

Uplifting Books



These uplifting books are part of a national collection of feel-good fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. Everyone needs a little mood boosting now and then, so why not give one a try?



Astley, Neil. Essential Poems From the Staying Alive Trilogy.

These essential poems are all about being human, being alive and staying alive: about love and loss; fear and longing; hurt and wonder; war and death; grief and suffering; birth, growing up and family; time, ageing and mortality; memory, self and identity; faith, hope and belief; acceptance of inadequacy and making do - all of human life in a hundred highly individual, universal poems.

Babalola, Bolu. Love in Colour : Mythical Tales From Around the World, Retold.

Bolu Babalola finds the most beautiful love stories from history and mythology and rewrites them with incredible new detail and vivacity in this debut collection. Focusing on the magical folktales of West Africa, Babalola also reimagines iconic Greek myths, ancient legends from the Middle East, and stories from countries that no longer exist in our world.

Bivald, Katarina, and Alice Menzies. The Readers of Broken Wheel Recommend.

Sara has never left Sweden but at the age of 28 she decides it's time. She cashes in her savings, packs a suitcase full of books and sets off for Broken Wheel, Iowa, a town where she knows nobody. Sara quickly realises that Broken Wheel is in desperate need of some adventure, a dose of self-help and perhaps a little romance, too. In short, this is a town in need of a bookshop. With a little help from the locals, Sara sets up Broken Wheel's first bookstore. The shop might be a little quirky but then again, so is Sara. And as Broken Wheel's story begins to take shape, there are some surprises in store for Sara too...

Bowen, James. A Street Cat Named Bob.

When James Bowen found an injured, ginger street cat curled up in the hallway of his sheltered accommodation, he had no idea just how much his life was about to change. James was living hand to mouth on the streets of London and the last thing he needed was a pet. Yet James couldn't resist helping the strikingly intelligent tom cat, whom he quickly christened Bob. He slowly nursed Bob back to health and then sent the cat on his way, imagining he would never see him again. But Bob had other ideas. Soon the two were inseparable and their diverse, comic and occasionally dangerous adventures would transform both their lives, slowly healing the scars of each other's troubled pasts.

Boyd, Hilary. Thursdays in the Park.

What do you do if you've been married to a man for half your life and out of nowhere he leaves your bed - permanently? When this happens to Jeanie, she's furious and determined to confront George, her husband of thirty years. Is he in love with someone else? What did she do wrong? He won't tell her. The brightest day of her week is Thursday, the day Jeanie takes her granddaughter to the park. There, one day, she meets Ray, kind, easy to talk to, and gorgeous - he is everything George isn't. But does she have the courage, while facing opposition from all sides, to turn her life upside down for another shot at love?

Bryson, Bill. The Road to Little Dribbling : More Notes From a Small Island.

Twenty years ago, Bill Bryson went on a trip around Britain to celebrate the green and kindly island that had become his adopted country. To mark the anniversary, Bryson makes a brand-new journey round Britain to see what has changed. Following (but not too closely) a route he dubs the Bryson Line, from Bognor Regis to Cape Wrath, by way of places that many people never get to at all, Bryson sets out to rediscover the wondrously beautiful, magnificently eccentric, endearingly unique country that he thought he knew but doesn't altogether recognize any more. Yet, despite Britain's occasional failings and more or less eternal bewilderments, Bill Bryson is still pleased to call our rainy island home. And not just because of the cream teas, a noble history, and an extra day off at Christmas.

Cannon, Joanna. Three Things About Elsie.

84-year-old Florence has fallen in her flat at Cherry Tree Home for the Elderly. As she waits to be rescued, she considers the charming new resident who looks exactly like a man she once knew - a man who died sixty years ago. His arrival has stirred distant memories she and Elsie thought they'd laid to rest. Lying prone in the front room, Florence wonders if a terrible secret from her past is about to come to light ...

De Waal, Kit. Six Foot Six (Quick Reads).

It's an exciting day for Timothy Flowers. It's the third of November, and it's Friday, and it's his twenty-first birthday. When Timothy walks to his usual street corner to see his favourite special bus, he meets Charlie. Charlie is a builder who is desperate for Timothy's help because Timothy is very tall, six feet six inches. Timothy has never had a job before - or no work that he's kept for more than a day. But when Timothy and Charlie have to collect money from a local thug, things don't exactly go according to plan...

