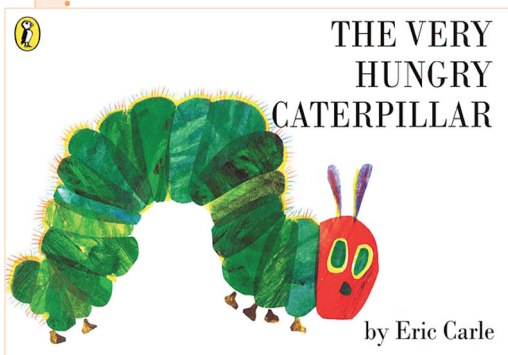


reviews: news

TOP 10 ALL-TIME FAVOURITE BOOKS

Full of hungry insects, cheeky animals, odd creatures and adventures galore, here are our readers' top 10 favourite books for the young – and young at heart!



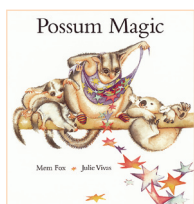
1 THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR by Eric Carle *First published: 1969*

Born in New York in 1929, Eric Carle was only six when he moved to Germany. After graduating from a prestigious art school in Stuttgart, he returned to the US where his most treasured childhood memories took place. In 1952, he moved to New York and became a graphic designer for *The New York Times*.

Seventeen years later, creating collage illustrations out of hand-painted papers, Eric blessed us with *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*.

When asked about his opting to base books on little creatures, he wrote: *When I was a small boy, my father would take me on walks across meadows and through woods. He would lift a stone or peel back the bark of a tree and show me the living things that scurried about. He'd tell me about the life cycles of this or that small creature and then he would carefully put the little creature back into its home. I think in my books I honour my father by writing about small living things. And in a way I recapture those happy times.*

Translated into over 45 languages, this hungry insect not only ate its way through the book, but also into the hearts of kids around the world, selling over 25 million copies. (Penguin, \$16.95)

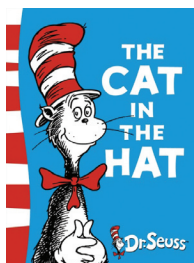


2 POSSUM MAGIC by Mem Fox *First published: 1983*

In her early 30s Mem Fox studied children's

literature at Flinders University in Melbourne where she wrote the first draft of *Possum Magic*. After five years and nine rejections, Mem was asked to cut the story by two-thirds, make it more lyrical and adopt an Australian theme by changing the original characters from mice to possums. The book was finally published in 1983.

Possum Magic has won several awards and is now available in a variety of formats, including board book, hardback, paperback and an audio tape that's read by Mem. (Scholastic, \$29.99)



3 THE CAT IN THE HAT by Dr Seuss *First published: 1957*

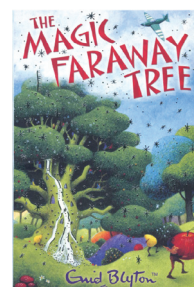
Crediting his mother as the inspiration for the rhymes he made so popular, Dr Seuss

(1904–1991) remembered a happy childhood in the US when his mother used to soothe him and his sister to sleep with rhymes.

Considered to be the most defining book of Dr Seuss' career, his 15th publication, *The Cat In The Hat*, was created in response to a book by Rudolf Flesch and an article by John Hersey, both entitled *Why Johnny Can't Read*. Both publications held the belief that children's books were boring. To add to that, Dr Seuss' publishers, Houghton Mifflin and Random House, challenged him to write and illustrate a

beginner book for kids using only 220 words.

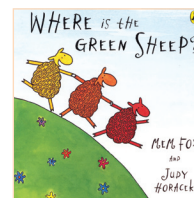
Throughout his career, Dr Seuss received two Academy awards, two Emmy awards, a Peabody award and a Pulitzer Prize. Although most of his life was spent writing children's books, he never had any children of his own. (HarperCollins, \$9.99)



4 THE MAGIC FARAWAY TREE by Enid Blyton *First published: 1943*

In her autobiography *The Story Of My Life*, Enid Mary Blyton (1897–1968) reveals her love of tales from an early

age: *I liked making up stories better than I liked doing anything else.* And we're so glad she had such aspirations! In her second book in *The Faraway Tree* series, *The Magic Faraway Tree*, it was easy to fall in love with Jo, Bessie, Fanny and Dick, and want to join them on their adventures. In modern reprints of the series, the characters' names have been changed to Joe, Beth, Frannie and Rick for a variety of reasons, including removing the sexual connotations! (Hardie Grant Egmont, \$14.95)

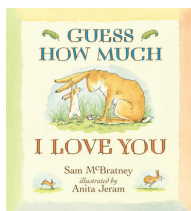


5 WHERE IS THE GREEN SHEEP? by Mem Fox *First published: 2004*

Mem Fox came up

with the idea of a children's book based on a green sheep when she found an image of one while browsing through the website of illustrator Judy Horacek, who illustrated her parent's book *Reading Magic*. They decided

