



## WINTER

If you would like to renew a book, or have any comments/ queries, please don't hesitate to contact us at [library@newsteadwood.co.uk](mailto:library@newsteadwood.co.uk)

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



Access our library software from any device, anywhere, using this URL: <https://uk.accessit.online/nws00>

To log in, click on the blue button that says, 'Login with School Details,' or enter your school email address in the Borrower ID field and your school password in the password field. Use Accessit to view your loans; reserve books when you're unable to come to the library; search the library stock; write book reviews, and more.

Follow us on Twitter/ X:

[@NWSLibrary](https://twitter.com/NWSLibrary)

Follow us on Instagram:

[@nwschoollibrary](https://www.instagram.com/nwschoollibrary)

See what we're reading on Storygraph:

<https://app.thestorygraph.com/profile/newsteadlibrary>

View our Amazon Wish List:

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/31U9EQLV3HCI?ref=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/31U9EQLV3HCI?ref=wl_share)

### External Competition: The Henrietta Branford Writing Competition

The Henrietta Branford Writing Competition is an annual competition for young people, running in conjunction with the Branford Boase Award. The competition aims to find and encourage writers of the future, something the late author Henrietta Branford (for whom the prize was named) was always keen to do.

This year's competition is inspired by 2024 Branford Boase Award winner Nathanael Lessoré's novel *Steady For This*. With that in mind, judges are looking for stories, poems, song or rap lyrics that will make them laugh. Submissions can be inspired by real life events or entirely fictitious. Nathanael Lessoré's top tip is "Listen. If I find something funny, I immediately make note of it. Try that, enjoy writing and good luck in the competition!"

The competition is open to **anyone under the age of 19**, and the closing date for entries is **Friday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2025**. Instructions on how to enter, as well as full terms and conditions can be found [here](#).

Six winners will receive signed copies of each of the books shortlisted for the 2025 Branford Boase Award. Additionally, their submissions will be published on the Branford Boase website.

### On This Day in History... The Birth of Victor Hugo, 26<sup>th</sup> February 1802

Victor Hugo was a French writer who lived in Besancon, France and was a key figure in the Romantic literary movement. Hugo is considered one of France's greatest poets, though he is best known internationally for his novels, particularly *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Les Misérables*. Encouraged by his mother, Hugo began writing poetry and drama at a young age. He wrote several plays that contributed to the Romantic movement, one of these being *Cromwell* which generated new ideas about drama combining both tragic and comedic elements. Throughout his lifetime, Hugo was passionate about politics, campaigning against slavery and fighting for the abolition of the death penalty. In 1851, he was exiled from France for opposing Napoleon III's regime and publicly naming him a traitor. Hugo settled in Guernsey in the UK and spent his exile writing political pamphlets against Napoleon, as well as several famous works including powerful poems and reflections on his personal grief. Hugo returned to France in 1870 and remained a prominent literary figure until his death in 1885. He was honoured with a national funeral and buried in the Pantheon in Paris.



*Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo

At one level a detective story in which the relentless Inspector Javert obsessively pursues the escaped convict Jean Valjean, culminating in a dramatic chase through the sewers of Paris, at another level Hugo's masterpiece is a drama of crime, punishment and rehabilitation set against a panoramic description of French society in the years after Napoleon's fall from power. But this book is also about the metaphysical struggle between good and evil in the soul of every man and every community.



*The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* by Victor Hugo

This extraordinary historical French gothic novel, set in Medieval Paris under the twin towers of its greatest structure and supreme symbol, the cathedral of Notre-Dame, is the haunting drama of Quasimodo, the disabled bell-ringer of Notre-Dame, as he struggles to stand up to his ableist guardian Claude Frollo, who also wants to commit genocide against Paris' Romani population.



### Rare Lord of the Rings Coin Set to be Auctioned



A privately owned collection of commemorative coins, including a *Lord of the Rings* set (left) will go to auction later this month. The collection also includes a 2012 London Olympics set and numerous Queen Elizabeth II sets. The collection, which comes from a privately owned estate in Sussex, is expected to sell for £3,000. Auctioneer Richard Bromell is particularly interested in the *Lord of the Rings* collection as it is "very special and attractive because of its link to history." The set was released in 2003 and is known as 'The Light Versus Dark Character Collection.'

