One of the most famous and celebrated Victorian coming-of-age novels, David Copperfield charts the adventures and vicissitudes of its eponymous hero's life, from the misery of his childhood after his mother's marriage to the tyrannical Mr Murdstone, through to his first steps as a writer and his search for love and happiness. Along the way he encounters a vast array of gloriously vivid characters - many of whom number among the most memorable in literature - such as the eccentric aunt Betsey Trotwood, the eloquent debtor Wilkins Micawber and the obsequious villain Uriah Heep. Replete with comedy and tragedy in equal measure, and cited by Dickens as his favourite child**, this partially autobiographical work provides tantalizing glimpses into Dickens's own childhood and remains one of the most enduringly popular novels in the English language.

"The power of [Dickens] is so amazing that the reader at once becomes his captive." - William Makepeace Thackeray

**Author Bio

Considered by many to be the greatest novelist of the English language, Charles John Huffam Dickens was born February 7, 1812, in Portsmouth, England. Some of his most popular works include Oliver Twist, David Copperfield, Nicholas Nickleby, A Tale of Two Cities and Great Expectations.
Paradise Lost
by John Milton

Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven."
Blind, broken by the death of his wife and bitterly disappointed by the
Restoration, Milton dictated his sweeping biblical epic Paradise Lost to a
series of helpers. While the struggle between God and Satan rages across the
cosmos, the human tragedy of Adam and Eve - the temptation and fall - is
movingly depicted in language unsurpassed in its musicality and beauty.
A staggering and audacious undertaking - seeking, in Milton's words, to
"justify the ways of God to men" - Paradise Lost has been revered since its
initial publication, inspiring writers from Mary Shelley to William Wordsworth,
and is widely considered to be the greatest poem ever written in the English
language.

"Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart;
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free" - William Wordsworth

Author Bio

John Milton (1608-74) is best known for his epic masterpiece Paradise Lost
and for his commitment to the republican cause. He wrote the crucial
justifications for the trial and execution of King Charles I and was Secretary for
Foreign Tongues, thus becoming the voice of the Commonwealth. His
influence on English literature can only be rivalled by Shakespeare.
Tender is the Night
by F. Scott Fitzgerald

While holidaying at a villa on the French Riviera, Dick and Nicole Diver, a wealthy American couple, meet the young film star Rosemary Hoyt. Her arrival causes a stir in their social circle and exposes the cracks in their fragile marriage. As their relationship unravels, glimpses of their troubled past emerge, and a series of disturbing events unfolds. Peopled by an unforgettable cast of aristocrats and high-fliers, Tender Is the Night is at once a scathing critique of the materialism and hypocrisy of the Roaring Twenties and a poignant and sensitive account of personal tragedy and disillusionment.

He was better than he knew, for in fact and in the literary sense he invented a generation.” - The New York Times
"Gatsby was a tour de force, but this is a confession of faith." - Fitzgerald comment on Tender is the Night

Author Bio

Considered one of the finest American writers of the twentieth century, F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940) was the author of various novels and short stories chronicling life in the US during the Roaring Twenties.
The friends Becky Sharp and Amelia Sedley leave Miss Pinkerton's school together, ready to forge their paths in the tawdry and cut-throat world of the early nineteenth century. The scheming, brilliant and ruthless orphan Becky is better equipped than any to scale the heights of Regency society. Amelia, however, is sweet, quiet and passive, and longs for nothing more than the love of the self-obsessed and raffish soldier George Osborne. Amidst the machinations and jostling for wealth and status, Captain William Dobbin, with his hidden love for Amelia, stands alone as a steadfast, selfless and dutiful man.
Woven into the climactic events of the Napoleonic Wars, and set against a backdrop of gaudy elegance and merciless personal ambition, Vanity Fair is an epic and sweeping satire, and a landmark of English literature.

Author Bio

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-63) was an English novelist best known for *Vanity Fair*, a satirical portrait of English society that is considered one of the crowning achievements of Victorian literature.
A Voyage to the Moon
by Cyrano de Bergerac, translated by Andrew Brown

In A Voyage to the Moon, the narrator, after an attempt to reach the moon using vials of dewdrops, finally finds himself in what appears to be the Garden of Eden, surrounded by Biblical patriarchs. After falling foul of the prophet Elijah, he soon meets a race who walk on all fours and whose nourishment comes in the form of vapour.

