



Jules Verne, 1870

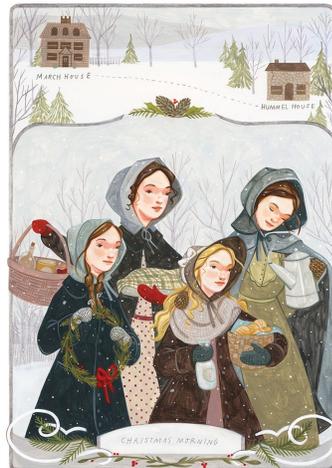
Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Seas

A nuclear submarine [1955] first appeared as the Nautilus in this prescient science fiction adventure where a renowned scientist, Professor Aronnax, his manservant and a harpoonist are rescued by the mysterious Captain Nemo who in his self-imposed exile, quests for scientific knowledge of the sea, and yet, more disturbingly seeks revenge on the terrestrial civilizations.

Louisa May Alcott, 1868

Little Women

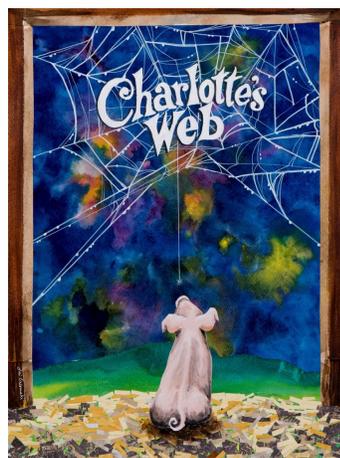
The story follows the lives of four March sisters - Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy - detailing their passage from childhood to womanhood. Somewhat autobiographical free-spirited Jo writes their story, showcasing each of her sister's dramatic, musical or artistic talent as they struggle to overcome poverty, gender inequality, love, marriage, children, and the tragic death of their beloved sister.



E. B. White, 1952

Charlotte's Web

Fern Arable pleads for the life of a runt pig she adopts as a pet and names him Wilbur. Sold to her uncle, Wilbur befriends a barn spider named Charlotte. When he is endangered of being slaughtered, Charlotte weaves words or short phrases in praise of Wilbur in her web, which the farmer interprets as a miracle, thus saving the pig's life. When Charlotte dies, Wilbur protects her egg sac and befriends the few baby spiders who do not leave.



The Brothers Grimm, 1812
Hansel and Gretel

A fearful German fairy tale of a young brother and sister who when famine settles over the land, are taken into the woods and abandoned by their father, a poor woodcutter, urged on by their wicked stepmother. Deep in the woods they stumble upon a house made of bread, cakes, and sugar and are lured inside by the witch, pretending to be a kindly old woman. Gretel tricks the witch and the two find their way home with the treasures they stole from the cannibalistic witch.



Various Authors, 1706
One Thousand and One Arabian Nights

Compiled in Arabic during the Golden Age of Islam, these legends, framed by the ruler Shahryar and his clever wife Scheherazade, who tells him each night only a part of a continuing story, in order to avoid execution. From Aladdin to Ali Baba and the Voyages of Sinbad, these stories include historical tales, love stories, tragedies, comedies, and poems where jinns, ghouls, sorcerers, and magicians often intermingle.



Jack London, 1903
Call of the Wild

Set in Yukon, Canada during the 1890s Klondike Gold Rush, a dog named Buck, a Saint Bernard-Scotch Collie mix, is sold off from his pampered home in California, eventually finding his way to Alaska where he is trained as a sled dog. Through multiple owners, he is mistreated until an experienced outdoorsman, John Thornton adopts him. The two rescue one another and when Thornton is killed, Buck returns to the wild.



