

## Classic Literature:

- **Charlotte's web – E. B. White** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*)



A poignant, humorous story of a pig, a spider and a little girl. Wilbur the pig's life has already been saved by Fern, but when he is sold to her uncle, he realises his life is in even more danger. Enter Charlotte A. Cavatica, a beautiful large grey spider. Charlotte is determined to keep Wilbur from the chopping block, and comes up with an ingenious way to do just that.

- **Little Women – Louisa May Alcott** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*)



This great American novel demonstrates Alcott's extraordinary talent at portraying the joys and struggles of family life in an unforgettable way. Generations of people - young and old, male and female - have fallen in love with the March sisters. This classic of young adult fiction transcends genre, gender, and class with its examination of personal quests, societal restrictions, family ties, and the end of innocence.

- **The Borrowers – Mary Norton** (*Adapted as both the film The Borrowers and animated film The Secret World of Arrietty*) (*Available on Audible*)



The Borrowers live in the secret places of quiet old houses: behind the mantelpiece, inside the harpsichord, under the kitchen clock. They own nothing, borrow everything and think that human beings were invented just to do the dirty work. Arrietty's father, Pod, was an expert Borrower. He could scale curtains using a hatpin and bring back a doll's teacup without breaking it. Girls weren't supposed to go borrowing, but as Arrietty was an only child her father broke the rule - and then something happened which changed their lives. She made friends with the human boy living in the house....

- **The Diary of a Young Girl – Anne Frank** (*Available on Audible*)



The Diary of Anne Frank Is 'A Monument to The Human Spirit'. One of the most famous accounts of living under the Nazi regime comes from the diary of a 13-year-old Jewish girl, Anne Frank. Edited by her father Otto H. Frank and German novelist Mirjam Pressler, this is a true story to be rediscovered by each new generation.

- **Pride and Prejudice – Jane Austen** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*)



In Pride and Prejudice, the Bennett sisters try to find their way in the repressive strictures of 19th century society. Austen shows the folly of judging by first impressions and the experience of falling in love, and she

superbly describes a world which, despite being more than two centuries old, still resonates with modern concerns.

- **To Kill a Mockingbird – Harper Lee** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*)



A lawyer's advice to his children as he defends the real mockingbird of Harper Lee's classic novel - a black man falsely charged with the rape of a white girl. Through the young eyes of Scout and Jem Finch, Harper Lee explores with exuberant humour the irrationality of adult attitudes to race and class in the Deep South of the 1930s. The conscience of a town steeped in prejudice, violence and hypocrisy is pricked by the stamina of one man's struggle for justice. But the weight of history will only tolerate so much.

- **Jane Eyre – Charlotte Brontë** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*)



Following Jane from her childhood as an orphan in Northern England through her experience as a governess at Thornfield Hall, Charlotte Brontë's Gothic classic is an early exploration of women's independence in the mid-19th century and the pervasive societal challenges women had to endure. At Thornfield, Jane meets the complex and mysterious Mr. Rochester, with whom she shares a complicated relationship that ultimately forces her to reconcile the conflicting passions of romantic love and religious piety.

- **Emma – Jane Austen** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*)



Austen's beautiful, clever, wilful but fallible heroine Emma Woodhouse believes she knows best. Perfectly content with her life she sees no need for either love or marriage, yet nothing pleases her more than meddling in the romantic lives of others. But when she fails to heed the warnings of her good friend Mr. Knightley and schemes to arrange a suitable match for her protégée, Harriet Smith, her carefully laid plans soon unravel and have consequences that she never expected. She discovers that she understands the feelings of others as little as she does her own heart.

- **Catcher in the Rye – J. D. Salinger** (*Available on Soundcloud*)



It's Christmas and Holden Caulfield has just been expelled from yet another school. Fleeing the crooks at Pencey Prep, he pinballs around New York City seeking solace in fleeting encounters - shooting the bull with strangers in dive hotels, wandering alone round Central Park, getting beaten up by pimps and cut down by erstwhile girlfriends. The city is beautiful and terrible, in all its neon loneliness and seedy glamour, its

mingled sense of possibility and emptiness. Holden passes through it like a ghost, thinking always of his kid sister Phoebe, the only person who really understands him, and his determination to escape the phonies and find a life of true meaning.