Published posthumously and intended mainly as a satire of its age, this imaginative and entertaining tale - here presented in a lively translation by Andrew Brown - is now considered one of the pioneering works of science fiction.

A firecracker of a book, sparking off in all directions." - TLS

Author Bio

Savinien de Cyrano de Bergerac (1619-55) - best known for Edmond de Rostand's depiction of him in his famous play - was a major writer of the French libertine movement, and the author of plays such as The Death of Agrippina and The Pedant Tricks and many other innovative works of prose and poetry. ANDREW BROWN is an author, a lawyer, and a volunteer police officer who lives in Cape Town, South Africa. He won the Sunday Times Fiction Prize for Coldsleep Lullaby, and his work has also been shortlisted for the Alan Paton Award and the Commonwealth Writers' Prize (Africa Region). He is married and has three children.
White Fang
by Jack London, illustrated by Ian Beck

Part wolf, part dog, White Fang learns to survive in the freezing wilderness. As well as being forced to confront the harsh realities of nature, the young cub experiences the cruelties of humans - but when his fortunes change, will love and civilization set him on the path to happiness?

Set in the Yukon territory of Canada during the gold rush of the 1890s, White Fang is a rollicking tale of adventure which has enchanted generations of readers since its first appearance in 1906 and become a timeless children's classic.

Author Bio

Jack London was an American author who wrote The Call of the Wild and other books. A pioneer in the then-burgeoning world of commercial magazine fiction, he was one of the first Americans to make a lucrative career exclusively from writing. Ian Beck has illustrated Digory the Dragon Slayer and Winston the Book Wolf by Marni McGee. He lives with his family in London, England.
Kidnapped
by Robert Louis Stevenson

After the death of his father, the seventeen-year-old orphan David Balfour discovers the existence of an uncle, and sets off in search of him. His uncle Ebenzer is far from welcoming, however, and David, after barely escaping with his life, finds himself kidnapped and bound for America, where he is to be sold into slavery. Yet when the hot-headed Jacobite rebel Alan Breck Stewart comes on board, David soon finds himself thrust into a perilous adventure, and fleeing for his life across the Scottish Highlands.

Inspired by real historical events, Kidnapped is an unforgettable and action-packed adventure story that has delighted and captivated readers for more than a century.

[Kidnapped] compelled me from the first words and has not let go to this day. . . It implanted an image of how a novel should work. I think a lot of my ambitions as a writer, and many of my own persisting themes, originate there: friendship, courage, the need to go out into the world and make your fate. I reread it every couple of years, and get more interested in it, not less." - Hilary Mantel

Author Bio

Robert Louis Stevenson was born in Edinburgh in 1850, the only son of an engineer, Thomas Stevenson. Despite a lifetime of poor health, Stevenson was a keen traveller, and his first book An Inland Voyage (1878) recounted a canoe tour of France and Belgium. In 1880, he married an American divorcee, Fanny Osbourne, and there followed Stevenson's most productive period, in which he wrote, amongst other books, Treasure Island (1883), The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, and Kidnapped (both 1886). In 1888, Stevenson left Britain in search of a more salubrious climate, settling in Samoa, where he died in 1894.
The Little Prince
by Antoine de Saint-Exupery, illustrated by Antoine de Saint-Exupery, translated by Gregory Norminton

Having crash-landed in the Sahara desert, a pilot comes across a young boy who introduces himself as the Little Prince and tells him the story of how he grew up on a tiny asteroid before travelling across the galaxies and coming to Earth. His encounters and discoveries, seen through childlike, innocent eyes, give rise to candid reflections on life and human nature. First published in 1943 and featuring the author’s own watercolour illustrations, The Little Prince has since become a classic philosophical fable for young and old, as well as a global publishing phenomenon, selling tens of millions of copies worldwide and being translated into dozens of languages.

The Little Prince is one of a kind and this new edition is true to the atmospherically factual style of the fantasy." - The School Librarian Journal
"A saint in short, true to his name, flying up here at the right hand of God . . . And he was not the only one. He was merely the one who put it into words most beautifully and anointed himself before the altar of the right stuff." - Tom Wolfe

Author Bio

Antoine de Saint-Exupery (1900-44) was a French writer and aviator, who disappeared on a reconnaissance mission during the Second World War. The author of several novels about flying, he is best remembered today for the children’s book The Little Prince.
Mugby Junction
by Charles Dickens

Published in the Christmas edition of Charles Dickens's magazine All the Year Round, Mugby Junction is the spellbinding result of a literary collaboration between some of the leading writers of the day, and contains four unforgettable contributions by Dickens himself, including 'The Signalman' - a chilling tale of a spectral apparition whose appearances forebode fatal accidents on the line.