*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow,
1855*

The Song of Hiawatha

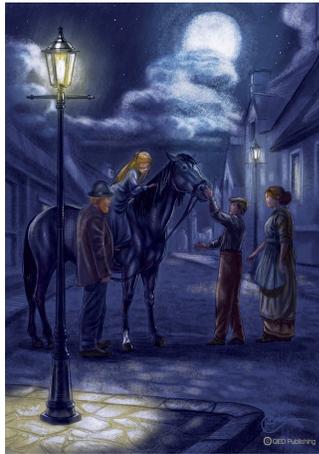
An epic poem of an Ojibwe warrior named Hiawatha and his tragic love for Minnehaha, a Dakota woman. It is set on the south shores of Lake Superior. His birth is foretold and he is prophesied to be a “mighty” peace-bringing leader. In its chapters Hiawatha has adventures as a child, he falls in love and slays the evil magician, invents written language, and in the end loses his love in a severe winter before launching his canoe westward, departing forever.



Anna Sewell, 1877

Black Beauty

Written towards the end of her life when Sewell was an invalid, the story teaches how to treat both people and animals with kindness, sympathy and respect. *Black Beauty* tells of a horse’s life and reads like an autobiography, describing in vivid details the world through the eyes of a horse. Her work showcased the plight of working animals and led to the abolition of many cruel practices of the day. As a social protest novel, its effects are still relevant today.



Hans Christian Andersen, 1844

The Snow Queen

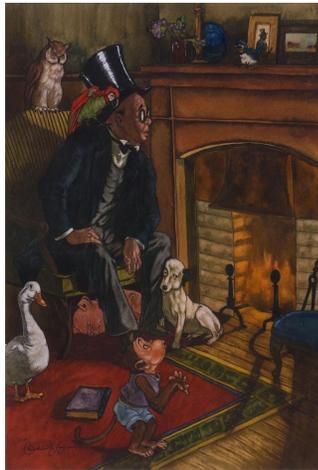
Told in seven stories, this Danish fairy tale centers on the struggle between good and evil as experienced by two children Gerda and her friend, Kai. When a magical mirror is shattered, its splinters pierce the eyes of people, freezing their hearts like blocks of ice and making them see only the bad and ugly around them. The evil Snow Queen kidnaps Kai. Gerda searches the world for him, delayed by a sorcerer and other misadventures. When she finds Kai, a kiss finally lifts the spell.



Hugh Lofting, 1920

The Story of Doctor Dolittle

Doctor Dolittle, a physician, is the central character in a series of stories that takes place in early Victorian England. After developing the unique ability to talk and understand the languages of animals, taught to him by his parrot Polynesia, he becomes a champion for the rights of animals around the world. His many adventures include vaccinating monkeys facing a raging epidemic and rescuing a boy from a rock island before returning to his beloved home in Puddleby.



Rudyard Kipling, 1894

The Jungle Book

In this collection of stories, Mowgli who was raised by wolves in the forests of India, encounters many adventures with Shere Khan, the tiger, Baloo, the bear, and Bagheera, the black panther, as he struggles to overcome his own sense of abandonment and the "rules of the jungle." By the end of the story, the mature Mowgli moves between the jungle and the village, learning moral lessons before mastering fire, asserting himself as a man, who must leave the jungle behind.



Harper Lee, 1960

To Kill a Mockingbird

Loosely based on the events Lee observed in 1936 in her hometown of Monroeville, Alabama, the story deals with the serious issues of rape and racial inequality. Atticus Finch, the narrator's father, represents as a lawyer a black man, Tom Robinson, who is wrongly accused of raping a white woman. His daughter Scout who is telling the story, and her brother Jem, witness the discrimination. Accused unfairly, Tom tries to escape from jail and is tragically shot and killed.



Johanna Spyri, 1881

Heidi

Set in the Swiss Alps, the story revolves around the events in the life of a young girl, Heidi, and her paternal grandfather. Orphaned, she is taken by her maternal aunt to live in the mountains with her reclusive grandfather. There she enthusiastically befriends young Peter and his blind grandmother and over time her resilient and friendly nature wins over her grandfather's affections. The mountain air and goat's milk also nurtures her friend Clara's spirit and helps her walk again.



Lucy Maud Montgomery, 1908

Anne of Green Gables

Anne Shirley, a redheaded spirited and imaginative 11 year old orphan, finds Green Gables and the home of Matthew and Marilla Cuthbert, on Prince Edward Island in Canada, a welcomed solace from her tumultuous life in foster care. At last she finds a kindred spirit in her friend Diana and respect for her rival in class Gilbert Blythe. The story follows her well-intentioned misadventures as she grows up and succeeds in becoming a teacher and devoted caretaker of Green Gables.



