



AUTUMN TERM

"What do we live for, if it is not to make life less difficult for each other?" — George Eliot

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Happy reading! – Miss Mullins, Miss Walker, and Miss McGarr

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On This Day in History... The Birth of George Eliot, 22nd November 1819



Mary Ann Evans, more commonly known by her pen name George Eliot, was a novelist and one of the leading writers of the Victorian era. Throughout the duration of her career, she wrote seven novels, the best known of these being *Middlemarch*, *The Mill on the Floss*, and *Silas Marner*. Most of Evans' works are set in the English countryside and are known for their realism, psychological insight, sense of place, and detailed description of rural England. Particularly well regarded, *Middlemarch* was her sixth novel – a study of a provincial English community and its inhabitants that was described by fellow writer Virginia Woolf as "one of the few English novels written for grown-up people." *Middlemarch* has also been hailed as "the greatest novel in the English language" by authors Martin Amis and Julian Barnes.

Evans chose to use a male pen name as, although contemporary female authors were publishing novels under their own names, she wanted to escape the stereotype of women's writing being limited to light-hearted romances. She chose the name George Eliot specifically as George was her partner's first name, and Eliot was a "good mouth-filling, easily pronounced word." Evans died in 1880 and is buried in Highgate Cemetery, London, next to the love of her life George Lewes. In 1980, a memorial stone was established for her in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey between W.H. Auden and Dylan Thomas.

The Mill on the Floss by George Eliot

Brought up at Dorlcote Mill, Maggie Tulliver worships her brother Tom and is desperate to win the approval of her parents, but her passionate, wayward nature and her fierce intelligence bring her into constant conflict with her family. As she reaches adulthood, the clash between their expectations and her desires is painfully played out as she finds herself torn between her relationships with three very different men: her proud and stubborn brother, a close friend who is also the son of her family's worst enemy, and a charismatic but dangerous suitor. With its poignant portrayal of sibling relationships, *The Mill on the Floss* is considered George Eliot's most autobiographical novel; it is also one of her most powerful and moving.



Middlemarch by George Eliot

Taking place in the years leading up to the First Reform Bill of 1832, *Middlemarch* explores nearly every subject of concern to modern life: art, religion, science, politics, self, society, human relationships. Among her characters are some of the most remarkable portraits in English literature: Dorothea Brooke, the heroine, idealistic but naive; Rosamond Vincy, beautiful and egoistic; Edward Casaubon, the dry-as-dust scholar; Tertius Lydgate, the brilliant but morally-flawed physician; the passionate artist Will Ladislaw; and Fred Vinney and Mary Garth, childhood sweethearts whose charming courtship is one of the many humorous elements in the novel's rich comic vein.



Author Joanne Harris on the Books That Shaped Her



Joanne Harris is an English-French author who has published over 20 books over her career since 1989. She is most famous for her romance/ magical realism novel *Chocolat* which was adapted into a film starring Johnny Depp in 2001. *The Guardian* recently interviewed Harris, asking her which books have shaped her as a person. Below are some of the books she mentioned that are available in the library, along with the reason why. Among the most touching memories Harris shared was one regarding the book that formed her earliest reading memory, *The Jungle Book*. She told *The Guardian*, "I was about five, sitting in my grandfather's study in Brittany, listening to him reading to me in French from his translated copy of Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*. He read me those stories so often that when he tried to skip a section, or rephrase something he thought was clumsy, I would correct him word-for-word. His nickname for me was Grenouille (frog), which also happened to be what Mowgli, the young protagonist's, name meant, and I was convinced the stories were about me."

Earliest Reading Memory: The Jungle Books by Rudyard Kipling

The Jungle Books can be regarded as classic stories told by an adult to children. But they also constitute a complex literary work of art in which the whole of Kipling's philosophy of life is expressed in miniature. They are best known for the 'Mowgli' stories; the tale of a baby abandoned and brought up by wolves, educated in the ways and secrets of the jungle by Kaa the python, Baloo the bear, and Bagheera the black panther. The stories, a mixture of fantasy, myth, and magic, are underpinned by Kipling's abiding preoccupation with the theme of self-discovery, and the nature of the 'Law'.