Dickins, Mary. Happiness FM.

These playful and irreverent poems will take you on a joyful journey that explores the complexities and contradictions of 21st century life. They may not solve your problems or mend your relationships but they will make you smile and see them in a different light.

Fforde, Jasper. The Eyre Affair.

There is another 1985, somewhere in the could-have-been, where the Crimean war still rages, dodos are regenerated in home-cloning kits and everyone is deeply disappointed by the ending of 'Jane Eyre'. In this world there are no jet-liners or computers, but there are policemen who can travel across time, a Welsh republic, a great interest in all things literary - and a woman called Thursday Next.

Graham, Laurie. Life According to Lubka.

Pittsburgh was too small for Beryl Wexler. Barely out of high school, she changed her name to Buzz, set off for London and made it to the top of the music PR business, looking after the coolest groups on the planet. Now, at her grand old age of 42, Buzz has been sidelined into World Music, and her life is about to change. On tour with the Gorni Grannies, a Bulgarian group of singers led by the feisty Lubka, Buzz faces quite different challenges from her usual tantrum-throwing celebs. Fuelled by shots of home-brewed Plum Raika, Buzz and Lubka address life's ups and downs, until the world tilts and a different future beckons.

Haddon, Mark. A Spot of Bother.

At fifty-seven, George is settling down to a comfortable retirement. Then Katie, his tempestuous daughter, announces that she is getting remarried, to Ray. Her mother Jean is a bit put out by all the arguing the wedding has occasioned, which gets in the way of her late-life affair with one of her husband's former colleagues. And the tidy life Jamie has created crumbles when he fails to invite his lover, Tony, to the dreaded nuptials. Unnoticed in the uproar, George discovers a sinister lesion on his hip, and quietly begins to lose his mind. This is a deeply moving portrait of a family who fall apart - and come together.

Henry, Veronica. A Sea Change. Quick Read Series.

Jenna is known as The Ice Cream Girl. She doesn't mind the name one bit. After all, it's a happy name, and there are far worse jobs than selling ice creams on Everdene beach. Craig spends as much time as he can at the beach hut in Everdene he rents with a few of his mates. As a policeman, it is a restful change from his daily life, and he's surfing mad. One weekend he's down there on his own when he notices a girl on the beach. He's young, free and single and she catches his eye. But on this particular summer weekend, both Jenna and Craig's lives are about to change ...

Hislop, Victoria. The Island.

On the brink of a life-changing decision, Alexis Fielding longs to find out about her mother's past. But Sofia has never spoken of it. All she admits to is growing up in a small Cretan village before moving to London. When Alexis decides to visit Crete, however, Sofia gives her daughter a letter to take to an old friend, and promises that through her she will learn more. Arriving in Plaka, Alexis is astonished to see that it lies a stone's throw from the tiny, deserted island of Spinalonga - Greece's former leper colony. Then she finds Fotini, and at last hears the story that Sofia has buried all her life: the tale of her great-grandmother Eleni and her daughters and a family rent by tragedy, war and passion.

Hislop, Victoria. The Thread.

Thessaloniki, 1917. As Dimitri Komninos is born, a devastating fire sweeps through the thriving Greek city where Christians, Jews and Muslims live side by side. Five years later, Katerina Sarafoglou's home in Asia Minor is destroyed by the Turkish army. Losing her mother in the chaos, she flees across the sea to an unknown destination in Greece. Soon her life will become entwined with Dimitri's, and with the story of the city itself, as war, fear and persecution begin to divide its people. Thessaloniki, 2007. A young Anglo-Greek hears his grandparents' life story for the first time and realises he has a decision to make. For many decades, they have looked after the memories and treasures of the people who were forced to leave. Should he become their next custodian and make this city his home?

Hodgkinson, Nicola. Life with the Lid Off.

