

Book Recommendations

I think that readers get pushed toward newly published books. Of course the bookstores want you to read the newest books - they need to sell them to you. But look at the library and you will see the same new books faced out on the shelves because it only makes sense to show you what has been added to the collection since the last time you visited. If you don't know what is already in the library and you want to find out, you need to browse the books' non-descript spines, or you need to talk to a librarian.

Everybody should have a librarian in his life, but not everyone does. So some people only see the new books in bookstores and the new ones in libraries. And when I want to buy people presents, what do I get? Usually a new book, because I want to get them something they haven't already read. Even for me new books tend to push the old ones aside. But now, instead of talking about some of the recent authors whose books I love, I'd like to make an argument here for some really great old books.

It astonishes me that some books last as long as they do. Jules Verne wrote *Around the World in Eighty Days* more than a hundred years ago. Edith Nesbit's books are almost as old. Edward Eager published *Half Magic* in 1954. Rosemary Sutcliff's books are a little more recent, but only by ten or twenty years. They are probably still in your library, but if you don't check them out, the librarians might pull them from the collections. There is never enough room in a library to keep books no one is reading, so the librarians look at their records from time to time and weed out the ones that no one has checked out lately. Sometimes they have to weed them out even when they know how great they are. *Around the World in Eighty Days* is probably safe, but not all the others will be kept on the shelf. Those unread books might end up sometime soon on the fifty cent a book table at the library book sale. They are a treasure to people like me - most of my library comes from those sales, but it's still a shame that they won't be on the shelf for readers who come along in five years or fifteen. You can save those books just by reading them. Of course, you might not like them, but you never know until you try.

This is just a quick list of some of my favorite old books. I hope to make the list longer and more annotated over time.

Around the World in 80 Days, Jules Verne
Puck of Pook's Hill, Rudyard Kipling
The Enchanted Castle, E, Nesbit
The Treasure Seekers, E. Nesbit
Half Magic, Edward Eager
The Eagle of the Ninth, Rosemary Sutcliff
Warrior Scarlett, Rosemary Sutcliff
The Shield Ring, Rosemary Sutcliff
Knight's Fee, Rosemary Sutcliff
The Wolves of Willoughby Chase, Joan Aiken

Midnight is a Place, Joan Aiken
Go Saddle the Sea, Joan Aiken
Howl's Moving Castle, Diana Wynne Jones
Charmed Life, Diana Wynne Jones
Drowned Ammet, Diana Wynne Jones
The Children of Green Knowe, L. M. Boston
The Secret of the Twelves, Pauline Clark
The Crime of Martin Coverly, Leonard Wibberly
Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Time, Jane Louise Curry
The Perilous Gard, Elizabeth Marie Pope
The Sherwood Ring, Elizabeth Marie Pope
The Dancing Bear, Peter Dickinson
The Weathermonger, Peter Dickinson
Heartsease, Peter Dickinson
Playing Beatie Bow, Ruth Park
The Princess and Curdie, MacDonald
The Princess and the Goblins, MacDonald
Mocassin Trail, Eloise Jarvis McGraw
Little Britches, Ralph Moody
Tom's Midnight Garden, Phillipa Pearce
Minnow on the Say, Phillipa Pearce