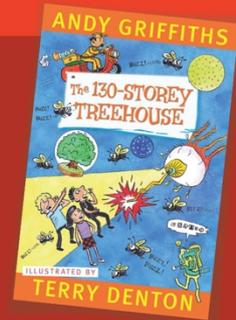




MS **Readathon**

**BOOKS WE LOVE**  
**BY ANDY, TERRY AND JILL**  
**(creators of the Treehouse series)**



Hi, my name is Andy. I write books about an ever-expanding treehouse with my friends Terry and Jill. (I write the words, Terry draws the pictures and Jill does the editing). If you're like most of our readers you're probably wondering what books we read when WE were growing up (given that we weren't able to read Treehouse books because we hadn't got around to writing them).

Well, not surprisingly, I guess, we enjoyed books with lots of pictures, books that took us on unpredictable adventures into fantastic worlds, books about animals, books of poems and rhymes, and, of course, silly books that made us laugh. We continue to draw massive inspiration—both directly and indirectly—from all these books and encourage you to explore them for yourself. (The next book in the Treehouse series, *The 130-Storey Treehouse* will be published on October 20, so you've got plenty of time to catch up with these before then!)

### **The Adventures of the Wishing Chair by Enid Blyton**

The wishing chair is a magical flying chair owned by two intrepid children, Mollie and Peter. Whenever the chair grows its wings Mollie and Peter and their pixie friend Chinky jump in and fly off to their next adventure. What I love most about Blyton's stories is how fast-paced, action-packed and extravagantly imaginative they are. In just three chapters alone there's a cloud castle, trickery, attempted theft, an angry pixie, a "nasty polite" little goblin, a witch who lives in a spinning house with green smoke coming out of its chimney ("Witch Snippit! Witch Snippit! Stop your house and let us in!"), an overly curious clock with legs ("For every tick it gave it walked a step along the mantelpiece"), invisibility paint, disobedient children, fighting and feasting. In a way, the imaginative experience of riding in a flying wishing chair was—and

is—a perfect metaphor for the feeling of reading a book: you can go anywhere and anything can happen.

### **The Adventures of Pinocchio by Carlos Collodi**

I adored—and continue to adore—this giant out-of-control fairy tale about a wooden puppet's quest to become a real boy. It's vivid, surprising, funny, harrowing and utterly unafraid to explore the dark places. Translated into 300 languages with over 80 million copies sold in recent years it must be doing SOMETHING right and if you haven't read it you should do so immediately! From the blurb to the Wilder publications edition: "This is not the gentle world of Walt Disney, but a darker, richer world in which the good guy doesn't win just by showing up."

### **The Adventures of Tin-Tin by Hergé**

One of Terry's favourites growing up, these graphic novels detail the adventures of Tin Tin, a young Belgian reporter and his dog, Snowy. The eleven official books feature clean, expressive drawings with plots that straddle a wide range of genres, including generous helpings of slapstick humour.

### **Alice's Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking Glass by Lewis Carroll**

One of my earliest memories is of sitting in a garden on a picnic rug on a sunny afternoon while my mother read me Alice in Wonderland. I'm not sure what I made of this mysterious and inspired nonsense but I do know I was already under the spell of Alice—and the power of books—at a very young age. The true beauty of this book is that you can come to it at any age and extract new pleasure and new meaning from it. If you're an adult I recommend Martin Gardner's The Annotated Alice which contains the text of both books with detailed and incredibly informative annotations throughout exploring all the philosophical and mathematical paradoxes that will lead you to a new appreciation of the wonder of Wonderland.

### **Asterix by Albert Uderzo**

One of the best-loved characters in French popular culture, the small-statured Asterix is a warrior from Roman-occupied ancient Gaul, who together with his best friend Obelix and dog Dogmatix – Idéfix in the French original – takes pleasure in outwitting Roman legionnaires.

Fortunately for Asterix, Obelix fell into a cauldron of magic potion as a child, making him invincibly strong. Each comic starts in the same way, before Asterix and his friends go on increasingly far-flung adventures – in Asterix in Britain, he introduces tea to the ancient Britons; in Asterix and Cleopatra, Obelix knocks off the Sphinx's nose.

### **A Bear Called Paddington by Michael Bond**

Paddington is a loveable, rather accident-prone character and his mishaps and adventures are endlessly amusing and strangely comforting. One of Jill's favourites.

### **The Borrowers by Mary Norton**

A modern classic, the Borrowers are tiny people who live under the floorboards and “borrow” what they need from humans (who are giants to them). They are resourceful and charming and the character names are wonderful too—Pod, Homily and Arietty Clock.