When single mother Nicola Hodgkinson decided to follow her rural dream, it involved transporting her young family - three rowdy children, her beloved horse, a wilful donkey and two single-minded bantams - to a ramshackle cottage in an idyllic seaside village. The family soon attracts the horrified attention of nosey neighbours, and annoys motorists by hogging country lanes with a horse-drawn caravan. But amid the chaos, the magic of family life shines through, peppered with humour, love, moments of high drama, and nostalgia.

Jonasson, Jonas, and Roy Bradbury, tr. The Hundred-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out of the Window and Disappeared.

Sitting quietly in his room in an old people's home, Allan Karlsson is waiting for a party he doesn't want to begin. His one-hundredth birthday party to be precise. The Mayor will be there. The press will be there. But, as it turns out, Allan will not ...Escaping (in his slippers) through his bedroom window, into the flowerbed, Allan makes his getaway. And so begins his picaresque and unlikely journey involving criminals, several murders, a suitcase full of cash, and incompetent police. As his escapades unfold, Allan's earlier life is revealed. A life in which - remarkably - he played a key role behind the scenes in some of the momentous events of the twentieth century.

Jones, Terry. Trouble on the Heath: A Comedy of Russian Gangsters, Town Planners and a Dog Called Nigel (Quick Reads).

When Malcolm Thomas objects to a horrid new building that will block his favourite view, he has no idea of the troubles ahead. Suddenly he is all mixed up with depressed town planners, violent gangsters and a kidnapped concert pianist. Malcolm starts to realize that he would have been far better off keeping quiet when he finds himself upside down with a gun in his mouth . . .

Joyce, Rachel. The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry.

When Harold Fry nips out one morning to post a letter, leaving his wife hovering upstairs, he has no idea that he is about to walk from one end of the country to the other. He has no hiking boots or map, let alone a compass, waterproof or mobile phone. All he knows is that he must keep walking. To save someone else's life.

Kawaguchi, Toshikazu. Before the Coffee Gets Cold.

In a small back alley in Tokyo, there is a café which has been serving carefully brewed coffee for more than one hundred years. But this coffee shop offers its customers a unique experience: the chance to travel back in time. We meet four visitors, each of whom is hoping to make use of the café's time-travelling offer, in order to: confront the man who left them, receive a letter from their husband whose memory has been taken by early onset Alzheimer's, to see their sister one last time, and to meet the daughter they never got the chance to know. But the journey into the past does not come without risks: customers must sit in a particular seat, they cannot leave the café, and finally, they must return to the present before the coffee gets cold . . .

Lelord, François. Hector and the Search for Happiness.Hector's Journeys.

Can we learn how to be happy? Hector is a successful young psychiatrist. He's very good at treating patients in real need of his help. But many people he sees have no health problems: they're just deeply dissatisfied with their lives. Hector can't do much for them, and it's beginning to depress him. So when a patient tells him he looks in need of a holiday, Hector decides to set off round the world to find out what makes people everywhere happy (and sad), and whether there is such a thing as the secret of true happiness.

Lewycka, Marina. Various Pets Alive and Dead.

For twenty years Doro and Marcus lived in a commune, convinced lentils and free love would change the world. They didn't. What they did do was give their children a terror of radicalism, dirt, cooking rotas and poverty. Their daughter Clara wants nothing less conformist than her own, clean bathroom. Their son Serge hides the awkward fact that he's a banker earning loadsamoney. So when Doro and Marcus spring a surprise on their kids - just as the world is rocked in ways they always wished for - the family is forced to confront some thorny truths about themselves...

Mabey, Richard. Turned Out Nice Again.

This is an exploration of our preoccupation with the weather. Richard Mabey weaves together science, art and memoirs (including his own) to show the weather's impact on our culture and national psyche. He rambles through the myths of Golden Summers and our persistent state of denial about the winter; the Impressionists' love affair with London smog, seasonal affective disorder (SAD - do we all get it?) and the mysteries of storm migraines; herrings falling like hail in Norfolk and Saharan dust reddening south-coast cars; moonbows, dog-suns, fog-mirages and Constable's clouds; the fact that English has more words for rain than Inuit has for snow; the curious eccentricity of country clothing and the mathematical behaviour of umbrella sales.

Macfarlane, Robert, and Jackie Morris. The Lost Spells.

