

## Booktime/Booked Up 2009 - celebrity quotes



### Sarah Beeny

Property expert and presenter

#### **Did you have a favourite book as a child?**

My favourite book as a child was a book called the *Babapapas*. They were little animals that changed shape. I've got a lot of mine from my childhood and they are the most wonderful books and now quite a cult thing from a very long time ago, but I think they're great.

Now my favourite children's book is *Oh the Places You'll Go* by Dr Seuss. It's a fantastic book. I give it to a lot of people who have children. I particularly like the picture on the page about the waiting place.

#### **Who read it to you?**

I have to say that no-one really read to us actually, but I remember my father used to make stories up which was brilliant. I don't really remember being actually read to but I do remember that it was him who told the stories most nights. I've got a tape of some of the stories that he told and they were always slightly bizarre and imaginative. We always had knights and monkeys and castles and things.

#### **Why do you think that sharing a book with a child is so important?**

So many reasons, I think it's fantastic to have really quiet time without other distractions and it teaches them so many things. It's sort of a version of meditation to me, for children, because what they want to do is leap around all of the time and it's really good for them to just stay still and be calm.

My very favourite time of the day is reading to my children and I think it can be a very peaceful time. It's a very good step, if you want your children to sleep, it's a very good step between a bath and bed that slowly calms them down to go to sleep. But also it's a very special time because it's just the two of you. I'm slightly obsessed with trying to read to my children one at a time. I've got three and I really like to read to them one at a time. We do read to them two or three books together but then I take each one off into their own rooms and read one book to them to them separately. But I just think it's very special and a lovely time to have a cuddle. It's a very loving time to me.

Educationally there's no question that it's encouraging them to associate books with nice things. And just the mere association with a lovely time and a book is a great gift anyway. And it stretches their imaginations and some illustrators are so fantastic. Funnily enough not so much many of the ones from when I was a child, but the illustrations now are fantastic. The print quality and illustrations have come on so far.

I sometimes catch my eldest son who's five and he can't read yet, he's just learning but he reads to the younger ones. He'll look at the pictures and open the book and they will all sit down and he's reading the pictures. It's an all round positive thing.

I got really obsessed with children's books when my eldest son was around 10 months and we had a fantastic book, which is wonderful called *Mole and the Baby Bird*. I've read it to my children since they were tiny and it's just beautiful and has amazing illustrations and I read it again recently and my eldest son cried. It's such a lovely story.

#### **Do you have favourite books that you like to read with your children?**

Julia Donaldson's *Charlie Cook's Favourite Book*. *The Mole and the Baby Bird* (Marjorie Newman and Patrick Benson) is a really big favourite and *The Magic Paintbrush*, another Julia Donaldson one. And another book that is fantastic, called *The Dancing Tiger* (Malachy Doyle, Lou Fancher, and Steve Johnson). It's a lovely book. There's a wonderful one called

*Giraffes Can't Dance*, (by Giles Andreae and Guy Parker-Rees) and another one called *Pants* (Giles Andreae and Nick Sharratt) and it's fantastic and funny and children just love it.

I actually think that you can make a children's book that's wonderful for a child to read and for an adult. This is how my quest for fun children's books started because I wanted to find ones that I also wanted to read. I think all of the *Hairy Maclary* series are good, they are lovely, easy books to read. There is another book that's really great, also by Giles Andreae called *The Lion who Wanted to Love*.



**Kirsty Gallacher**  
Presenter

**Did you have a favourite book as a child?**

I loved *Wind in the Willows* and *Beatrix Potter* - anything to do with animals basically!

**Who read it to you?**

My Mum, Dad or Grandparents if they were looking after us.

**Who was your favourite children's book character when you were growing up?**

No specific character but thinking about it, I loved Mole in *Wind in the Willows*. He was so sweet and bumbling.