Each coin depicts on its reverse a character from J.R.R. Tolkien's original book series, as portrayed by the actors featuring in the films directed by Peter Jackson. The coin set originated in New Zealand and is a rare find as the coins were never officially circulated. Bromell went on to say that "Coins are easy to collect, quite simple to look after and don't take up much space... They are a wonderful thing to accumulate." Original BBC article by Katie Waple [here](#).

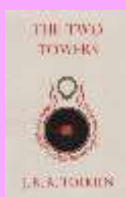
*The Lord of the Rings #1: The Fellowship of the Ring* by J.R.R. Tolkien

In ancient times the Rings of Power were crafted by the Elven-smiths, and Sauron, the Dark Lord, forged the One Ring, filling it with his own power so that he could rule all others. But the One Ring was taken from him, and though he sought it throughout Middle-earth, it remained lost to him. After many ages it fell into the hands of Bilbo Baggins, as told in *The Hobbit*. In a sleepy village in the Shire, young Frodo Baggins finds himself faced with an immense task, as his elderly cousin Bilbo entrusts the Ring to his care. Frodo must leave his home and make a perilous journey across Middle-earth to the Cracks of Doom, there to destroy the Ring and foil the Dark Lord in his evil purpose.



*The Lord of the Rings #2: The Two Towers* by J.R.R. Tolkien

Frodo and his Companions of the Ring have been beset by danger during their quest to prevent the Ruling Ring from falling into the hands of the Dark Lord by destroying it in the Cracks of Doom. They have lost the wizard, Gandalf, in a battle in the Mines of Moria. And Boromir, seduced by the power of the Ring, tried to seize it by force. While Frodo and Sam made their escape, the rest of the company was attacked by Orcs. Now they continue the journey alone down the great River Anduin—alone, that is, save for the mysterious creeping figure that follows wherever they go.



"I am beginning to learn that it is the sweet, simple things of life which are the real ones after all." – Laura Ingalls Wilder



**Wonder Woman Historia: The Amazons** by Kelly Sue DeConnick and Gene Ha

Millennia ago, Queen Hera and the goddesses of the Olympian pantheon grew greatly dissatisfied with their male counterparts...and far from their sight, they put a plan into action. A new society was born, one never before seen on Earth, capable of wondrous and terrible things...but their existence could not stay secret for long. When a despairing woman named Hippolyta crossed the Amazons' path, a series of events was set in motion that would lead to an outright war across heaven and Earth—and the creation of Earth's greatest guardian!



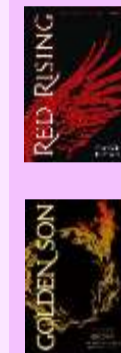
**The Ultimate Star Trek and Philosophy: The Search for Socrates** by William Irwin, Jason T Eberl and Kevin S Decker

Reunites the editors of *Star Trek and Philosophy* with *Star Trek's* finest experts for 31 new, highly logical essays. Features a complete examination of the *Star Trek* universe, from the original series to the most recent films directed by J.J. Abrams, "Star Trek" (2009) and "Star Trek Into Darkness" (2013). Introduces important concepts in philosophy through the vast array of provocative issues raised by the series, such as the ethics of the Prime Directive, Star Trek's philosophy of peace, Data and Voyager's Doctor as persons, moral relativism and the Federation's quest for liberation, the effect of alternate universes on reality and identity, the Borg as transhumanists, Federation Treconomics, "Star Trek's" secular society, and much, much more...!



**Red Rising #1: Red Rising** by Pierce Brown

Darrow is a Red, a member of the lowest caste in the color-coded society of the future. Like his fellow Reds, he works all day, believing that he and his people are making the surface of Mars liveable for future generations. Yet he spends his life willingly, knowing that his blood and sweat will one day result in a better world for his children. But Darrow and his kind have been betrayed. Soon he discovers that humanity already reached the surface generations ago. Vast cities and sprawling parks spread across the planet. Darrow—and Reds like him—are nothing more than slaves to a decadent ruling class. Inspired by a longing for justice, and driven by the memory of lost love, Darrow sacrifices everything to infiltrate the legendary Institute, a proving ground for the dominant Gold caste, where the next generation of humanity's overlords struggle for power. He will be forced to compete for his life and the very future of civilization against the best and most brutal of Society's ruling class. There, he will stop at nothing to bring down his enemies... even if it means he has to become one of them to do so.