P. L. Travers, 1934

Mary Poppins

A magical English nanny Mary Poppins is blown in by the East wind to care for the Banks children, Jane and Michael. Complete with a travelling carpet bag and an umbrella that lifts her into the sky, Mary Poppins, a no-nonsense exceptional nanny, while instilling discipline, uses her magical touch to teach the Bank's children many valuable lessons. The series comprises eight books published between 1934 and 1988.



Giambattista Basile, 1330

Sleeping Beauty

Later translated by the Brothers Grimm, this German fairy tale tells of a cursed princess who is forced to sleep for a hundred years by an evil fairy, only to be awakened by a handsome prince. A variant of this tale, Little Briar Rose, has the princess pricking her finger on a spindle and falling into a deep sleep. This prophecy is revealed to the king at a banquet celebrating his daughter's birth and regardless of forbidding all spinning wheels, this tragedy happens. The enchantment ends when a prince kisses her.



Murasaki Shikibu, 1021

The Tale of Genji

Considered the first novel, written by a Japanese noblewoman and lady-in-waiting at the peak of the Heian period, this work depicts the lifestyles of the high courtiers. It recounts the intrigues of a son of an ancient emperor, Hikaru Genji, and for political reasons he is demoted to a mere commoner. Genji serves as an imperial officer and has many affairs of the heart which leads to the birth of a son, but the death of his wife. Towards the end of his life he laments how life is so fleeting.



Lew Wallace, 1880

Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ

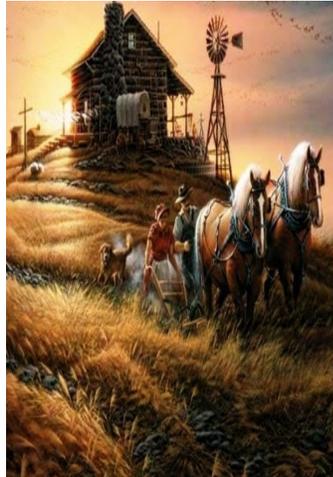
Considered the most influential Christian book of the nineteenth century, the story follows Judah Ben-Hur, a Jewish prince from Jerusalem who is enslaved by the Romans during the first century. Ben-Hur becomes a charioteer and a Christian, his story unfolding parallel to the life of Jesus. In it are themes of betrayal, conviction, and redemption with a revenge plot that leads to a story of love and compassion.



Laura Ingalls Wilder, 1932

Little House on the Prairie

Eight autobiographical children's novels revolve around the life of the Ingalls family and their small homestead near Pepin, Wisconsin. It is told from the perspective of the middle daughter, Laura Elizabeth Ingalls Wilder, and portrays real-life events she experienced growing up, from spelling competitions to a minstrel show, to the daily chores of housework. Laura narrates her struggles with childish comments and commitment as her family faces hardships, disabilities and survival.



Howard Pyle, 1883

The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood

A series of stories about the English outlaw Robin Hood and his band of Merry Men who as legends resisted the authorities and aided his fellow man. Based on Middle Age ballads, Pyle adapts the story of a heroic outlaw who robs the rich to feed the poor. Such philanthropy has Robin Hood eluding the Sheriff of Nottingham and finding solace in Maid Marian and his Merry Band of Outlaws, Will Stutely, Little John, Friar Tuck, and Allan-a-Dale.



C. S. Lewis, 1952

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader

The third novel in the seven novel series The Chronicles of Narnia, has Lucy and Edmund with their cousin Eustace drawn into the Narnian world through a picture of a ship at sea. The Dawn Treader is the ship of Caspian X, the King of Narnia. They join in the quest to find the seven lost Lords of Narnia. Here too, the slave trade flourishes and the group narrowly escape a raging sea-serpent.