### **The Cat in the Hat by Dr Seuss**

Even though this book was first published in 1957 I'm pretty much convinced Dr Seuss built a time machine and travelled forward to the year 2019 and stole the idea for this book from 'The Splat in the Hat' in The 117-Storey Treehouse. It's pretty good, but not as good as the original.

### **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory by Roald Dahl**

As close to perfection as a children's book will ever come. And the 1971 movie is a perfect complement to it. So perfect, in fact, that the film and the book are merged together in my mind. I especially like the first few pages where Charlie introduces himself and his family in a series of short sentences and illustrations. I always wished that the whole book could have continued like that. When we started working on the Treehouse books I got my chance ...

### **Charlotte's Web by E. B. White**

A wonderful book. Funny, sad and wise—and there's a whole barn full of talking animals, which makes this one of Jill's very special favourite books of all time.

### **Finn Family Moomintroll by Tove Jansson**

Jill loved the Moomintrolls, both reading about them and drawing them. The stories are surreal and funny and, as a result of reading them, Jill spent a lot of time imagining herself floating around on her own little cloud, just like the Moomintrolls. I didn't read the Moomintroll books until I was an adult but I instantly fell in love with their gentle loopy humour.

### **Frog and Toad Are Friends, Frog and Toad Together, Frog and Toad All Year, Days with Frog and Toad by Arnold Lobel**

Frog and Toad are two of the most endearing characters ever invented and these amphibious friends make learning to read a pleasure. My favourite story is 'Alone' from 'Days with Frog and Toad'. Toad, puzzled and worried by his friend Frog's desire to be alone, ends up crashing the island where Frog has gone. But, rather than be annoyed at Toad's intrusion, Frog reassures Toad that their friendship is fine. It finishes with, "Frog and Toad stayed on the island all afternoon. They ate wet sandwiches without iced tea. They were two close friends sitting alone together." Alone together. Perfect.

### **Grimm's Fairy Tales by The Brothers Grimm**

A rich store of recorded folklore have become embedded in our collective psyche. I think the blurb to the Vintage edition describes them perfectly: "Once upon a time there was a book, and inside the book were princes who had been turned into frogs or ferocious beasts, princesses so beautiful they astonished the sun, faithful sweethearts and evil stepmothers, giants taller than mountains and a boy no bigger than your thumb, houses made of bread and cake and birds made of gold - in fact, all manner of mysterious, monstrous and magical things. The book is in your hands. Read it happily ever after."

### **Harold and the Purple Crayon by Crockett Johnson**

Harold lives in a world that he is drawing. A beautifully simple and dreamlike book of unlimited invention. Why purple? In Crockett Johnson's words: "Because purple is the color of adventure."

### **How Tom Beat Captain Najork and his Hired Sportsmen by Russell Hoban**

This nonsensical, quintessentially English picture book is about how Tom, who likes fooling around with things like mud and sticks and on high-up things that wobble and teeter, single-handedly outplays a whole team of very unsporting professionals. (It's not a spoiler because it's in the title. It's how he does it that's the story.)

### **The Incredible Adventures of Professor Branestawm by Norman Hunter**

Professor Branestawm is the classic absent-minded genius, always at work creating bizarre inventions. He has 5 pairs of glasses—a pair for reading, a pair for writing, a pair for when he's outdoors, a pair for looking at you over the top of and a pair for looking for the other 4 pairs, which he is always losing. Jill loved this when she was growing up—I came to it relatively late and was floored by how funny it was.

### **James and the Giant Peach by Roald Dahl**

This was the first of Roald Dahl's books for children and contains one of the best openings to any story ever:

“Until he was four years old, James Henry Trotter had a happy life. He lived peacefully with his mother and father in a beautiful house beside the sea. There were always plenty of other children for him to play with, and there was the sandy beach for him to run about on, and the ocean to paddle in. It was the perfect life for a small boy. Then, one day, James's mother and father went to London to do some shopping, and there a terrible thing happened. Both of them suddenly got eaten up (in full daylight, mind you, and on a crowded street) by an enormous angry rhinoceros which had escaped from the London Zoo. Now this, as you can well imagine, was a rather nasty experience for two such gentle parents. But in the long run it was far nastier for James than it was for them.”

### **The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe and The Voyage of the Dawn Treader by C.S. Lewis**

Jill read all the books in the Narnia series a couple of times, but these two were her favourites—magical, exciting adventures with talking animals. (She's always loved a talking animal story.) NB: You may discover a mysterious wardrobe in The 91-Storey Treehouse that is a portal to a wacky world called 'Barnarnia' but any resemblance to Narnia is purely coincidental, I swear.

