

Marney's Old Favorites List

All are e-books, many also audio books, in the library

A favorite "children's" series:

Author: Maud Hart Lovelace

Betsy-Tacy, followed by *Betsy-Tacy and Tib*, *Over the Big Hill*, *Downtown*; then for middle-school, high school stories: *Heaven to Betsy*, *Betsy In Spite of Herself*, *Betsy Was a Junior*, *Betsy and Joe*, *Betsy and the Great World*, *Betsy's Wedding*. All in ebook format; at least Betsy-Tacy in audiobook.

Why recommend an older children's series? Written, beginning in the 1940s, so the language is fairly contemporary, this noted author details life in a very progressive household for its time—girls valued and encouraged to be educated and to self-select their adult paths. The setting is the then-small but thriving town of Mankato, MN, about 50 years after Laura Ingalls Wilder, and not too many miles apart, geographically. A "children's series" only in that young girls love the stories, but there is a whole large group of women (The Betsy-Tacy Society) who keep the books and stories alive for today's audience. Books are all still in print.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maud_Hart_Lovelace

<https://www.betsy-tacysociety.org/maud-hart-lovelace/>

England/Ireland favorites

England:

Author: "Miss Read" (books actually filed under this pen name; name was really Dora Saint)

The Thrush Green series (there is also another series "Fairacre" you could consider also)

The order of titles is in the link below; best, if possible, to read in order beginning with *Thrush Green*.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miss_Read (Some audio, not all; but all are available as ebooks.)

The first title in this series was written in 1959; the final in 2009 (with help from her editor; by this time the author was blind). This set of gentle narrative stories is perfect for creating a calming evening of reading. The same characters continuously appear throughout the series, the stories are of "village life" with little notice of war, disease, or other events to disturb the reader's equilibrium.

Ireland:

Author: Maeve Binchy

This highly-regarded Irish author wrote many novels, plays, and textbooks, but I'm going to recommend a few titles that weave a common set of characters into stories that portray Irish contemporary life, centered in Dublin and surrounding smaller towns. You might best start with *Night of Rain and Stars* where you'll meet four essential characters appearing in the titles listed below, but you could start with *Heart and Soul*. These titles are the core of this loosely-woven series: then *Minding Frankie* finishes the core set. But these stories feature some of the central characters and if you enjoyed the above three, you won't want to miss *Scarlet Feather*, *Whitethorn Woods*, and *A Week in Winter*. All e-book and audiobook format.

I can't really choose a contemporary American fiction author or series. Someone asked about the author for whom I handle online media and do her book design layouts for both print and e-book; she's **Ruth Doan MacDougall** and at this time, while many of her books are in e-book format, she has not chosen to put them into the library collection. Her contemporary series follows a group of mid-1950s high school friends as they continue through their lives; the next book in the series will place them all in the Great Recession of just a few years ago. However, none are e-book available in library collections, although hard copies are available in many library catalogs.