Geoffrey of Monmouth, 1136
The History of Merlin and
King Arthur

Geoffrey of Monmouth, an Anglo-Norman cleric wrote the earliest version of the Arthurian Legend. In it the Life of Merlin and Arthur's education by Merlin are detailed along with the sword in the stone and his death on Salisbury plain with his final resting place at Avalon. In the late 12th century, Arthur's Camelot is written about, a mythical castled city where the King held court and 150 knights of the round table.



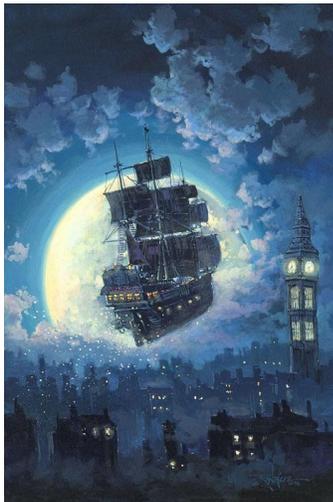
J. R. R. Tolkien, 1937
The Hobbit, or There and
Back Again

The story set in Middle Earth follows the quest of home-loving Bilbo Baggins, a hobbit, who wins a share of the treasure guarded by Smaug, the dragon with the help of Gandalf the wizard who saves them from trolls, Thorin Oakenshield and his band of dwarfs. Never out of print, the story reaches its climax in the Battle of Five Armies, where many creatures and characters showcase personal growth and forms of heroism.



J. M. Barrie, 1911
Peter Pan; or, the Boy Who
Wouldn't Grow Up

Peter Pan, a mischievous yet innocent boy who can fly has many adventures on the island of Neverland that is inhabited by mermaids, fairies, Native Americans and pirates. Wendy Darling and her two brothers, with Tinker Bell and the Lost Boys follow Peter Pan to Neverland once he claims his shadow and there they encounter the ticking crocodile and Captain Hook in a climatic final scene.



Hans Christian Andersen, 1837

The Little Mermaid

A tragic story with a happy ending, the Little Mermaid rescues a prince from drowning and longs to be in the world inhabited by human beings. She is warned by the witch that she cannot return to the sea once she makes the deal to give up her tongue and beautiful voice in exchange for becoming human. Her soul too, is only obtained if she wins the love of the prince and marries him. Through tragic circumstances and an act of selflessness, she ends up being a daughter of the air.



Mark Twain, 1884

Huckleberry Finn

Son of the town's vagrant drunkard, Huckleberry Finn sleeps on doorsteps when the weather is fair and empty hogsheads during storms, living off of what he receives from others. When Jim, a runaway slave befriends Huck, the two begin an adventure taking a raft on the Mississippi River, heading north to the Ohio River in hopes of finding freedom from slavery for Jim and freedom from an abusive father for Huck.



Ray Bradbury, 1950

The Martian Chronicles

A series of short emotional episodic stories, which follow a "future history" structure, of the earliest colonization of Mars by humans fleeing a troubled and eventually atomically devastated Earth. It chronicles the conflict between aboriginal Martians and the new colonists. Many of the stories have been adapted by the theater and films, placing Bradbury in the tradition of anti-science fiction writers who see the rise of the machine age as problematic.



Robert Louis Stevenson, 1881

Treasure Island

A tale of buccaneers and buried gold, *Treasure Island* popularized elements such as treasure maps marked with an “X”, schooners, the Black Spot, and tropical islands with one-legged seamen with parrots on their shoulders. Young Jim Hawkins becomes the cabin boy for an adventure led by the local physician Dr. Livesey and the district squire John Trelawney, to find the pirates who served under Captain Flint and his chef “Long John” Silver and to salvage their lost treasure on Skull Island.



Herman Melville, 1851

Moby Dick

Melville spent four years as a sailor on a whaling vessel and drew from this experience the sailor Ishmael's narrative of an obsessive quest by Captain Ahab to kill Moby Dick, a giant sperm whale, that bit off his leg at the knee. Its opening sentence “Call me Ishmael” is famous. The cursed ship, the Pequod, at last finds this mysterious whale. The Captain, possessed by fallen angels, gets entangled with the harpoon's line and is dragged out to sea behind the creature.