**Red Rising #2: Golden Son** by Pierce Brown

A lamb among wolves in a cruel world, Darrow finds friendship, respect, and even love—but also the wrath of powerful rivals. To wage and win the war that will change humankind's destiny, Darrow must confront the treachery arrayed against him, overcome his all-too-human desire for retribution—and strive not for violent revolt but a hopeful rebirth. Though the road ahead is fraught with danger and deceit, Darrow must choose to follow Eo's principles of love and justice to free his people. He must live for more.



**On a Sunbeam** by Tillie Walden

Throughout the deepest reaches of space, a crew rebuilds beautiful and broken-down structures, painstakingly putting the past together. As new member Mia gets to know her team, the story flashes back to her pivotal year in boarding school, where she fell in love with a mysterious new student. Soon, though, Mia reveals her true purpose for joining their ship—to track down her long-lost love.

### A Thousand Blows Comes to Disney+



New Disney+ series *A Thousand Blows* tells a unique story about Jamaican characters in Victorian London. Set in the 1880s, the show follows notorious boxer Sugar Goodson as he navigates the dangerous world of illegal boxing after leaving his life in the Caribbean behind. Malachi Kirby and Francis Lovehall, who play the show's leads, told the BBC that their characters enact a fresh narrative of Jamaican men during the depicted time in history, focusing on resilience and the pursuit of dreams despite challenges they face. Lovehall explained, "[The show] centres a different narrative - I've never watched something that follows two Jamaican men with dreams that aren't enslaved, are free men, and are coming here with a different tempo, a different truth, and they carry that truth with integrity." The show is an emotional one as characters' journeys are filled with personal loss as they seek new lives

following a rebellion in Jamaica. *A Thousand Blows* provides a fresh take on British-Jamaican history and culture during a period that is often overlooked. The first season of *A Thousand Blows* is now available of Disney+ in the UK. **Note: This show is rated TV-MA which means it may be unsuitable for viewers under the age of 17.** Click [here](#) to read the original BBC article.

**Black and British: A Forgotten History** by David Olusoga

In *Black and British*, award-winning historian and broadcaster David Olusoga offers readers a rich and revealing exploration of the extraordinarily long relationship between the British Isles and the people of Africa. Drawing on new genetic and genealogical research, original records, expert testimony and contemporary interviews, *Black and British* reaches back to Roman Britain, the medieval imagination and Shakespeare's *Othello*. It reveals that behind the South Sea Bubble was Britain's global slave-trading empire and that much of the great industrial boom of the nineteenth century was built on American slavery. It shows that Black Britons fought at Trafalgar and in the trenches of the First World War.



### Where to Start with Jane Austen

Born 16<sup>th</sup> December 1775, this year marks what would have been Jane Austen's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday. In honour of this milestone anniversary, *The Guardian* have put together a reading guide suggesting the best reasons for reading each of Austen's novels. The original *Guardian* article by John Mullan can be found [here](#).

**The Entry Point: Pride and Prejudice** by Jane Austen

With its 'light and bright and sparkling' dialogue, its romantic denouement and its lively heroine, *Pride and Prejudice* is Jane Austen's most perennially popular novel. The love story of Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy, who misjudge, then challenge and change each other, is also a novel about the search for happiness and self-knowledge in a world of strict social rules, where a woman must marry well to survive.



**The One to Make You Cry: Persuasion** by Jane Austen

What does persuasion mean - a firm belief, or the action of persuading someone to think something else? Anne Elliot is one of Austen's quietest heroines, but also one of the strongest and the most open to change. She lives at the time of the Napoleonic wars, a time of accident, adventure, the making of new fortunes and alliances. A woman of no importance, she manoeuvres in her restricted circumstances as her long-time love Captain Wentworth did in the wars. Even though she is nearly thirty, well past the sell-by bloom of youth, Austen makes her win out for herself and for others like herself, in a regenerated society.