**Why do you think that sharing a book with a child is so important?**

Lots of reasons - it's a chance to be creative and bond with your child. It's also a great learning experience for them, it's lots of fun for both of you and it's a wonderful escapist activity!

**Do you or did you have a favourite book to read with your child or the children of friends or family?**

At the moment, I'm going through all the *Beatrix Potter* books with my son. He loves them just as much as I did.



**Lenny Henry**  
Comedian and actor

**Did you have a favourite book as a child?**

I read a lot as a child. I remember reading lots of books in my third year at school, *Great Expectations* had an effect on me as a child. As did the *Birdy* books by E.W. Hildick, and also the *Jennings* and *William* books.

**Who read it to you?**

No one read to me as a child; although I read to my daughter from the time she arrived up until she said, half way through *Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince* 'Dad...I've got this, okay?' I read voraciously and was encouraged to do so by my parents, who were too busy at work to supervise me. I will always be grateful to my Auntie Pearl for enrolling me at Dudley Library.

**Who was your favourite children's book character when you were growing up?**

I think William and the Outlaws were firm favourites, just because they got up to shenanigans. My friends and I were of a similar bent and would ride our bikes all over Dudley seeking adventure - sadly hardly ever finding any.

**Why do you think that sharing a book with a child is so important?**

I think children watch their parents very closely, and learn as much about etiquette, manners and education from them as they do from school. So it's really important that the child sees that reading and education are important to mum and dad.

**Do you or did you have a favourite book to read with your child or the children of friends or family?**

My wife and I read lots of books to our daughter; favourites of course were *Charlie and the Frost Giant* and *Charlie Queen of the Desert* - which were written by me for her...and illustrated by Chris Burke. She also loved the VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR and (I'm paraphrasing) A VERY FUNNY BOOK called Who did a Poo on my Head (real title: *The Mole Who Knew it was None of His Business*) ...it's about a mole who ...well , the title's self explanatory. I read *The Hobbit* to her and some friends one holiday, and *Harry Potter* has played a very big part in our lives until very recently.



**Zoe Wanamaker**

Actress

Some of the books Zoe read as a child were *The Little Red Train* and *Winnie the Pooh* before moving on to *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Lion*, *The Witch & The Wardrobe* and *Once in Future King* by T H White, and then on to darker stuff!



**Matthew Pinsent**

Olympic rower

**Did you have a favourite book as a child?**

My favourite book was probably one by Enid Blyton. With older siblings I was indoctrinated pretty early on into the Famous Five series! But also *Swallows and Amazons* really stands out with the kind of unbearable tension in a book that is sadly so rare to find as an adult.

**Who read it to you?**

My parents would do the reading - and often it was from a chair in which I now read to my children.

**Why do you think sharing a book with a child is so important?**

Our children love books and of course we are encouraging that. Selfishly, it's also a chance to have a ten minute uninterrupted cuddle with them which - with three year old boys especially - they wouldn't countenance under other circumstances! Whilst they love the television too, books are much more fun for us as a family.

**Do you have favourite books to read with your children?**

The *Hairy Mcclary* books are almost worn through, anything by Julia Donaldson is a hit (and fun to read) and the Mr Men books are constantly out of their box.



**Ian Hislop**

Satirist and Editor of Private Eye

**Did you have a favourite book as a child?**

*The Odyssey* (in English).

**Who read it to you?**

Miss Krailing in form 1(b) at Ardingly College. I was 8.

**Who was your favourite children's book character when you were growing up?**

Dr Doolittle.

**Why do you think that sharing a book with a child is so important?**

You can't give them anything better.

**Do you or did you have a favourite book to read with your children?**

Yes. Anything by Geraldine McCaughrean, *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* by C.S.Lewis, and *Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame, but then they started to read for themselves and they were away.



**Hermione Norris**

Actress

**Did you have a favourite book as a child?**

Yes, *James and the Giant Peach*.

**Who read it to you?**

My Sister

**Who was your favourite children's book character when you were growing up?**

*Charlie*, from *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.