Johann David Wyss, 1812

The Swiss Family Robinson

Written by a Swiss pastor about the adventures of a family shipwrecked on an island in the Pacific, William and Elizabeth and their four sons, Fritz, Ernest, Jack and Franz, must learn to survive for the ten years they are stranded there. Intended to teach his own four sons about family values, the uses of the natural world and self-reliance, the family thrives with their two dogs, demonstrating bravery and resourcefulness.



Gaston Leroux, 1909

Phantom of the Opera

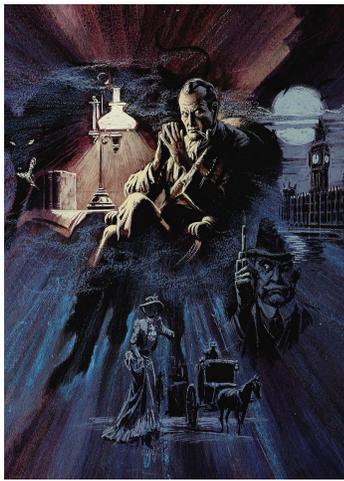
Based on rumors concerning a real opera house, the Palais Garnier, with a genuine underground lake and a ghost becomes the inspiration for the phantom or the Angel of Music, who haunts Christine in this story of obsessive love and revenge. Christine, a beautiful and promising young singer, is abducted and taken to the phantom's lair below the opera house. There she is carefully mentored. The phantom reveals himself as a deformed man, Erik. Death and torture follow as a love triangle unravels.



Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 1887

Sherlock Holmes

The most portrayed literary human character in history, Sherlock Holmes, a consulting detective, was inspired by Conan Doyle's colleague Dr. Joseph Bell, who drew broad conclusions from minute observations. Dr. Watson, describes Holmes as "bohemian" in his habits and lifestyle. The two end up solving many crimes through a deductive method using this guiding principle: "When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth."



Agatha Christie, 1927

Miss Marple

Jane Marple, an elderly spinster lives in the English village of St. Mary Mead, and there acts as an amateur consulting detective. Giving "old maids" a voice, Miss Marple uses her shrewd intelligence, astute observations, and parallel incidents of acquaintances she has known to solve even the most difficult of crimes. She eavesdrops on conversations while knitting, often piecing together unsuspecting motivations and opportunities.



Daniel Defoe, 1719

Robinson Crusoe

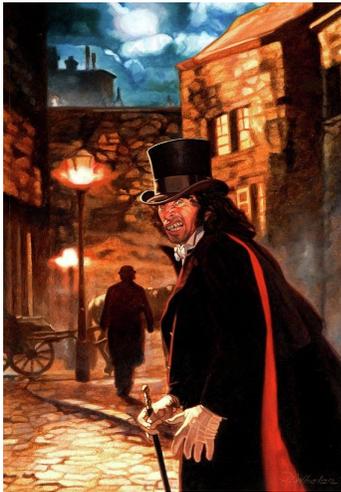
Written as an autobiography of a castaway who spends 28 years on a tropical desert island near Trinidad, encountering cannibals, captives, mutineers, and his own loneliness, many readers believed he was a real person. On the "Island of Despair" Crusoe finds solace in salvaging from the wrecked ship means to survive. He teaches himself how to make pottery and grow barley and rice. His close companion "Friday" is an escaped prisoner from the native cannibals.



Robert Louis Stevenson, 1886

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

Dr. Jekyll, a kind and respected English doctor develops a serum that effectively masks his dark side. Instead, it transforms him into Edward Hyde, a violent sociopathic killer. Over time, his transformation becomes erratic and out of his control. He concludes the story with a letter that Henry Jekyll's life has come to an end. The phrase "Jekyll and Hyde" represents an unpredictable dual nature.



Mary Shelley, 1818

Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus

Victor Frankenstein, an ambitious scientist, creates a hideous Creature using dead body parts. The brain, from a dead criminal, is brought to life and the Creature with intelligence and articulation, questions his creator, "I ought to be thy Adam, but I am rather the fallen angel". After the cursed Creature strangles Victor's wife, Elizabeth to death, the doctor seeks revenge for "the fiend".