**The One to Drop into Dinner Party Conversation: Sanditon (and Other Stories)** by Jane Austen

Written in the last months of Austen's life, *Sanditon* features a glorious cast of hypochondriacs and speculators in a newly established seaside resort, and shows the author contemplating a changing society with scepticism and amusement. It tells the story of Charlotte Heywood, who is transported by a chance accident from her rural hometown to Sanditon, where she is exposed to the intrigues and dalliances of a small town - and encounters the intriguingly handsome Sidney Parker.



**The One That Might Surprise You: Sense and Sensibility** by Jane Austen

Marianne Dashwood wears her heart on her sleeve, and when she falls in love with the dashing but unsuitable John Willoughby, she ignores her sister Elinor's warning that her impulsive behaviour leaves her open to gossip and innuendo. Meanwhile Elinor, always sensitive to social convention, is struggling to conceal her own romantic disappointment, even from those closest to her. Through their parallel experience of love—and its threatened loss—the sisters learn that sense must mix with sensibility if they are to find personal happiness in a society where status and money govern the rules of love.



**HappyHead #2: Dead Happy** by Josh Silver

Friends. Welcome to Elmhallow. Seb, along with a select group of participants, finds himself washed up on an isolated island called Elmhallow, under the guardianship of a mysterious couple. As the experiment steps up another level, Seb is forced to team up with Eleanor once more. But where is Finn? And what does *HappyHead* have in store for them next?



**Blue Flag: Volume 3** by Kaito

Toma gets seriously injured diving in front of a car to save Taichi, leaving Taichi racked with guilt over not just getting his best friend hurt, but also stealing his last chance at making the summer baseball tournament. Guilty and angry, the two boys clash in an emotionally raw argument. Futaba, worried about both of them, invites Taichi out in an attempt to cheer him up.



**Blue Flag: Volume 4** by Kaito

Toma's older brother, Seiya, asks Taichi to find out why Toma doesn't want to go to college. On the day of Toma's release from the hospital, Taichi still hasn't found a way to broach the subject with Toma. Meanwhile, Futaba discovers Taichi's birthday is coming up, and she decides to invite the group to a fireworks festival so they can all celebrate.

**The Girl Who Drank the Moon** by Kelly Barnhill

Every year, the people of the Protectorate leave a baby as an offering to the witch who lives in the forest. They hope this sacrifice will keep her from terrorizing their town. But the witch in the Forest, Xan, is in fact a good witch who shares her home with a wise Swamp Monster and a Perfectly Tiny Dragon. Xan rescues the children and delivers them to welcoming families on the other side of the forest, nourishing the babies with starlight on the journey. One year, Xan accidentally feeds a baby moonlight instead of starlight, filling the ordinary child with extraordinary magic. Xan decides she must raise this girl, whom she calls Luna, as her own. As Luna's thirteenth birthday approaches, her magic begins to emerge - with dangerous consequences. Meanwhile, a young man from the Protectorate is determined to free his people by killing the witch. Deadly birds with uncertain intentions flock nearby. A volcano, quiet for centuries, rumbles just beneath the earth's surface. And the woman with the Tiger's heart is on the prowl...



**Something Wicked This Way Comes** by Ray Bradbury

For those who still dream and remember, for those yet to experience the hypnotic power of its dark poetry, step inside. The show is about to begin. Cooger & Dark's Pandemonium Shadow Show has come to Green Town, Illinois, to destroy every life touched by its strange and sinister mystery. The carnival rolls in sometime after midnight, ushering in Halloween a week early. A calliope's shrill siren song beckons to all with a seductive promise of dreams and youth regained. Two boys will discover the secret of its smoke, mazes, and mirrors; two friends who will soon know all too well the heavy cost of wishes...and the stuff of nightmares.