The eight stories included in this volume range from the hilarious to the hair-raising, and not only remain as fresh today as when they first appeared in 1866, but stand as a testament to the versatility and exuberance of Dickens's unrivalled genius.

Includes: 'Barbox Brothers', 'Barbox Brothers and Co.', 'Main Line: The Boy at Mugby' and 'No. 1 Branch Line: The Signalman' by Charles Dickens, 'No. 2 Branch Line: The Engine Driver' by Andrew Halliday, 'No. 3 Branch Line: The Compensation House' by Charles Collins, 'No. 4 Branch Line: The Travelling Post-Office' by Hesba Stretton and 'No. 5 Branch Line: The Engineer' by Amelia B. Edwards

Author Bio

Considered by many to be the greatest novelist of the English language, Charles John Huffam Dickens was born February 7, 1812, in Portsmouth, England. Some of his most popular works include Oliver Twist, David Copperfield, Nicholas Nickleby, A Tale of Two Cities and Great Expectations.
Guignol's Band
by Louis-Ferdinand Celine, translated by Bernard Frechtman and Jack Nile

Celine's third novel, first published in 1944 but dealing with events taking place during the First World War, Guignol's Band follows the narrator's meanderings through London after he has been demobilized due to a war injury. The result is a frank, uncompromising, yet grotesquely funny portrayal of the English capital's seedy underworld, peopled by prostitutes, pimps and schemers.

Often considered to be Celine's funniest work, Guignol's Band showcases its author's idiosyncratic style at its finest, frantically blending slang, invective, onomatopoeia with literary language, and bridging the gap between gritty realism and absurd mysticism.

"The most blackly humorous and disenchanted voice in all of French literature."
- London Review of Books

"If the French demand bad behaviour from their novelists, they got more than they bargained for with the antisemitic Celine. But they were also getting the prose stylist of the century."
- The Guardian

Author Bio

Louis-Ferdinand Celine was one of the most controversial writers of the twentieth century, a writer who mixed realism with imaginative fantasy, and like his contemporary Henry Miller, an iconoclast who shocked and frightened many of his readers. Celine, the pen name of L.F. Destouches, was a doctor in poor Parisian districts whose experience of the misery and chicanery of the poor gave him a jaundiced view of humanity that he poured into prose, that is comic, as well as often frightening and obscene.
Jude the Obscure  
by Thomas Hardy

Jude Fawley, an intelligent and sensitive young Wessex schoolboy, dreams of studying at the famous university in Christminster, Hardy's fictional representation of Oxford. He embarks on years of private study, but his plans are thrown into disarray when he is deceived into marriage and then deserted by the duplicitous Arabella Donn. Jude, still hoping to earn a place at the university, travels to Christminster to work as a stonemason. Here, he falls for his freethinking cousin Sue, but with the pair living together out of wedlock, the pressures of poverty and social disapproval soon threaten to ruin their lives.

Full of passion, anger, fatalism and tragedy, Jude the Obscure attacks the inequalities and hypocrisies inherent within Victorian society’s attitudes towards marriage, social mobility, education and the role of women. The novel, which caused an immediate uproar on its publication, is now widely considered to be one of the great works of the nineteenth century, and the apotheosis of Hardy’s fiction.

There is no other novelist alive with the breadth of sympathy, the knowledge or the power for the creation of Jude.” - H.G. Wells

Author Bio

Thomas Hardy was an English novelist, short story writer, and poet of the naturalist movement, though he saw himself as a poet and wrote novels mainly for financial gain only. The bulk of his work, set mainly in the semi-imaginary county of Wessex, delineates characters struggling against their passions and circumstances.
Manon Lescaut
by Antoine Francois Prevost

When the young nobleman Des Grieux lays eyes on the beautiful and charming Manon Lescaut, he immediately falls in love with her, and they elope to Paris, incurring the wrath of his family and forfeiting his inheritance. However, he struggles to satisfy her taste for luxury, frittering away the little he has left, and his domestic bliss finally disintegrates when he finds out that Manon has betrayed him for a rich lover.