- **Lord of the Flies – William Golding** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*)



A plane crashes on a desert island, and the only survivors, a group of schoolboys, assemble on the beach and wait to be rescued. By day they inhabit a land of bright fantastic birds and dark blue seas, but at night their dreams are haunted by the image of a terrifying beast. As the boys' delicate sense of order fades, so their childish dreams are transformed into something more primitive and their behaviour starts to take on a murderous, savage significance.

- **The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn – Mark Twain** (*Adapted as the film Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn*) (*Available on Audible*)



The mischievous adventures of a pair of young boys growing up along the Mississippi River. It is set in the 1840s in the fictional town of St. Petersburg, inspired by Hannibal, Missouri, where Twain lived as a boy. In the novel Tom Sawyer has several adventures, often with his friend, Huck.

- **The Princess Bride – William Goldman** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*)



This adventure story has everything you could want: the good guy, some bad guys, the girl, sword fighting, revenge, romance, of course a happy ending, and rodents of unusual size. Join Westley the plucky farm boy, Buttercup the beautiful young maiden, Inigo Montoya the driven, embittered swordsman, and many other strange and unusual characters in this swashbuckling tale of good-natured silliness. It is read by Rob Reiner, who directed the motion picture based on this classic tale.

- **1984 – George Orwell** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*)



1984 is the year in which it happens. The world is divided into three superstates. In Oceania, the Party's power is absolute. Every action, word, gesture and thought is monitored under the watchful eye of Big Brother and the Thought Police. In the Ministry of Truth, the Party's department for propaganda, Winston Smith's job is to edit the past. Over time, the impulse to escape the machine and live independently takes hold of him and he embarks on a secret and forbidden love affair. As he writes the words 'DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER', his personal rebellion begins....

- **Time Machine – H. G. Wells** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*)



When a Victorian scientist propels himself into the year 802,701 AD, he is initially delighted to find that suffering has been replaced by beauty, contentment and peace. Entranced at first by the Eloi, an elfin species descended from man, he soon realises that this beautiful people are simply remnants of a once-great culture - now weak and childishly afraid of the dark. But they have every reason to be afraid: in deep tunnels beneath their paradise lurks another race descended from humanity - the sinister Morlocks. And when the scientist's time machine vanishes, it becomes clear he must search these tunnels, if he is ever to return to his own era.

- **The Picture of Dorian Gray – Oscar Wilde** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*)



The story of a man who sells his soul to the devil in exchange for eternal youth. As Basil Hallward, an aspiring artist, puts a few touches on a portrait of his handsome young friend Dorian Gray, Gray wishes that the portrait might grow old while he remains forever young. While Dorian Gray spends his life pursuing fresh experiences and new sensations, his looks do not change. However, the portrait, secretly hidden in the attic of his residence and with which he has grown increasingly obsessed, does. More and more, as Dorian struggles to hide his true identity, the portrait reveals his progressive pathway to dissolution.

- **Tale of Two Cities – Charles Dickens** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*)



Set in London and Paris before and during the French Revolution, the audiobook tells the story of a French doctor who is imprisoned for 18 years in the Bastille in Paris. Upon his release, he moves to London with his daughter, Lucie, whom he had never met. She marries but there is conflict between her husband and the people who decades earlier caused her father's imprisonment. Set against the backdrop of the conditions that led up to the French Revolution, it depicts the plight of the French peasantry demoralised by the French aristocracy and the brutality demonstrated by the revolutionaries during the Reign of Terror, towards the former aristocrats.