**Why do you think that sharing a book with a child is so important?**

I think that it is an incredibly intimate thing to do, to embark on a journey in the mind's eye like that.

**Do you or did you have a favourite book to read with your child or the children of friends or family?**

*The Tiger Who Came To Tea*.



**Joe Swash**

Actor

**Did you have a favourite book as a child?**

*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.

**Who read it to you?**

My Nanny Fran

**Who was your favourite children's book character when you were growing up?**

Wally from *Where's Wally?* I used to love trying to find him in the pictures.

**Why do you think that sharing a book with a child is so important?**

It is really important for children to read books as with DVDs, video games and internet children can become quite anti-social but the one-on-one time spent reading with a child is special for them and important for their development.

**Do you or did you have a favourite book to read with your child or the children of friends or family?**

Harry loves when I read the story of the *3 Little Pigs* and the wolf who blows the house down.



**Beverly Naidoo**

Children's author

**Did you have a favourite book as a child?**

Yes, I had more than one favourite but my 'most-read' book was probably the Blue Fairy Book. I still have it, with its faded and stained blue cover. The stories were collected and edited by Andrew Lang and my parents bought me one soon after it was first published in 1949.

**Who read it to you?**

I'm fairly sure that I used to read this favourite by myself. But another favourite was *Le Petit Prince* (The Little Prince) by Antoine de Staint-Exupéry (published in 1946). It was my brother's copy and had very short chapters. I read it bit by bit with my very lovely French tutor, Mlle Dee Beuchat (her surname came from 'Beautiful Cat'). There are pencil markings all over the pages – mine and hers – with the English meanings of words I didn't know.

**Who was your favourite children's book character when you were growing up?**

Again, I had lots of favourite characters, but Peter Pan and Wendy were very special. They gave me hope that nasty characters like Captain Hook didn't have to get their way!

**Why do you think that sharing a book with a child is so important?**

What can be more magical and amazing than entering a world that exists in your imagination and being able to share that with someone else? Stories are the beginning of so many conversations that would never otherwise take place, where we can talk about our hopes, fears, thoughts, feelings and, sometimes, even secrets.

**Do you or did you have a favourite book to read with your child or the children of friends or family?**

When my first grandchild Evelyn Rose was born six months ago, I gave her a box of books. *Slinki Malinki* by Lynley Dodd is already one of her favourites. I also can't wait to read *The Tiger who Came to Tea* by Judith Kerr with her. That was one of my daughter Maya's many favourites when she was little. Maya is now an aunty and both of us also look forward to sharing with Evelyn a picture book that we made together, *Baba's Gift*. It will introduce her to the land of her grandparents... and, before very long, she will be making up her own stories to share with us too!



**Andrew Lancel**

Actor

**Did you have a favourite book as a child?**

My favourite book as a very little boy was *The Gingerbread Man* - there is a picture of me reading it in nursery. My own son now enjoys eating them but has yet to enjoy the book. Later I was a

big fan of Greek myths and legends. Bible stories too - particularly Joseph.

**Who read it to you?**

My Mum read me *The Gingerbread Man* but it also seems I was quite happy to sit on my own with a book from an early age.

**Who was your favourite children's book character when you were growing up?**

It would have to be Joseph from Genesis. I think I had a children's bible with cool illustrations and I'd discovered the musical by then. Funnily enough I never wanted to play him - just the narrator. I came across Holden Caulfield in my teens and of course wanted to be him.

**Why do you think that sharing a book with a child is so important?**

Books are forever. They are sacred, universal and pure and there is nothing better than sharing a story, a book with your child, or a child. Even for a minute a day.

**Do you or did you have a favourite book to read with your children?**

My 21month old son is a massive fan of *In the Night Garden* and not a day goes by without us reading *The Book of Songs of Rhymes* from it - actually hardly an hour goes by....! Like me he's enjoying his Children's Bible too.