Bram Stoker, 1897

Dracula

The story begins with Count Dracula moving from Transylvania to England where he can feed on new blood and spread the undead curse. A small group of people led by Professor Abraham Van Helsing attempts to understand this “monster” and the threat of his kind to humanity. Lucy is affected by the curse and dies. Following her death and burial, Mina becomes Dracula’s latest victim. Her link leads Van Helsing and his hunters to Dracula’s castle where at last vampirism is defeated.



Clement Clarke Moore, 1820

Legend of Santa Claus

Father Christmas, Saint Nicholas, Sinterklaas, Kris Kringle or simply Santa, this imaginary figure originated in Western Christian culture and is said to bring gifts to the homes of well-behaved children on the night of Christmas Eve [24 December]. From the historical Saint Nicholas, a 4th century Greek bishop and gift-giver of Myra, Santa Claus with the aid of his elves makes toys in his workshop at the North Pole and with his flying reindeer delivers gifts to good children.



Pre-Columbian Era, 1400s

Incan Myth of Llamas

High in the Andes Mountains of Peru, there’s a legend of llamas rescuing people from the Great Flood. Llamas, with a human look in their eyes, traditionally provided wool, food, transport and could breathe in the high altitudes; but once upon a time they could talk and they warned the Peruvians of a great flood coming. Those that heeded the warning escaped into the high mountains and were saved from the devastation of the flood.



Neolithic Era, 3500 B.C.

Legends of Dragons

Dragons appear in virtually all cultures around the globe. Many of these stories may have been inspired by ancient discoveries of fossils belonging to dinosaurs or perhaps exaggerations of living reptiles such as Komodo dragons, Gila monsters, iguanas, and alligators. In Chinese lore, the dragon is the highest-ranking creature and tells of a man named Dongfu who loved dragons and because he could understand a dragon's will, was able to tame and raise them.



William Shakespeare, 1603

Three Witches

Shakespeare's witches are prophets who hail Macbeth, the general and inform him early in the story of his ascent to kingship. However, representing evil, darkness, chaos, and conflict, their ominous role alters as they also predict Macbeth's tragic downfall. As supernatural weird sisters, these three are similar to Baba Yaga, a Russian witch who can manifest herself into three identical figures, and travels through forests in a house with rooster's feet.



Washington Irving, 1820

The Legend of Sleepy Hollow

The story is set in TarryTown, New York in 1790. Sleepy Hollow is renowned for its ghosts and haunting atmosphere and when Ichabod Crane, a lanky and superstitious schoolmaster encounters a Headless Horseman, a Hessian soldier in search of his head, decapitated by a cannonball. The cloaked rider and Ichabod are "spirited away by supernatural means".



Charles Dickens, 1843

A Christmas Carol

Ebenezer Scrooge, an elderly miser, is visited on Christmas Eve by the ghost of his former business partner, Jacob Marley, who warns Scrooge of three more apparitions, the spirits of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet to Come. Each visit transforms the grumpy old man into a kinder, gentler soul who by the end wants to keep the spirit of giving in his heart. The retelling of this classic each Christmas has inspired many western traditions and celebrations, a popular story of second chances.



European Maritime Legend, 1641

The Flying Dutchman

Glowing with a ghostly light is a doomed cursed ship with dead sailors that can never make port and must sail the oceans forever. This legendary ship, The Flying Dutchman, once transported goods from the Indies to Amsterdam. When the wind and rain went against them, the Captain Hendrick van der Decken swore that he would make it through that night. "May I be eternally damned if I do..." Sightings of his spectre vessel is considered a bad omen.



Edgar Allan Poe, 1845

The Raven

A talking raven mysteriously visits a distraught man, lamenting the loss of his love, Lenore. The man reminisces that his friend, the raven, will soon leave him as "other friends have flown before" symbolic of losing all hope as he broods "take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!" The raven repeats the word "Nevermore" as the poem traces the man's slow fall into madness, "his eyes have all the seeming of a demon that is dreaming..."