Mem would write the book and Judy would illustrate it. Books by Mem hold a timeless quality. Here she explains what she has learnt from her 21 years of being an author of children's books: *I've come to appreciate that the books young children like best fall broadly into two categories: either short books with a pattern, based on rhyme, rhythm or repetition; or short books with a really good story. They don't like nostalgia books. They don't like first-person books. And they don't like long books. Stories or patterns: that's it.* (Penguin, \$19.95)

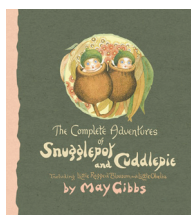


6 GUESS HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU

by Sam McBratney

First published: 1994

'The response to this book just takes my breath away,' says Northern Ireland native Sam McBratney on his very popular *Guess How Much I Love You*. He adds, 'I was talking to my agent about the text after I completed it, and she said, "Sam, this book can do nothing but good." I didn't really understand what she meant at the time, but now I know that she was thinking about the opportunities it would create for wee ones and big ones to come together for a few precious moments.' And that it did, with over 15 million copies sold worldwide of this sweet story about measurements of love. (Walker Books, \$27.95)



7 THE COMPLETE ADVENTURES OF SNUGGLEPOT AND CUDDLEPIE

by May Gibbs

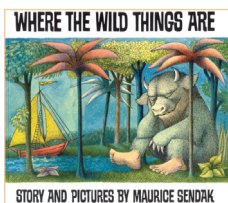
First published: 1949

Born in 1877, May made the move from England to Australia when she was just four. Then after studying art in London she returned in 1913 to Sydney to become the

first professionally trained children's book illustrator to work full time in Australia.

That same year she created the gumnut babies, and in an interview for *Woman's World* (November 1 1924) said: *When I stayed with my cousins in the bush, I [told] stories about the little people I imagined to be there. They always took the form of sturdy, commonsense little persons living the same practical, busy lives as ants and other intelligent bush creatures. Never did I find the elegant star-browed fairies that my Old World books showed me. The bush suggested always things grotesque, mirthful, cunning and quaint.*

Loved by generations of children, this tale about the adventures of two gumnut half-brothers has remained in print since it was first published in 1918. May continued to work well into her 80s, and passed away in 1969. (HarperCollins, \$39.99)

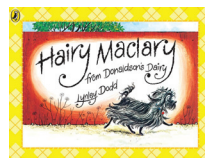


8 WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

by Maurice Sendak

First published: 1963

Raised in the US in a family of storytellers, Maurice Sendak won the Caldecott Medal in 1964 for *Where The Wild Things Are*. In an interview for the *Los Angeles Times*, he speaks about Sunday afternoons, when his 'hideous, beastly relatives' – who were also the inspiration for the characters of his book – came around for dinner: *They would lean over you with their foul breath and squeeze you and pinch you, and their eyes [were] blood-stained and their teeth [were] big and yellow... At first the book was to be called Where the Wild Horses Are, but when it became apparent to my editor I could not draw horses, she kindly changed the title to Wild Things, with the idea that I could at the very least draw "a thing"! So I drew my relatives. They're all dead now, so I can tell people.* (Random House, \$39.95)



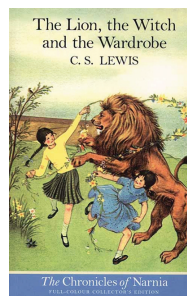
9 HAIRY MACLARY FROM DONALDSON'S DAIRY

by Lynley Dodd

First published: 1983

Hairy Maclary from Donaldson's Dairy was the first in New Zealand-born Lynley Dodd's very successful series. Frequently asked where she gets her ideas, she writes: *I keep an ideas book, which is a motley collection of bits; lists of words, scraps of drawing, newspaper cuttings, snatches of storyline and verse.* She adds, *One scrap in the book, a rough sketch of a small, hairy dog, under which I wrote, One morning at nine, on the way to the park, went Hairy Maclary from Donaldson's Dairy, went on to become very useful.*

And in regards to whether Hairy Maclary is a real dog, Lynley says he is a result of her imagination, with attributes taken from the many different terriers she's met. (ABC Books, \$12.95)



10 THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE

by CS Lewis

First published: 1950

Known to many readers of his popular novels as CS

Lewis, Clive Staples Lewis lived from 1898 to 1963. Writing in a range of genres, from science fiction and children's literature to Christian apologetics, he is best known for his fantasy series *The Chronicles Of Narnia*.

How could anyone not adore the loveable characters and their exciting adventures, and especially *The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe* – the first book in the series? The works of CS Lewis have been translated into more than 30 languages and sold millions of copies. (HarperCollins, \$17.99)