**Jon Ronson**

Author

**Did you have a favourite book as a child?**

*The Faraway Tree* books by Enid Blyton.

**Who read it to you?**

My mother.

**Who was your favourite children's book character when you were growing up?**

I think Lucy from the Narnia books, because she was the smallest and the youngest but also the sassiest, which was how I liked to see myself.

**Why do you think that sharing a book with a child is so important?**

There is incredible closeness between the reader and the child, sharing an adventure together, filling in the blanks together.

**Do you or did you have a favourite book to read with your child or the children of friends or family?**

I really loved reading my son *Zagazoo* by Quentin Blake. Now he's eleven and discovering more grown up books like *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* and even Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse 5*.



**Mark Foster**

Olympic swimmer

**Did you have a favourite book as a child?**

Yes, it was called *Fozzie's Last Lap*, a book about not giving up by Richard Chevatt

**Who read it to you?**

My Mum.

**Who was your favourite children's book character when you were growing up?**

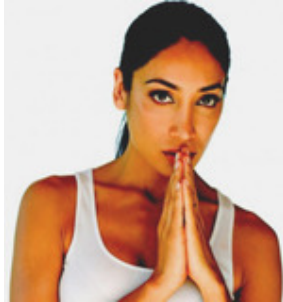
Fozzie Bear from the muppets.

**Why do you think that sharing a book with a child is so important?**

It's a great way to teach children while having fun with them and encouraging their imagination.

**Do you or did you have a favourite book to read with your child or the children of friends or family?**

My nephew Oscar (3 and a half) loves *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*.



**Sofia Hayat**

Bollywood actress and author

**Did you have a favourite book as a child?**

My favourite book as a child was *The Wizard of Oz*. I loved all the characters that Dorothy met on her way, like the tin man and the lion, and how their dreams came true, despite the wicked evil witch. I remember their quest to reach the emerald city, and when I was reading the book, I could imagine this huge sparkling green palace, made of emeralds. I wanted to dance on the yellow brick road with them and help them destroy the wicked witch! The lion

got his bravery and the tin man a real heart and Dorothy and Toto went home.

**Who read it to you?**

It was a teacher at school.

**Who was your favourite children's book character when you were growing up?**

I loved Cinderella, because she was the poor girl that everyone picked on and said was ugly. She was always picked on by the Ugly Sisters, but she never fought back; and in the end she got to go to the ball and marry the Prince. She was so loving and kind and forgiving, and got to wear a beautiful sparkling gown!

**Why do you think that sharing a book with a child is so important?**

Sharing a book with a child is so important. Not only are you bonding with that child, but you help to increase their creativity and imagination. It also encourages their reading skills.

**Do you or did you have a favourite book to read with your child or the children of friends or family?**

I love to read either *Winnie the Pooh*, or *Horrid Henry*, because my Nephew Humza loves it!



**Jeremy Strong**

Children's author

**Did you have a favourite book as a child?**

It was called *Jock of the Bushveld*, and after that I read and re-read for myself many times an anthology of African folk tales about animals called *The Long Grass Whispers*. I've always loved stories involving animals.

**Who read it to you?**

My grandmother read my big bro and myself the exciting story of Jock - the adventures of a dog and his master in the African wilderness.

**Who was your favourite children's book character when you were growing up?**

I loved William! He was a true hero! I also liked Biggles and the Famous Five.

**Why do you think that sharing a book with a child is so important?**

Firstly it's the warm bonding, the whispering and cuddling, laughing and sharing excitement together. Then it's the book itself and reading - a time of no pressure to read or to learn- just a book for sheer pleasure. (And funnily enough what a lot of reading and learning goes on without anyone realising!) Finally it shows that the adult cares for books and thinks they are important. The child will then pick this message up.

**Do you or did you have a favourite book to read with your child or the children of friends or family?**

I loved sharing *The House at Pooh Corner* with my children, but they particularly liked *Dinosaurs and All That Rubbish* and a wonderful book of simple rhymes called *Father Fox's Penny Rhymes*.