Book That Changed Her as a Teenager: The Gormenghast Trilogy by Mervyn Peake

Gormenghast is the vast crumbling castle to which the seventy-seventh Earl, Titus Groan, is Lord and heir. Gothic labyrinth of roofs and turrets, cloisters and corridors, stairwells and dungeons, it is also the cobwebbed kingdom of Byzantine government and age-old rituals, a world primed to implode beneath the weight of centuries of intrigue, treachery, manipulation and murder – a tour de force that ranks as one of the twentieth century's most remarkable feats of imaginative writing.



The Book She Can Reread: Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë

A wild, passionate story of the intense and almost demonic love between Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff, a founding adopted by Catherine's father. After Mr Earnshaw's death, Heathcliff is bullied and humiliated by Catherine's brother Hindley and wrongly believing that his love for Catherine is not reciprocated, leaves Wuthering Heights, only to return years later as a wealthy and polished man. He proceeds to exact a terrible revenge for his former miseries.



The Book She Discovered Later in Life: The Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame

For more than a century, *The Wind in the Willows* and its endearing protagonists—Mole, Water Rat, Badger, and, of course, the incorrigible Toad—have enchanted children of all ages. Whether the four friends are setting forth on an exciting adventure, engaging in a comic caper, or simply relaxing by the River Thames, their stories will surprise and captivate you.



NEW

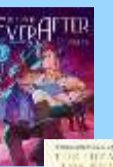
Mort by Terry Pratchett

Death comes to us all. When he came to Mort, he offered him a job. Death is the Grim Reaper of the Discworld, a black-robed skeleton with a scythe who ushers souls into the next world. He is also fond of cats and endlessly baffled by humanity. Soon Death is yearning to experience what humanity really has to offer, but to do that, he'll need to hire some help. It's an offer Mort can't refuse. As Death's apprentice he'll have free board, use of the company horse—and being dead isn't compulsory. It's a dream job—until Mort falls in love with Death's daughter, Ysabel, and discovers that your boss can be a killer on your love life...



So This is Ever After by F.T. Lukens

Three months to find your true love, save the kingdom and secure the throne. It's all a breeze from here, right? WRONG! Dive into LGBTQ+ romantic fantasy from New York Times bestselling author F. T. Lukens! Perfect for fans of Rainbow Rowell and Adam Silvera. Arek didn't think about what would happen after he fulfilled the prophecy. He's officially King of Ere, but only Arek and his mage, the devastatingly handsome Matt, know that the role comes with a catch: marry by your eighteenth birthday—or die. Arek's got three months to find his One True Love and save his own life. But things go painfully and hilariously wrong... until he discovers that love might have been right in front of him all along.



The Haunting Season by Bridget Collins

Winter, with its unsettling blend of the cosy and the sinister, has long been a popular time for gathering by the bright flame of a candle, or the warm crackling of a fire, and swapping stories of ghosts and strange happenings. Now eight bestselling, award-winning authors – master storytellers of the sinister and the macabre – bring this time-honoured tradition to vivid life in a spellbinding collection of new and original haunted tales. From a bustling Covent Garden Christmas market to the frosty moors of Yorkshire, from a country estate with a dreadful secret, to a London mansion where a beautiful girl lies frozen in death, these are stories to make your hair stand on end, send shivers down your spine and to serve as your indispensable companion to the long nights of winter.



The Infinite Book by John D Barrow

Infinity is surely the strangest idea that humans have ever had. Where did it come from and what is it telling us about our Universe? Can there actually be infinities? Can you do an infinite number of things in a finite amount of time? Is the Universe infinite? Infinity is also the place where things happen that don't. What is it like to live in a Universe where nothing is original, where you can live forever, where anything that can be done, is done, over and over again? These are some of the deep questions that the idea of the infinite pushes us to ask. Throughout history, the infinite has been a dangerous concept. Many have lost their lives, their careers, or their freedom for talking about it. The Infinite Book will take you on a tour of these dangerous questions and the strange answers that scientists, mathematicians, philosophers and theologians have come up with to deal with its threats to our sanity.



