

## Nancy Sorrell

Ambassador for Booktime and Booked Up



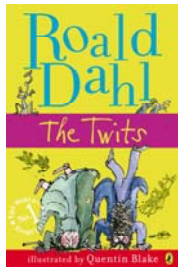
When I was about 13 years old, my favourite book was *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck, and Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

My favourite story was *Little Red Riding Hood*.

The most memorable poem was *The Owl and the Pussy Cat*.

We have a wonderful first edition Fairy book full of beautiful poems that we read to the twins. They love it. We also read *Dora the Explorer*, *Rupert Bear*, and *Little Red Riding Hood* and lots more.

## David Walliams



### What was your favourite book as a child?

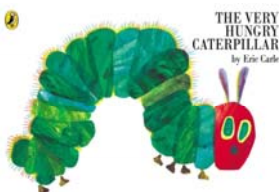
I loved all Roald Dahl's books for children, but my absolute favourite was *The Twits*. It's a hilarious story of an old couple who loathe each other. Dahl's writing is always so direct and his ideas so magical, and combined with Quentin Blake's genius illustrations this book is an all-time classic.

### Did you have a favourite poem or story?

My favourite poem as a child was 'This Be The Verse' by Philip Larkin. I couldn't believe you could have swear words in a poem. It also feels like Larkin is addressing a young reader in a poem that your parents wouldn't approve of. It has lost none of its power to shock.

### Did your parents or carer read you any memorable stories or poems as you were growing up?

My Dad used to read Dr Seuss books to me as a child, particularly *Green Eggs and Ham*. We both loved the non-sensical poetry and scary surrealism of the drawings.



### What stories and/or poems do you read to your children?

I don't have any kids but I read Eric Carle's *The Hungry Caterpillar* to my two year old nephew Eddie. It's a wonderfully simple book with beautiful illustrations, and Eddie likes it to be read to him time and time again.

Jacket images courtesy of Puffin Books

## Lauren Laverne



### What was your favourite book as a child?

I was an absolute Roald Dahl nut - the *B.F.G.* was my favourite. I remember being utterly transported, terrified and thrilled by it. Amazing.



### Did you have a favourite poem or story?

I wrote poems all the time and remember my own better than anyone else's. Enid Blyton's *Tales of Toytown* were a splendid collection of short stories that I devoured repeatedly.

### Did your parents or carer read you any memorable stories or poems as you were growing up?

My Mam used to be a primary school teacher and taught me to read when I was three but it was my Dad who read me bedtime stories. He's an amazing guitarist and I remember him actually singing me books! *The Railway Cat* was a favourite.

### What stories and/or poems do you read to your children?

Fergus is only nine months but already a voracious reader - his current favourites are *That's not my Dinosaur*, *Squeak Squeak* from the baby Einstein series and the classic *Dear Zoo*!

Jacket image courtesy of Puffin Books

## Anna Friel

### What was your favourite book as a child?

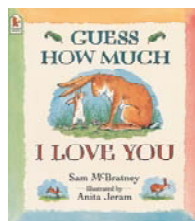
*The Worst Witch* by Jill Murphy/ *Mr Pink Whistle* by Enid Blyton.

### Did you have a favourite poem or story?

Fave Poem was Please Sir by Brian Patten. Teenage years were full of Judy Blume.

### Did your parents or carer read you any memorable stories or poems as you were growing up?

Constantly was read to. God mother is a literary agent so I would get all of the latest children's books before they were published. Dad nightly would interpret stories from *Lord of the Rings* and make up new Gandolph stories.



### What stories and/or poems do you read to your children?

*Guess How Much I Love You* and all traditional fairy tales.

Jacket image courtesy of Walker Books

## Nick Knowles



**What was your favourite book as a child?**

*Call of the Wild* by Jack London

**Did you have a favourite poem or story?**

Kipling's "If" that my father used to quote to me



**Did your parents or carer read you any memorable stories or poems as you were growing up?**

My dad used to read me Biggles books by WE Johns

**What stories and/or poems do you read to your children?** *Princess Bride* and, when they were young, Dr Seuss *Sam I am*.

Jacket image courtesy of Puffin Books

## Matthew Wright



**What was your favourite book as a child?**

The first two books I really treasured as my own to read were *Stig of the Dump* by Clive King – the story of a boy and his friend, the cavemen, from the local quarry, and *The Golden Shadow* by Leon Garfield, a modern re-telling of Ancient Greek myths – absolutely brilliant and still helps me answer classics questions on University Challenge.

**Did you have a favourite poem or story?**

WH Auden's *Night Mail* – I can still recite it to this day. It's great because it has a real locomotive meter

**Did your parents or carer read you any memorable stories or poems as you were growing up?**

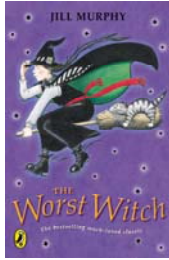
Along with my sister Katie, I loved *The Wind in the Willows*. There was also a book based on the Magic Roundabout in which Dylan and Brian attempt to build a house – a story that had us literally crying with laughter.