- **Bleak House – Charles Dickens** (*Available on Audible*) (*TV mini-series*)



At the heart of Bleak House is the longstanding case of Jarndyce v. Jarndyce - a damning portrayal of the 19th century legal system. Dickens

shines a light on the impact that overdrawn court proceedings could have on the lives of those involved, specifically through two of his protagonists, Richard Carstone and his beloved Ada Clare. Dickens' unassuming heroine, Esther Summerson, along with the equally benevolent owner of Bleak House, John Jarndyce, attempts to guide the young lovers, Richard and Ada, to live their lives unaffected by the court proceedings. But with the introduction of some typically Dickensian characters such as Grandfather Smallweed and Mr Tulkinghorn, trouble soon ensues for all who cross their paths.

- **Great Expectations – Charles Dickens** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*)



Pip is an orphan, brought up in a village on the Essex marshes by his disagreeable sister and her husband Joe Gargery, the kind-hearted village blacksmith. Life is harsh and Pip has few prospects until he receives from an anonymous benefactor the chance of escaping the forge for a more promising life in London. But his expectations are fraught with difficulties as he is haunted by figures from his past such as the escaped convict Magwitch, the eccentric Miss Havisham, and her proud and beautiful ward, Estella. As he passes from childhood to adulthood he in time discovers his true self.

- **Orlando – Virginia Woolf** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*)



Orlando, is a playful mock biography of a chameleonic historical figure, immortal and ageless, who changes sex and identity on a whim. First masculine, then feminine, Orlando begins life as a young sixteenth-century nobleman, then gallops through three centuries to end up as a woman writer in Virginia Woolf's own time. A wry commentary on gender roles and modes of history, Orlando is also, in Woolf's own words, a light-hearted 'writer's holiday' which delights in ambiguity and capriciousness.

- **Watership Down – Richard Adams** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*)



Fiver could sense danger. Something terrible was going to happen to the warren; he felt sure of it. They had to leave immediately. So begins a long and perilous journey of survival for a small band of rabbits. As the rabbits skirt danger at every turn, we become acquainted with the band, its humorous characters, and its compelling culture, complete with its own folk history and mythos. Fiver's vision finally leads them to Watership Down, an upland meadow. But here they face their most difficult challenges of all.

- **Animal Farm – George Orwell** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*)



Political allegory set in a farmyard, where the animals decide to seize the farmer's land and create a co-operative that reaps the benefits of their combined labours. However, as with all great political plans, some animals see a bigger share of the rewards than others, and the animals start to question their supposed utopia. They decide that working for humans is doing them no favours, so under the leadership of Napoleon, the only Berkshire Boar on the farm, and the other pigs, they drive out the farmer and his cohorts and set about structuring their own society.

- **The Secret Garden - Frances Hodgson Burnett** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*)



After losing her parents, young Mary Lennox is sent from India to live in her uncle's gloomy mansion on the wild English moors. She is lonely and has no one to play with, but one day she learns of a secret garden somewhere in the grounds that no one is allowed to enter. Then Mary uncovers an old key in a flowerbed - and a gust of magic leads her to the hidden door. Slowly she turns the key and enters a world she could never have imagined.

- **Black Beauty – Anna Sewell** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*)



Much-loved family classic follows Black Beauty's journey from a well-born colt to a painfully overworked cab horse. Brimming with vivid detail and relatable characters, each chapter of Black Beauty's long and varied life communicates an important message about kindness, sympathy and understanding.

- **Frankenstein – Mary Shelly** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*)



An epic battle between man and monster at its greatest literary pitch. In trying to create life, the young student Victor Frankenstein unleashes forces beyond his control, setting into motion a long and tragic chain of events that brings Victor to the very brink of madness. How he tries to destroy his creation, as it destroys everything Victor loves, is a powerful story of love, friendship, scientific hubris, and horror.

- **The Silver Sword – Ian Serrailier** (*Available on Audible*)



Alone and fending for themselves in a Poland devastated by World War Two, Jan and his three homeless friends cling to the silver sword as a symbol of hope. As they travel through Europe towards Switzerland, where they believe they will be reunited with their parents, they encounter many

hardships and dangers. This extraordinarily moving account of an epic journey gives a remarkable insight into the reality of a Europe laid waste by war.