### **The Magic Faraway Tree by Enid Blyton**

Alongside The Adventures of the Wishing Chair, this was one of my favourite Enid Blyton series. Many readers have asked me where I got the idea to write about a crazy, endlessly expanding treehouse ... well, I'm pretty sure this book had something to do with it.

### **The Magic Pudding by Norman Lindsay**

"Children would rather read about about food and fighting than fairies," Norman Lindsay famously bet his friend Bertram Stevens, and The Magic Pudding is the result. A book about, well, food and fighting and a bad-tempered magic pudding that no matter how much you eat, always reforms itself. Its owners, Bill Barnacle the sailor and Sam Sawnoff the penguin—along with their friend Bunyip Bluegum the koala—are continually defending it against being stolen by the pudding thieves Patrick the possum and Watkin the wombat ... which is where all the fighting comes in. Mad, bad and wonderfully incomprehensible, this book celebrated its 100th birthday in 2018 and shows no signs of going out of print any time soon.

### **Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes**

We all loved nursery rhymes and returned to them over and over. We didn't know it at the time, of course, but according to neuroscientist and reading expert, Maryanne Wolf, we were doing our young brains a great service because reading or listening to nursery rhymes sharpens a child's awareness of the sounds within words and will help them with the difficult task of learning to read. (Jill distinctly remembers learning—to her surprise—that Gloucester rhymes with Foster.)

### **Mr Gum and the Biscuit Billionaire by Andy Stanton**

Okay, we didn't read this one as kids because it was only written in 2014. A cross between Roald Dahl and Monty Python, this is the 2nd anarchic book in the Mr Gum series and we love it because it introduces one of our all-time favourite children's book characters, Alan Taylor the biscuit billionaire, so-called because he's a very rich gingerbread man with electric muscles, who has a lot to learn about friendship.

### **One fish two fish red fish blue fish by Dr Seuss**

This is my favourite of all the Dr Seuss books. Pure visual and verbal nonsense, unburdened by a heavy moral or any other purpose other than to have some serious fun with words and pictures. It's like he started writing a book about all the different kinds of fish there are, got bored about twelve pages in and just started filling the book with lots of crazy little verses that bear almost no relationship to one another other than to prove his idea that "these things are fun and fun is good!"

### **Pippi Longstocking by Astrid Lindgren**

Pippi is one of the best children's book characters ever created. She is unique. She is super strong and completely independent. "Why, she could lift a whole horse if she wanted to! And she wanted to." Her adventures are so funny and freewheeling. I think for a child she provides perfect escapism.

### **The Story of Ferdinand by Munro Leaf**

This is one of Jill's earliest reading memories. She loved how Ferdinand was so content being himself and can still remember how funny she found it when Ferdinand sat on a bee and then "ran around puffing and snorting, butting and pawing the ground as if he were crazy".

### **Struwellpeter by Heinrich Hoffman**

As a young child I was both terrified—and wildly amused—by my grandmother's copy of an 1845 German rhyming picture book called *Struwwelpeter* (Shock-headed Peter). It contained a variety of over-the-top cautionary tales about the various gruesome fates that awaited children who disobeyed their parents. Whether the children's "crimes" are poor personal hygiene, not eating their soup, playing with matches or just sucking their thumbs, their wildly exaggerated punishments are swift, shocking and often fatal. The sing-song quality of the rhyme undercuts the lurid horror of the illustrations and makes the book a weird combination of frightening and funny that I could not get enough of. It taught me that you NEVER know what's going to happen when you turn the page of a book.

### **The House at Pooh Corner by A.A.Milne**

One of my earliest and most enduring loves. These gentle, funny and entertaining stories are ideal read-alouds that will entertain the whole family. The magical illustrations of E.H. Shepard are inseparable from the text and, as a child, I spent almost as much time lost in the map of the 100-acre wood as I did in the stories.

### **Treasure Island**

This is one of Terry's particular favourites. A timeless tale of pirates, lost treasure maps, mutiny and derring-do. (Captain Woodenhead might not be as terrifying as Long John Silver, but you can see everything Terry learned about pirates on full display in The 26-Storey Treehouse.)

### **Uncle by J.P. Martin**

Uncle is a rich elephant who wears a purple dressing gown, lives in an enormous many-roomed castle with his helpers, including the Old Monkey, Cloutman, Gubbins and the One-Armed Badger. He is engaged in an endless war with his enemies, the Badfort crowd, including Beaver Hateman, Sigismund Hateman, Nailrod Hateman, Filljug Hateman, Jellytussle, Hootman and Hitmouse. If it sounds completely mad that's because it absolutely is. Pure inspired genius.