quiet on the Western Front – Erich Maria Remarque**

"All Quiet on the Western Front" is probably the most famous anti-war novel ever written. The story is told by a young 'unknown soldier' in the trenches of Flanders during the First World War. Through his eyes we see all the realities of war; under fire, on patrol, waiting in the trenches, at home on leave, and in hospitals and dressing stations.

#### **Bridge over the River Kwai – Pierre Boulle**

1942: Boldly advancing through Asia, the Japanese need a train route from Burma going north. In a prison camp, British POWs are forced into labor. The bridge they build will become a symbol of service and survival to one prisoner, Colonel Nicholson, a proud perfectionist. Pitted against the warden, Colonel Saito, Nicholson will nevertheless, out of a distorted sense of duty, aid his enemy. While on the outside, as the Allies race to destroy the bridge, Nicholson must decide which will be the first casualty: his patriotism or his pride.

#### **Captains Courageous – Rudyard Kipling**

A pampered millionaire's son tumbles overboard from a luxury liner and falls into good fortune, disguised in the form of a fishing boat. The gruff and hearty crew teach the young man to be worth his salt as they fish the waters off the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. Brimming with adventure and humor.

**Fail Safe – Eugene Burdick & Harvey Wheeler**

Something has gone wrong. A group of American bombers armed with nuclear weapons is streaking past the fail-safe point, beyond recall, and no one knows why. Their destination -- Moscow. First published in 1962, when America was still reeling from the Cuban missile crisis, Fail-Safe reflects the apocalyptic attitude that pervaded society during the height of the Cold War, when disaster could have struck at any moment.

**Ivanhoe – Sir Walter Scott**

Published in 1819, this classic historical romance unfolds in a 12th-century kingdom torn asunder by the hatred between Saxons and Normans. Its dispossessed heroes, Ivanhoe and Richard the Lion-Hearted, face an uphill battle against firmly entrenched adversaries, and their success rests upon a cast of unlikely characters, including the legendary Robin Hood.

**Kidnapped – Robert Louis Stevenson**

Classic adventure novel, set in the year 1751, centers around David Balfour, a young Scotsman orphaned by the death of his father. Betrayed by his uncle, the young hero is shanghaied (i.e. kidnapped) and headed for bondage in the New World, until a swashbuckling highlander comes to his rescue. Stirring, suspenseful; considered by Stevenson his best fiction.

**The Last of the Mohicans – James Fenimore Cooper**

A massacre at a colonial garrison, the kidnapping of 2 pioneer sisters by Iroquois tribesmen, the treachery of a renegade brave, and the ambush of innocent settlers create an unforgettable picture of American frontier life in this imaginative, innovative, and classic 18th-century adventure — the most popular of James Fenimore Cooper's "Leatherstocking Tales."

**The Man in the Iron Mask – Alexandre Dumas**

In this sequel to *The Three Musketeers*, jailbreaks, masquerades, and swordfights pit Aramis against his fellow musketeers and create an incomparable tale of swashbuckling.

**Mutiny on the Bounty – James Hall & Charles Nordhoff**

Mutiny On The Bounty is the thrilling account of the strange, eventful, and tragic voyage of His Majesty's Ship *Bounty* in 1788/1789, which culminated in Fletcher Christian's mutiny against Captain Bligh.

**The Old Man and the Sea – Ernest Hemingway**

A unique fishing story - as old man Santiago determines to try his luck in the Gulf waters off Cuba for the eighty fifth day. The old man goes out - beyond the other fishing boats - and drops his lines in the way he has always done, and baits the hooks so that his hoped for great fish could smell and taste. The miracle happens - and the fish, a giant marlin, is bigger than any fish dreamed of. And the old man is alone....The story of that battle, that carried him out to sea and lasted through two days and two nights, is one of the miniature modern classics of such writing.

**Robinson Crusoe – Daniel Defoe**

A shipwreck's sole escapee, Robinson Crusoe endures 28 years of solitude on a Caribbean island and manages not only to survive but also to prevail. A warm humanity, evocative details of his

struggle to tolerate his lonely existence, and lively accounts of his many exploits make Robinson Crusoe the most engaging of narrators.

### **The Three Musketeers – Alexandre Dumas**

Populated by some of the most famous names in literary and actual history — D'Artagnan, Athos, Porthos, Aramis, Cardinal Richelieu, Louis XIII — Dumas's peerless adventure offers a rousing read. It traces an aspiring Musketeer's path to 17th-century Paris, where he encounters intrigue, romance, and, of course, thrilling swordplay.

### **Treasure Island – Robert Louis Stevenson**

Heady tale of a treasure map, a perilous sea journey across the Spanish Main, a mutiny led by the infamous Long John Silver, and a lethal scramble for buried treasure as seen through the eyes of cabin boy Jim Hawkins. An action-packed adventure story that will hypnotize young readers and entertain older ones.

