



# FOKL Best reads 2023

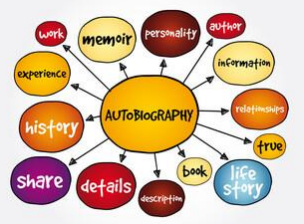


## Adult Fiction

<p><b>Sylvia Vetta</b> <b>Current of Death</b> (Fiction)</p>	<p>Probably the first crime novel set in Kennington, thinly disguised as 'Thames Reach'. A gripping read with a good protagonist and some interesting characters. The Thames also stars. I hope for more.</p>
<p><b>Julie Anderson</b> <b>Opera</b> (Fiction)</p>	<p>The third novel in the Cassandra Fortune trilogy of mysteries, these are all great reading but to my mind this is the best as we find out about Cassie's back story. The author is an ex-senior civil servant and her insight into the corridors of power is fascinating.</p>
<p><b>Elly Griffiths</b> <b>Dr Ruth Galloway Mysteries</b> (Fiction)</p>	<p>Set on the Norfolk coast, Dr Ruth Galloway is a forensic archeologist based at the University of Norfolk and gets dragged into police investigations to assist DCI Nelson.</p> <p>The series of books can be read independently, but the characters and their relationships develop throughout the various novels, so there is a benefit to reading the 16 books in order.</p> <p>Other series worth reading are :</p> <p>'The Brighton Mysteries' – set in 1950's with DI Edgar Stephens and Magician Max Mephisto solving crimes.</p> <p>Harbinder Kaur series – Set in current times with DS Kaur as a Sikh woman detective.</p>
<p><b>Justine Gilbert</b> <b>Daisy Chain</b> (Fiction)</p>	<p>Justine has an American relation who had an affair with Franklin D Roosevelt. She researched her life and the result is Daisy Chain – a novel that explores the president's private life. It also illuminates the suffering he experienced because of the damage done to him by Polio.</p>
<p><b>Rory Clements*</b> <b>Nucleus</b> (Fiction) *Has won Crime Writers Association Historical Dagger.</p>	<p>Set at the outbreak of WWII, sleuth Tom Wilde comes to Cambridge to solve a crime. Good escapist historical fiction.</p>
<p><b>Rory Clements*</b> <b>John Shakespeare Series</b> (Fiction)</p>	<p>John Shakespeare series set in late Tudor times.</p>
<p><b>Rachel Joyce</b> <b>Miss Benson's Beetle</b> (Fiction)</p>	<p>Miss Benson is going to the other side of the world to find a golden beetle. Her companion is Enid Pretty. They are polar opposites and the book explores their unlikely friendship and their adventures.</p>

<p><b>Jennifer Johnston</b>  <b>How many miles to Babylon</b>  (Fiction)</p>	<p>A sad and tragic short story written by a woman about two friends who both loved horses – they lived in Ireland and met up again on Flanders field in WWI. Unforgettable.</p>
<p><b>Harriet Beecher Stowe</b>  <b>Uncle Tom’s Cabin</b>  (Fiction)</p>	<p>Rereading Uncle Tom’s Cabin again I found the true horror of slavery, along with a very, very moving record of why the author wrote the book at the time she did. Heart breaking.</p>
<p><b>Claire Keegan</b>  <b>Foster/Small things like these.</b>  (Fiction)</p>	<p>Only recently discovered this author. Short books set in Ireland. Unputdownable. Gave me hope in our new world.</p>
<p><b>Peter James</b>  <b>DS Roy Grace Series</b>  (Fiction)</p>	<p>There were several of these ‘who-done-its’ on our library’s shelves – surprised not to have found them before. Long books with short chapters, multi stranded plots and likeable main characters. Written in pleasing easy-reading prose. Ideal books for insomniacs.</p>
<p><b>Val McDermid</b>  <b>Still Life</b>  (Fiction)</p>	<p>Another in the Karen Pirie series. If you enjoy ‘detective’ stories - with the usual Val McDermid modern jargon – you will enjoy this.</p>
<p><b>Nora Roberts</b>  <b>Black Rose/Blue Dahlia</b>  (Fiction)</p>	<p>Very good gardening descriptions of the plants. Very easy to read.</p>
<p><b>M.C.Beaton</b>  <b>Agatha Raisin</b>  (Fiction)</p>	<p>Even though these are murder mysteries, they are gentle village life stories that follow the same theme. Agatha uses her intuition to solve crimes and the police seem inept. She has many foibles because she lives a reinvented existence having had an impoverished childhood and now is rich.</p>
<p><b>Stephen King</b>  <b>Fairytale</b>  (Fiction)</p>	<p>I know it’s not high-brow or ‘literary’, but it’s such a fantastic and compelling story, drawing the reader along with twists on traditional stories that turn shocking and horrific.</p>
<p><b>Janice Hallett</b>  <b>The Appeal</b>  (Fiction)</p>	<p>A murder mystery written as a series of emails, messages and WhatsApps. A good read if you are looking for something a bit different.</p>
<p><b>Richard Osman</b>  <b>Thursday Murder Club novels</b>  <b>(the latest two)</b>  (Fiction)</p>	<p>Great fun. The plots are a bit unbelievable, but lovely characters – almost makes one believe it would be fun to live in a ‘protected housing’ emporium.</p>
<p><b>Michael Smith</b>  <b>Ritter – no man dies twice</b>  (Fiction)</p>	<p>Set in wartime Germany – Ritter is a decent German Dectective trying to do his job amid the violence and corruption of the Gestapo dominated society.</p>
<p><b>Fredrik Backman</b>  <b>A man called Ove</b>  (Fiction)</p>	<p>This is a million – copy bestseller.  Ove is a bit of a moaner, but if you want your radiator fixing, Ove is your man! And if you need an emergency lift to the hospital, then Ove is your man again.</p>