**Jill Murphy**  
Children's author

**Did you have a favourite book as a child?**

*Rupert Bear* when I was little because I loved the pictures, especially night-time ones with lanterns and exciting caves. Later on I adored all the *Narnia* books by C.S.Lewis exquisitely illustrated by Pauline Baynes.

**Who read it to you?**

My mum.

**Who was your favourite children's book character when you were growing up?**

Rupert Bear.

**Why do you think that sharing a book with a child is so important?**

Because kids still love it! Although they are surrounded by gadgets, T.V and mind numbing computer games, they still love a special time to cuddle up with you and look at the pictures together. A time when they have all your attention in the nicest possible way.

**Do you or did you have a favourite book to read with your child or the children of friends and family?**

*Peace At Last!!* I know it's one of mine but it really is fun to read aloud, especially the snoring bit. I also love *Little Rabbit FooFoo* and *Revolting Rhymes* for older kids – a joy to read aloud. I especially like *Goldilocks* which makes me laugh every time.



**Joyce Dunbar**  
Children's author.

**Did you have a favourite book as a child?**

We had very few books at home, but *Grimm's Fairy Tales* with dramatic and strange illustrations by Mervyn Peake is still very vivid in my memory.

**Who read it to you?**

My father. Most memorably and paradoxically, he read to us *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn*. Huck Finn is about a boy who runs away from his brutal, drunken father. My father was, at times, a drunken brute. So listening to the story gave me not only an insight into my own situation, but a good and positive memory of my father. I can still hear his rendering of the southern American dialect in his gruff, northern voice. He did it with great gusto.

**Who was your favourite children's book character when you were growing up?**

My favourite characters were from comics. Dennis the Menace and Beryl the Peril. I wasn't a bookish child. I'd never heard of *Winnie-the-Pooh* until I got to University. I thought him incredibly soppy - until I read the stories to my own children. It was as a parent reading to my children that I discovered so many of the children's classics for the first time.

**Why do you think that sharing a book with a child is so important?**

The few books my father read to us as children meant more to me than anything I read at school. When you read to a child you share an imaginative space which illuminates the everyday world. It is an act of love and nurturing that children never forget. Without this, I think my life would have been so much poorer.

**Do you or did you have a favourite book to read with your child or the children of friends or family?**

I adored *In the Night Kitchen* by Maurice Sendak. It is so surreal with wonderful rhythm. I read it to my children so many times that they might even have got sick of it. A friend bought me *Where the Wild Things Are* as a wedding present. What a treasure.



**Viviane Schwartz**

Children's author and illustrator

**Did you have a favourite book as a child?**

No, I loved all books, except one about a girl who never brushed her hair and got birds nesting in it, which I made into a small papier mache monster. But I had a favourite reading-out book when I was very small - a sesame street book titled *Grover and the Everything in the Whole Wide World Museum*. It really had everything in it.

**Who read it to you?**

My mother. It was her favourite reading-out book too because it reliably made me laugh more than anything else.

**Who was your favourite children's book character when you were growing up?**

Momo, in the book of the same name by Michael Ende. She saves the world from the Grey Men who steal time. Actually, every character in that book taught me something important for life, and it still was a great adventure story.

**Why do you think that sharing a book with a child is so important?**

Because being a child is being an explorer, and grown-ups have the duty to help them on their way.

Also: a book is a small world. If you share it with a child you will learn to know each other as equals, readers both, thrown out of the house and into an adventure together. It might make things much less surprising when they start telling you what they think of your own world.

It's also important for adults to know that children might not agree with your taste in books, and realise that that is a good thing, too. Children need things to disagree with. In fact, your child might have some books to share with you that'll make you think.

**Do you or did you have a favourite book to read with your child or the children of friends or family?**

I remember Roald Dahl's *The Witches* going down very well every time when babysitting.