### **Stories About Women (and a boy named Oliver)**

#### **Anna Karenina – Leo Tolstoy**

Tolstoy's tumultuous tale of passion and self-discovery recounts the effects of nonconformist behavior — a society woman's adulterous affair and a landowner's unconventional quest for a meaningful existence — against a backdrop of late 19th-century Russia.

#### **Emma – Jane Austen**

Sparkling comedy of provincial manners concerning a well-intentioned young heiress and her matchmaking schemes that result in comic confusion for the inhabitants of a 19th-century English village.

#### **Jane Eyre – Charlotte Bronte**

An orphan girl's progress from the custody of cruel relatives to an oppressive boarding school culminates in a troubled career as a governess. Jane's first assignment at Thornfield, where the proud and cynical master harbors a scandalous secret, draws readers ever deeper into a compelling exploration of the mysteries of the human heart.

#### **Little Women – Louisa May Alcott**

The timeless, heartwarming tale of the four young March sisters — Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy — their mother Marmee, and other memorable characters. Generations of readers have enjoyed this story of the joys, heartaches, and triumphs of a warm, close-knit family, poor in material wealth, but rich in love and devotion to one another.

#### **Madame Bovary – Gustave Flaubert**

Bored and unhappy in a lifeless marriage, Emma Bovary yearns to escape from the dull circumstances of provincial life. Flaubert's powerful, deeply moving examination of the moral degeneration of a middle-class Frenchwoman is universally regarded as one of the landmarks of 19th-century fiction.

**Middlemarch – George Eliot**

Dorothea Brooke, a young woman of impeccable character, marries the embittered Mr. Casaubon, who almost immediately dies. Eliot takes the reader through a labyrinth of nineteenth-century morals and conventions as Dorothea searches for fulfillment and happiness.

**Oliver Twist – Charles Dickens**

Set in Victorian London, this is a tale of a spirited young innocent's unwilling but inevitable recruitment into a scabrous gang of thieves. Masterminded by the loathsome Fagin, the underworld crew features some of Dickens' most memorable characters, including the vicious Bill Sikes, gentle Nancy, and the juvenile pickpocket known as the Artful Dodger.

**Pride and Prejudice – Jane Austen**

A headstrong young woman and her aristocratic suitor must overcome their respective impediments to a happy ending — his pride must be humbled and her prejudice dissolved. The consummate artistry of the author transforms this effervescent tale of a rural romance into a witty, shrewdly observed satire of English country life.

**Rebecca – Daphne duMaurier**

Rebecca is a novel of mystery and passion, a dark psychological tale of secrets and betrayal, dead loves and an estate called Manderley. Manderley is filled with memories of the elegant and flamboyant Rebecca, the first Mrs. DeWinter; with the obsessive love of her housekeeper, Mrs. Danvers, who observes the young, timid second Mrs. DeWinter with sullen hostility; and with the oppressive silences of a secretive husband, Maxim.

**The Scarlet Letter – Nathaniel Hawthorne**

For nearly a century and a half, Hawthorne's masterpiece has mesmerized readers and critics alike. One of the greatest American novels, its themes of sin, guilt, and redemption, woven through a story of adultery in the early days of the Massachusetts Colony, are revealed with remarkable psychological penetration and understanding of the human heart.

**Sister Carrie – Theodore Dreiser**

A teenage girl without money or connections leaves her small town in search of a better life in Dreiser's revolutionary first novel. The chronicle of Carrie Meeber's rise from obscurity to fame — and the effects of her progress on the men who use her and are used in turn — aroused much controversy upon its debut in 1900.

**Uncle Tom's Cabin – Harriet Beecher Stowe**

The moving abolitionist novel that fueled the fire of the human rights debate in 1852 and melodramatically condemned the institution of slavery through such powerfully realized characters as Tom, Eliza, Topsy, Eva, and Simon Legree.

## **Satire**

### **Babbitt – Sinclair Lewis**

Prosperous and socially prominent, George Babbitt appears to have everything. But when a personal crisis forces the middle-aged real estate agent to reexamine his life, Babbitt mounts a rebellion that jeopardizes everything he values. Widely considered Sinclair Lewis' greatest novel, this satire remains an ever-relevant tale of an individual caught in the machinery of modern life.

### **Don Quixote – Miguel Cervantes**

The hilarious misadventures of Don Quixote, the idealistic knight, and his squire, Sancho Panza, who set out to right the wrongs of the world.

### **Gulliver's Travels – Jonathan Swift**

From the preeminent prose satirist in the English language, a great classic recounting the 4 remarkable journeys of ship's surgeon Lemuel Gulliver. For children it remains an enchanting fantasy; for adults, a witty parody of political life in Swift's time and a scathing send-up of manners and morals in 18th-century England.