### Books of My Life: Ben Okri



Poet and novelist Ben Okri recently shared the books that have shaped his life and career with *The Guardian*. Some of his favourite books growing up were the plays of Henrik Ibsen and Anton Chekhov. He would transplant the characters and imagine them as Nigerian (Okri was born in Nigeria). The book that changed him as a teenager was George Orwell's *Animal Farm* as it was "the first book that broke [his] heart". Plato's *Symposium* made Okri want to be a writer, and James Joyce and Virginia Woolf are two authors that shaped his writing style. The book he rereads, and owns many editions of, is F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. Okri is currently reading Jane Austen's *Emma*. Read the original *Guardian* article [here](#).

**My Favourite Book Growing Up: Hedda Gabler** by Henrik Ibsen

*Hedda* is an intelligent and ambitious woman, trapped in the stifling environment of a bourgeois 19th-century marriage. When writer Ellert Loevborg, an old flame returns to Hedda's life with a masterpiece that might threaten her husband's career, Hedda decides to take drastic and fatal action.



**The Book That Changed Me as a Teenager: Animal Farm** by George Orwell

A farm is taken over by its overworked, mistreated animals. With flaming idealism and stirring slogans, they set out to create a paradise of progress, justice, and equality. Thus, the stage is set for one of the most telling satirical fables ever penned—a razor-edged fairy tale for grown-ups that records the evolution from revolution against tyranny to a totalitarianism just as terrible.



**The Book That Made Me Want to be a Writer: The Symposium** by Plato

In the course of a lively drinking party, a group of Athenian intellectuals exchange views on eros, or desire. From their conversation emerges a series of subtle reflections on gender roles, sex in society and the sublimation of basic human instincts. The discussion culminates in a radical challenge to conventional views by Plato's mentor, Socrates, who advocates transcendence through spiritual love. The *Symposium* is a deft interweaving of different viewpoints and ideas about the nature of love—as a response to beauty, a cosmic force, a motive for social action and as a means of ethical education.

**The Writer Who Changed My Mind: To the Lighthouse** by Virginia Woolf

The serene and maternal Mrs. Ramsay, the tragic yet absurd Mr. Ramsay, and their children and assorted guests are on holiday on the Isle of Skye. From the seemingly trivial postponement of a visit to a nearby lighthouse, Woolf constructs a remarkable, moving examination of the complex tensions and allegiances of family life and the conflict between men and women. As time winds its way through their lives, the Ramsays face, alone and simultaneously, the greatest of human challenges and its greatest triumph—the human capacity for change.

**The Book I Came Back To: Don Quixote** by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra

Don Quixote has become so entranced by reading chivalric romances that he determines to become a knight-errant himself. In the company of his faithful squire, Sancho Panza, his exploits blossom in all sorts of wonderful ways. While Quixote's fancy often leads him astray—he tilts at windmills, imagining them to be giants—Sancho acquires cunning and a certain sagacity. Sane madman and wise fool, they roam the world together, and together they have haunted readers' imaginations for nearly four hundred years.



**The Book I Reread: The Great Gatsby** by F. Scott Fitzgerald

First published in 1925, this quintessential novel of the Jazz Age has been acclaimed by generations of readers. The story of the mysteriously wealthy Jay Gatsby and his love for the beautiful Daisy Buchanan, of lavish parties on Long Island at a time when The New York Times noted "gin was the national drink and sex the national obsession," it is an exquisitely crafted tale of America in the 1920s.



**The Book I Discovered Later in Life: A Tale of Two Cities** by Charles Dickens

*A Tale of Two Cities* is Charles Dickens's great historical novel, set against the violent upheaval of the French Revolution. The most famous and perhaps the most popular of his works, it compresses an event of immense complexity to the scale of a family history, with a cast of characters that includes a bloodthirsty ogre and an antihero as believably flawed as any in modern fiction.



**The Book I Am Currently Reading: Emma** by Jane Austen

Although described by Jane Austen as a character "whom no one but myself will much like", the irrepressible Emma Woodhouse is one of her most beloved heroines. Clever, rich and beautiful, she sees no need for marriage, but loves interfering in the romantic lives of others, until her matchmaking plans unravel, with consequences that she never expected. Jane Austen's novel of youthful exuberance and gradual self-knowledge is a brilliant, sparkling comic masterpiece.