- **'A Series of Unfortunate Events' series by Lemony Snicket** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*) (*BBC TV series*)



There is nothing to be found in Lemony Snicket's 'A Series of Unfortunate Events' but misery and despair. You still have time to choose another international best-selling series to read. But if you insist on discovering the unpleasant adventures of the Baudelaire orphans, then proceed with caution... Violet, Klaus, and Sunny Baudelaire are intelligent children. They are charming, and resourceful, and have pleasant facial features. Unfortunately, they are exceptionally unlucky. In *The Bad Beginning*, the siblings encounter a greedy and repulsive villain, itchy clothing, a disastrous fire, a plot to steal their fortune and cold porridge for breakfast.

- **Goodnight Mr Tom – Michelle Magorian** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*)



Young Willie Beech is evacuated to the country as Britain stands on the brink of World War II. A sad, deprived child, he slowly begins to flourish under the care of old Tom Oakley, but his newfound happiness is shattered by a summons from his mother back in London...

- **Five on a Treasure Island – Enid Blyton** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*)



Julian, Dick and Anne are spending the holidays with their tomboy cousin George and her dog, Timothy. One day, George takes them to explore nearby Kirrin Island, with its rocky little coast and old ruined castle on the top. Over on the island, they make a thrilling discovery, which leads them deep into the dungeons of Kirrin Castle on a dangerous adventure. Who - and what - will they find there?

- **Alice's Adventures in Wonderland – Lewis Carroll** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*)



On a sunny afternoon, Alice discovers a bottle that says DRINK ME. Unable to resist, she follows the label's instructions...and immediately shrinks to tumble down a rabbit hole into an adventure where nothing is as it seems. From The Mad Hatter to the White Rabbit, the grinning Cheshire Cat and the Queen of Hearts, Alice meets a cast of characters who are both eccentric and memorable. But will Alice survive her nonsensical

adventure...and can she get back home? She must face the challenges of eccentric puzzles, verses and riddles, with the help of intriguing new friends, in order to find the way back home.

- **Five Children and It – Edith Nesbit** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*)



Robert, Anthea, Jane, Cyril and the Lamb are on holiday at the White House, a beautiful place on the edge of a hill with a chalk quarry one side and a gravel-pit on the other. Before they have even been there a week, they make an amazing discovery. Digging in the gravel-pit, they find a fairy! The Psammead is brown, furry, fat and shaped like a spider- as well as being very old, and very grumpy. But most importantly, the creature can grant wishes, and the children are soon having the most wonderful adventures...

- **Stig of the Dump – Clive King** (*Available on Audible*)



Nobody believes Barney when he says he's discovered a boy living wild in the dump. But for Barney, Stig is totally real. They become great friends, learn each other's ways and embark on a series of exciting adventures.

- **Wind in the Willows – Kenneth Graham** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*) (*BBC TV series*)



Here is a timeless tale of waterside Britain that has been loved by generations of children and acclaimed as a classic. The story of Mole, Ratty, Badger, and Toad, and their escapades, whether messing about on the river or poop-pooing in Toad's shiny new car, cannot fail to enchant.

- **Swallows and Amazons – Arthur Ransome** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*)



For anyone who loves sailing and adventure, Arthur Ransome's classic Swallows and Amazons series stands alone. Originally published over a half-century ago, the twelve books are still eagerly read by children and adults alike – by all those captivated by the world of adventure and imagination. Swallows and Amazons, the book that started it all in 1930, introduces the Walker family, the camp on Wild Cat Island, the able-bodied catboat Swallow, and the two intrepid Amazons, plucky Nancy and Peggy Blackett.

- **Peter Pan – JM Barrie** (*Adapted as a film*) (*Available on Audible*)



The story begins at home in London during The Blitz, and Mary Darling is planning to evacuate her children to the countryside. However, her plans take an unexpected turn when a familiar face from her childhood



returns...the one and only Peter Pan, the mysterious boy from Kensington Gardens. Intrigued by their mother's friend, Wendy, Michael and John seek Peter Pan out, resulting in them being whisked off to Neverland and setting up home with Peter, Tinker Bell and the Lost Boys.