Although causing scandal on its initial publication in 1731 and subsequently being banned, Manon Lescaut proved very popular with eighteenth-century readers, and remains one of literature’s finest and most evocative depictions of obsessive love.

Author Bio

Antoine Francois Prevost (1697-1763) was a Benedictine monk who left the order, moved to England and the Netherlands and became an author under the name Abbe Prevost. Although best known for his novel Manon Lescaut, he wrote many other volumes of fiction, history and travel writing, as well as translating the works of Samuel Richardson, among others.
After her parents die of cholera in India, Mary Lennox is sent to live with her uncle in his gloomy house in Yorkshire, where she leads a lonely and neglected life, with nothing to do apart from exploring her surroundings. One day she discovers a walled garden which has been locked up, and becomes determined to enter it and find out its secret and the source of the mysterious crying sound that can be heard nearby. A powerful tale of regeneration and personal transformation, The Secret Garden has become one of the most popular children's classics, and has continued to delight generations of young readers.

Growing up in a poor New York neighbourhood, Cedric Errol appears to be a normal American boy. However, as he discovers when he meets his grandfather, the Earl of Dorincourt, he is actually Lord Fauntleroy, and is expected to become an English gentleman. Whisked away from his mother and his friends, Cedric must find a way to convince his grandfather to send him home and show him that there is more to nobility than titles and wealth. First published in 1886, Little Lord Fauntleroy was Frances Hodgson Burnett's first children's novel, and was hugely popular in its day. It contains many of the themes that would recur in her masterpiece The Secret Garden, and remains a witty and charming tale of a transatlantic clash of cultures.

When Sara Crewe is brought from India to attend Miss Minchin's boarding school for girls in London, she arrives looking rather like a princess, with trunks full of the finest clothes. Yet, despite having her own pony and carriage, private room and personal maid, Sara is never a snob to her fellow pupils. Instead, she is kind, thoughtful and (...)
The adventures of Mowgli, the young man raised by wolves in the jungles of Central India, and his friends Baloo the bear, Bagheera the panther and Kaa the python, as they face the arch villain Shere Khan the tiger, have become so popular that they have achieved an almost mythical status throughout the world. They were collected by Kipling in The Jungle Book and its sequel, The Second Jungle Book, which also contain other stories set in India which prominently feature animals, such as the well-known 'Rikki-Tikki-Tavi', which describes the struggles of a mongoose against venomous cobras. Here presented with brand-new illustrations by Ian Beck, these hugely popular tales, inspired by ancient fables and Kipling's own experiences in India, form a vivid account of the relationship between humans and nature, and will continue to inspire readers young and old. Originally told by Rudyard Kipling to his children at bedtime, The Just-So Stories, a compendium of witty tales imagines how animals came to be as they are now. Discover how the massive whale got a tiny throat by swallowing a mariner, how the lazy camel got a hump so that he had no excuse not to work, and why the leopard's spots were painted on. Kipling's imagination runs wild as he creates charming origin stories that still enchant and delight children to this day. This edition features Kipling's iconic original illustrations. Kimball O'Hara, the orphaned son of an Irish soldier, spends his childhood on the bustling streets of Lahore, begging and running errands in order to survive. One day he meets an old Tibetan lama, and he decides to accompany him on his travels across the Indian subcontinent. After falling into the hands of his (...)
Thoughts
by Giacomo Leopardi, translated by J.G. Nichols

Admired for the poetical heights of his Canti, the gentle wit of his prose dialogues and the soul-searching questionings of his Zibaldone (Notebooks), Leopardi was also an acute social commentator and a sharp dissector of the human mind. 
Thoughts - a collection of philosophical and critical observations put together for publication by Leopardi himself shortly before his death in 1837 - shows a more light-hearted side to Leopardi's personality, and offers both those who are familiar with and those who are new to his works a fresh insight into the thought processes and the worldview of Italy's last great polymath.

The miraculous thing about his poetry is that he simply takes the weight out of language, to the point that it resembles moonlight." - Italo Calvino

Author Bio

Giacomo Leopardi was born in Recanati, a small town in the Italian Marches, in 1798. Renowned in his youth as a classical scholar, he suffered from poor health all his life and never experienced happiness in love. He visited Rome, Bologna, and Florence, but never fully broke away from his family, until in his last years he finally moved with a friend to Naples, where he died in 1837. He is the author of Zibaldone

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On Sale: Nov 5/19
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