	This book is hilariously funny, but also ineffably sad – that’s what made it a best seller. Very skillful writing.
<b>Sara Nisha Adams</b> <b>The reading list</b> (Fiction)	About a book reader and a librarian who work their way through nine books written on a scrappy piece of paper and in doing so forge a close friendship. People brought together through reading.
<b>Janice Hadlow</b> <b>The other Bennet sister</b> (Fiction)	For lovers of Pride and Prejudice this is great fun. She follows the life of Mary, the overlooked middle sister and develops her into a strong character. Plenty of good exploration of social setting.
<b>Kerry Andrew</b> <b>Skin</b> (Fiction)	Interesting, thought provoking, unexpected. Also sad. Deals with transgender issues. Set in London and Donegal.



## Adult Non-Fiction

<b>Alain Erlande-Brandenburg</b> <b>The Cathedral Builders of the Middle Ages</b> (Non-Fiction)	A marvellous little book, well-illustrated and full of fascinating details.  One of Thames & Hudson’s New Horizons’ series.
<b>Alan Rusbridger</b> <b>Play it again</b> (Non-Fiction)	In 2011 when editor of The Guardian, Alan, an amateur pianist, gives himself one year to learn and play Chopin’s Ballade in G minor – this is the sharing of his hectic year. An unputdownable read!
<b>Sheila Hancock</b> <b>Old Rage</b> (Non-Fiction)	This is described as ‘one of our best-loved actor’s powerful riposte to a world driving her mad’. It was very honest and funny in places. I particularly enjoyed listening to Shelia narrate the book in the audio version.
<b>Ann Whitehead ( Claret Press)</b> <b>Vote for Honesty and Get Democracy Done - Four simple steps to change politics</b> (Non-Fiction)	This is NOT a party political book. It asks simple questions like ‘Why do teachers, doctors and lawyers lose their jobs if they lie and yet politicians often enhance their careers through lying?’ How can that be changed?
<b>Esther Woolfson</b> <b>Corvus: A Life with Birds</b> (Non-Fiction)	About a family who had a pet rook, named Chicken and a pet magpie, called Spike. Good that she explodes the myths and superstitions about crows and ravens. They are not evil, or vermin or the bringers of bad luck. In fact they are very civilized birds, co-operative, fun-loving and highly intelligent; more than other birds.
<b>Peter Adamson</b> <b>Landmark in time: The World of the Wittenham Clumps</b> (Non-Fiction)	A series of essays by a local author relating to people, nature, history, science. Each topic has a connection with the Clumps and he finished with a brief history of Engand as seen from the Clumps.

<p><b>Rob Eastaway</b>  <b>Maths on the back of an Envelope</b>  (Non-Fiction)</p>	<p>Subtitled “Clever ways to (roughly) calculate anything”, this is an interesting guide to the disappearing art of calculating and estimating without the aid of a calculator. The author is a frequent guest on Radio 4’s “More or Less”. Don’t be put off by the subject, even if you hated maths at school!</p>
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## Younger Reader recommendations

<p><b>Roald Dahl</b>  <b>Charlie &amp; the Chocolate Factory</b>  (Fiction)</p>	<p>I enjoyed this book because it was about chocolate and I enjoy it too.</p>
<p><b>Roald Dahl</b>  <b>James and the Giant Peach</b>  (Fiction)</p>	<p>James goes into the peach and talks to the insects.</p>
<p><b>Malorie Blackman</b>  <b>Noughts and Crosses</b>  (Fiction)</p>	<p>The book was full of drama and excitement. Malorie is an amazing author and I couldn’t stop reading her books.</p>