The Lost Spells introduces a beautiful new set of natural spell-poems and artworks. Each "spell" conjures an animal, bird, tree or flower -- from Barn Owl to Red Fox, Grey Seal to Silver Birch, Jay to Jackdaw -- with which we share our lives and landscapes. Moving, joyful and funny, The Lost Spells above all celebrates a sense of wonder, bearing witness to nature's power to amaze, console and bring joy.

Mackesy, Charlie. The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse.

A book of hope for uncertain times. Enter the world of Charlie's four unlikely friends, discover their story and their most important life lessons.

McGough, Roger. That Awkward Age.

'From laundrettes to contact lenses, Paul McCartney's trousers to plane crashes, McGough guides us through the pitfalls and idiosyncrasies of our illogical and unexciting lives, and finds the humour and drama hidden within. This new collection has a bonus section: in a series of wonderfully funny poems, responding to Carol Ann Duffy's "The World's Wife" McGough gives voice to a number of forgotten and long-suffering male figures: Lord Godiva, Mr Sappho, Mr Blyton, etc

Munro, Alice. Too Much Happiness.

These are beguiling, provocative stories about manipulative men and the women who outwit them, about destructive marriages and curdled friendships, about mothers and sons, about moments which change or haunt a life. Alice Munro's stories surprise and delight, turning lives into art, expanding our world and shedding light on the strange workings of the human heart.

Nicholls, David. Us.

Douglas Petersen understands his wife's need to 'rediscover herself' now that their son is leaving home. He just thought they'd be doing their rediscovering together. So when Connie announces that she will be leaving, too, he resolves to make their last family holiday into the trip of a lifetime: one that will draw the three of them closer, and win the respect of his son. One that will make Connie fall in love with him all over again. The hotels are booked, the tickets bought, the itinerary planned and printed. What could possibly go wrong?

Oatway, Charlie. Tackling Life: The True Story of a Footballing Bad Lad Made Good (Quick Reads).

Charlie Oatway has been a fighter all his life. He's expelled from school and his family are in and out of prison more times than you can count. However, Charlie has a talent for football and makes it as a pro. Then he picks one fight too many and ends up in prison. Will life ever be the same again? Will Charlie get back into the game he loves? Tackling Life is the true and hilarious story of a footballing bad lad made good.

Owens, Delia. Where the Crowdads Sing.

For years, rumors of the 'Marsh Girl' have haunted Barkley Cove, a quiet town on the North Carolina coast. So in late 1969, when handsome Chase Andrews is found dead, the locals immediately suspect Kya Clark, the so-called Marsh Girl. Part murder-mystery, part coming-of-age novel, its evocation of the marshland and its inhabitants is as unforgettable as Kya herself. A story of loneliness, survival and love that's as engrossing as it is moving.

Page, Libby. The Lido.

Meet Rosemary, 86, and Kate, 26: dreamers, campaigners, outdoor swimmers...Rosemary has lived in Brixton all her life, but everything she knows is changing. Only the local lido, where she swims every day, remains a constant reminder of the past and her beloved husband George. Kate's on the bottom rung of her career as a local journalist, and is determined to make something of it. So when the lido is threatened with closure, Kate knows this story could be her chance to shine. But for Rosemary, it could be the end of everything. Together they are determined to make a stand, and to prove that the pool is more than just a place to swim - it is the heart of the community.

Pratchett, Terry. Soul Music. A Discworld Novel [16].

Being sixteen is always difficult, even more so when there's a Death in the family. After all, it's hard to grow up normally when Grandfather rides a white horse and wields a scythe. Especially if he decides to take a well-earned moment to uncover the meaning of life and discover himself in the process, so that you have to take over the family business, and everyone mistakes you for the Tooth Fairy. And especially when you have to face the new and addictive music that has entered Discworld. It's lawless. It changes people. It's got a beat and you can dance to it. It's called Music With Rocks In. And it won't fade away.

Sedaris, David. Calypso.

Sedaris sets his formidable powers of observation toward middle age and mortality. Make no mistake: these stories are very, very funny - it's a book that can make you laugh 'til you snort, the way only family can. But much of the comedy here is born out of that vertiginous moment when your own body betrays you and you realize that the story of your life is made up of more past than future.

Shaffer, Mary Ann, and Annie Barrows. The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society.