The Idea of the Brain by Matthew Cobb

A powerful examination of what we think we know about the brain and why – despite technological advances – the workings of our most essential organ remain a mystery. For thousands of years, thinkers and scientists have tried to understand what the brain does. Yet, despite the astonishing discoveries of science, we still have only the vaguest idea of how the brain works. In *The Idea of the Brain*, scientist and historian Matthew Cobb traces how our conception of the brain has evolved over the centuries. Although it might seem to be a story of ever-increasing knowledge of biology, Cobb shows how our ideas about the brain have been shaped by each era's most significant technologies. Today we might think the brain is like a supercomputer. In the past, it has been compared to a telegraph, a telephone exchange, or some kind of hydraulic system. What will we think the brain is like tomorrow, when new technology arises? The result is an essential read for anyone interested in the complex processes that drive science and the forces that have shaped our marvellous brains.

National Book Tokens' Annual Hidden Books Game Launches



Now in its twelfth year, the National Book Tokens' Hidden Books Game has launched. The game consists of a large picture, containing 20 visual clues to book titles. The player must click on each clue and type in the correct book title. Books hidden in the game could be recent bestsellers, famous classics, or anything in between. If you manage to guess all 20

book titles correctly, you will be entered into a prize draw and in with a chance of winning a £500 National Book Token. Below is a picture of this year's game. Click on the link below the picture to be taken to the National Book Tokens' Hidden Books Game website. In order to save your progress, you will need to make an account - according to Caboodle's (National Book Tokens' parent company) terms and conditions, you must be aged 16 or older to do so. The game will be open for entries until the 31st of December.



[Click here to play the Hidden Books Game](#)

On This Day in History... The Mousetrap opens at the Ambassadors Theatre in London's West End, 25th November 1952



The Mousetrap, written by author Agatha Christie, is the longest running show, of any kind, in the world. The murder mystery play opened in 1952 and ran continuously until 2020 when it was forced to temporarily close due to the pandemic, it then reopened in May 2021. To date, *The Mousetrap* has been performed well over 28,000 times and has been seen by over 10,000,000 people. The play is a whodunnit with a twist at the end, which audiences are asked not to reveal after leaving the theatre.

When *The Mousetrap* first opened in the West End, it received underwhelming reviews, with *The Manchester Guardian* claiming that it was "a middling piece" and another critic commenting that the characters were "built entirely of clichés." However, the fact that the play is still performed where other, more highly acclaimed shows have been

discontinued speaks to undermine these poor reviews. Some notable actors who have performed in *The Mousetrap* (which consists of a cast of just 8 players) are Patrick Stewart, Julie Walters, Hugh Bonneville and Miranda Hart. *The Mousetrap* is currently performed at St Martin's Theatre in London, the home of the play since March, 1974.

The Body in the Library by Agatha Christie

It's seven in the morning. The Bantrys wake to find the body of a young woman in their library. She is wearing evening dress and heavy make-up, which is now smeared across her cheeks. But who is she? How did she get there? And what is the connection with another dead girl, whose charred remains are later discovered in an abandoned quarry? The respectable Bantrys invite Miss Marple to solve the mystery... before tongues start to wag.



The Murder on the Links by Agatha Christie

When Hercule Poirot and his associate Arthur Hastings arrive in the French village of Merlville-sur-Mer to meet their client Paul Renault, they learn from the police that he has been found that morning stabbed in the back with a letter opener and left in a newly-dug grave adjacent to a local golf course. Among the plausible suspects are Renault's wife Eloise, his son Jack, Renault's immediate neighbor Madame Daubreuil, the mysterious "Cinderella" of Hasting's recent acquaintance, and some unknown visitor of the previous day—all of whom Poirot has reason to suspect. Poirot's powers of investigation ultimately triumph over the wiles of an assailant whose misdirection and motives are nearly—but not quite—impossible to spot.



Non-Fiction November

National Non-Fiction November is the Federation of Children's Book Groups' annual celebration of all things factual. In a 2022 survey, the National Literacy Trust found that more than half of children and young people (56%) read non-fiction and that children and young people who read non-fiction are more engaged with environmental issues. The report found that overall "more children and young people who read non-fiction [are] motivated to read for educational purposes, to satisfy curiosities, to foster social connections and to support their mental wellbeing." The full report can be found [here](#). As a result of these findings, it's clear that it is vital to provide young people with the opportunity to read non-fiction titles. See below for some great non-fiction books available in the library.

Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer

As a botanist, Robin Wall Kimmerer has been trained to ask questions of nature with the tools of science. As a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, she embraces the notion that plants, and animals are our oldest teachers. In *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Kimmerer brings these lenses of knowledge together to show that the awakening of a wider ecological consciousness requires the acknowledgment and celebration of our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world. For only when we can hear the languages of other beings are we capable of understanding the generosity of the earth and learning to give our own gifts in return.



Amazing Muslims Who Changed the World by Burhana Islam

Do you think you know who first thought of the theory of evolution? Have you ever wondered who created the oldest university in the world? Is Joan of Arc the only rebel girl who led an army that you've heard of? If so, then you need this stunningly illustrated treasure trove of iconic and hidden amazing Muslim heroes! You'll find people you might know, like Malala Yousafzai, Sir Mo Farah and Muhammad Ali, as well as some you might not.



Entangled Life by Merlin Sheldrake

The more we learn about fungi, the less makes sense without them. They can change our minds, heal our bodies and even help us avoid environmental disaster; they are metabolic masters, earth-makers and key players in most of nature's processes. In *Entangled Life*, Merlin Sheldrake takes us on a mind-altering journey into their spectacular world and reveals how these extraordinary organisms transform our understanding of our planet and life itself.



Humble Pi: A Comedy of Maths Errors by Matt Parker

Our whole world is built on math, from the code running a website to the equations enabling the design of skyscrapers and bridges. Most of the time this math works quietly behind the scenes... until it doesn't. All sorts of seemingly innocuous mathematical mistakes can have significant consequences. Math is easy to ignore until a misplaced decimal point sends the stock market, a unit conversion error causes a plane to crash, or someone divides by zero and stalls a battleship in the middle of the ocean. Exploring and explaining a litany of glitches, near misses, and mathematical mishaps involving the internet, big data, elections, street signs, lotteries, the Roman Empire, and an Olympic team, Matt Parker uncovers the bizarre ways math trips us up, and what this reveals about its essential place in our world. Getting it wrong has never been more fun.



Undoctored by Adam Kay

Author of *This is Going to Hurt*, Adam Kay returns and will once again have you in stitches in his painfully funny and startlingly powerful follow-up, *Undoctored: The Story of a Medic Who Ran Out of Patients*. In his most honest and incisive book yet, he reflects on what's happened since handing up his scrubs and examines a life inextricably bound up with medicine. Battered and bruised from his time on the NHS frontline, Kay looks back, moves forward and opens up some old wounds.



Can We Talk About Consent? by Justin Hancock

What exactly is consent? Why does it matter? How can you respect other people's boundaries, and have them respect yours? This book breaks down the basics of how to give and get consent in every aspect of life for readers aged 14 years and older. It's a powerful word, but not everyone understands exactly what it means. This stylish guide explains clearly why consent matters – for all of us. With honest explanations by experienced sex and relationships educator Justin Hancock, you'll learn how consent is a vital part of how we connect with ourselves and our self-esteem, the people close to us and the wider world.



Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong About the World – and Why Things Are Better Than You Think by Hans Rosling

Our problem is that we don't know what we don't know, and even our guesses are informed by unconscious and predictable biases. The international bestseller, inspiring and revelatory, filled with lively anecdotes and moving stories, *Factfulness* is an urgent and essential book that will change the way you see the world, and make you realise things are better than you thought.



It's Not OK to Feel Blue and Other Lies curated by Scarlett Curtis

Everyone has a mental health. So we asked: What does yours mean to you? The result is extraordinary. Over 60 people have shared their stories. Powerful, funny, moving, this book is here to tell you: It's OK. Contains writing from Emma Thompson, Reggie Yates, Matt Haig, and more.



Dead Zone: Where the Wild Things Were by Philip Lymbery

Why are so many animals facing extinction? Climate change and poaching are not the only culprits. The impact of consumer demand for cheap meat is equally devastating, and it is vital that we confront this problem if we are to stand a chance of reducing its effect on the world around us. Our planet's resources are reaching breaking point: awareness is slowly building that the wellbeing of society depends on a thriving natural world. The author us on an eye-opening journey across the globe, focussing on a dozen iconic species - from elephants to bumblebees to penguins - and looking at the role that industrial farming is playing in their plight.