**What stories and/or poems do you read to your children?**

Unimaginative but true, I've read a fair bit of *Harry Potter* to youngsters.

Jacket image courtesy of Puffin Books

## Angela Griffin



### What was your favourite book as a child?

My favourite book growing up was *The Worst Witch*, it was read to me at school by my teacher Mrs Bricknell. She inspired my love for reading.

### Did your parents or carer read you any memorable stories or poems as you were growing up?

My mum used to read to me every night and we would go to the library together and choose books. I loved all the Enid Blyton's, and as I got older The Famous Five series were regulars in my house.

According to my mum I could read when I went to school, and she put that down to my love of books.

### What stories and/or poems do you read to your children?

I read to my two daughters aged 1 and 4, and they too have a real love of books. My eldest has a fantastic imagination and she too will be going to school in September able to read.

Her favourite books are *The Smartest Giant in Town*, anything with Angelina Ballerina in, *Wobble Bear says Yellow*.

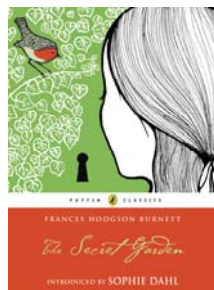
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## Emily Maitlis



### What was your favourite book as a child?

As a child I loved the books of Joan Aiken - *Wolves of Willoughby Chase*, *Nightbirds on Nantucket*, and best of all *Midnight is a Place*. They had a real darkness to them which, I think, fascinated me - wicked Victorian governesses, orphans, and children working in the cotton mills. I think it was a combination of the fantastical and the historical realism - in all its gory accuracy- that captivated me.



I also adored all the stories that took you back in time - *Tom's Midnight Garden*, *The Secret Garden*, *Carrie's War*, *Come back Lucy* - the idea was always similar - a mechanism, be it a grandfather clock, a garden, a word - would transport the protagonist from the awfulness of their misunderstood present to a past time when everyone took them seriously. I can see the appeal to children and adolescents very much on those terms. In fact, I still have fantasies about going back in time... Mainly to take back all the things I regret saying...

### Did you have a favourite poem or story?

I loved Grimms fairy tales - I had a big red hardbook version that I would take to the garden and bury myself in. I still think fairy tales are so important to pass down through the generations - a real oral tradition when we have so few.

## Did your parents or carer read you any memorable stories or poems as you were growing up?

My mother read to me the whole time - right up to the stage where we'd read the entire works of Jane Austen together at bedtime which I think - hope - she enjoyed as much as me. I also recall an extraordinary Victorian children's book called *The Princess and Curdie* which I have never seen as an adult. I seem to remember this fantastical adventure - probably half morality tale like *Pilgrims Progress*. In fact, I would never read it again as an adult even if I could find it as I would hate to destroy the magic.

## What stories and/or poems do you read to your children?

I read to my children a lot and my boys adore books. One of the best things I ever did - inadvertently- was to commit many of the - oft repeated - bedtime stories and rhymes to memory. My eldest ended up in hospital aged two and even without the books to hand I recited the stories to get him to sleep and take his mind off horrid hospital stuff. I think the familiarity is amazingly reassuring for a little boy in a strange place.

We are big fans of *Wibley Pig*, by Mick Inkpen, who's drawings are hugable. And of *Not Now Bernard*, the story of a little boy who's parents ignore him until a monster takes his place, and of *When Mum Turned into a Monster* - a delightful book about a mother losing her rag which, I believe, gives solace to stressed parents everywhere.

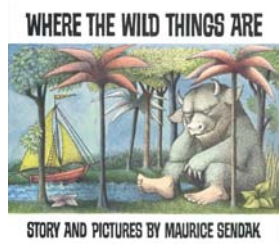
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## Ian Whybrow



They say that parents don't have conversations with their children any more. They just tell them what to do and ask for the bare minimum of information about what their offspring have been up to. Luckily, I never went short of conversation when I was small because my mother liked sharing books with me and my sisters every night. The books we revisited all the time were *Barbar the Elephant* ("Why has that one got circles on his bottom?") *Orlando the Marmalade Cat* ("But you can't spread cats on toast...") and *When We Were Very Young*. ("What do sergeants do apart from looking after the guards' socks when they're changing them at

Buckingham Palace?)



When I read to my girls, our favourite picture-books were: *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak; *Mr Gumpy's Outing* by John Burningham and *Meal One* by Ivor Cutler and Helen Oxenbury. We shared them dozens of times because of the funny, rough and outrageous bits in them that always lifted our spirits by making us smile.