It's 1946 and author Juliet Ashton can't think what to write next. Out of the blue, she receives a letter from Dawsey Adams of Guernsey - by chance, he's acquired a book that once belonged to her - and, spurred on by their mutual love of reading, they begin a correspondence. When Dawsey reveals that he is a member of the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society, her curiosity is piqued and it's not long before she begins to hear from other members.

Simonson, Helen. Major Pettigrew's Last Stand.

Major Ernest Pettigrew (Ret'd) is not interested in the frivolity of the modern world. But when his brother's death sparks an unexpected friendship with Mrs. Ali, the widowed village shopkeeper of Pakistani descent, the Major is drawn out of his regimented world and forced to confront the realities of life in the twenty-first century. Drawn together by a shared love of Literature and the loss of their respective spouses, the Major and Mrs. Ali soon find their friendship on the cusp of blossoming into something more. But although the Major was actually born in Lahore, and Mrs. Ali was born in Cambridge, village society insists on embracing him as the quintessential local and her as a permanent foreigner. The Major has always taken special pride in the village, but how will the chaotic recent events affect his relationship with the place he calls home?

Simsion, Graeme. The Rosie Project.

Love isn't an exact science - but no one told Don Tillman. A thirty-nine-year-old geneticist, Don's never had a second date. So he devises the Wife Project, a scientific test to find the perfect partner. Enter Rosie - 'the world's most incompatible woman' - throwing Don's safe, ordered life into chaos. But what is this unsettling, alien emotion he's feeling?

Smith, Dodie. I Capture the Castle.

This is the diary of Cassandra Mortmain, which tells of her extraordinary family and their crumbling castle home. Cassandra's father was once a famous writer, but now he mainly reads detective novels while his family slide into genteel poverty. Her sister Rose is bored and beautiful, and desperate to marry riches. Their step-mother Topaz has habit of striding through the countryside wearing only her wellington boots. But all their lives will be soon be transformed by the arrival of new neighbours from America, and Cassandra finds herself falling in love...

Stockett, Kathryn. The Help.

Enter a vanished and unjust world: Jackson, Mississippi, 1962. Where black maids raise white children, but aren't trusted not to steal the silver...There's Aibileen, raising her seventeenth white child and nursing the hurt caused by her own son's tragic death; Minny, whose cooking is nearly as sassy as her tongue; and white Miss Skeeter, home from College, who wants to know why her beloved maid has disappeared. Skeeter, Aibileen and Minny. No one

would believe they'd be friends; fewer still would tolerate it. But as each woman finds the courage to cross boundaries, they come to depend and rely upon one another. Each is in a search of a truth. And together they have an extraordinary story to tell...

Vickers, Salley. Miss Garnet's Angel.

Julia Garnet is a teacher. Just retired, she is left a legacy which she uses by leaving her orderly life and going to live - in winter - in an apartment in Venice. Its beauty, its secret corners and treasures, and its people overwhelm a lifetime of reserve and caution. Above all, she's touched by the all-prevalent spirit of the Angel, Raphael. The ancient tale of Tobias, who travels to Media unaware he is accompanied by the Archangel Raphael, unfolds alongside Julia Garnet's contemporary journey. The two stories interweave with parents and landladies, restorers and priests, American tourists and ancient travellers abounding.

Winn, Raynor. The Salt Path.

Just days after Raynor learns that Moth, her husband of 32 years, is terminally ill, their home is taken away and they lose their livelihood. With nothing left and little time, they make the brave and impulsive decision to walk the 630 miles of the sea-swept South West Coast Path, from Somerset to Dorset, via Devon and Cornwall. Carrying only the essentials for survival on their backs, they live wild in the ancient, weathered landscape of cliffs, sea and sky. Yet through every step, every encounter and every test along the way, their walk becomes a remarkable journey. The Salt Path is an honest and life-affirming true story of coming to terms with grief and the healing power of the natural world. Ultimately, it is a portrayal of home, and how it can be lost, rebuilt and rediscovered in the most unexpected ways.

All of the books listed above are available from the library.

The books can be found on the library shelves and can be borrowed for four weeks at a time. You can also ring/email to borrow them and we can post them out to you.



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