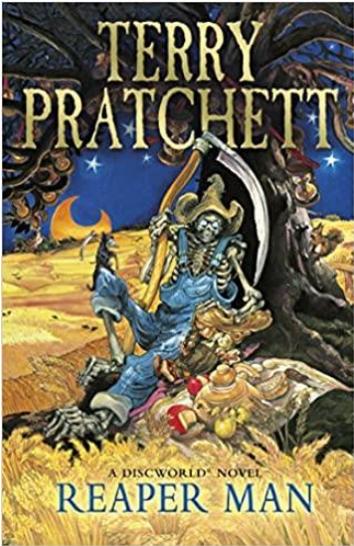
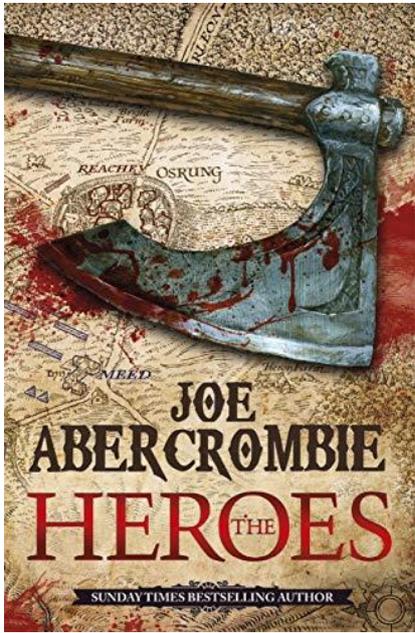


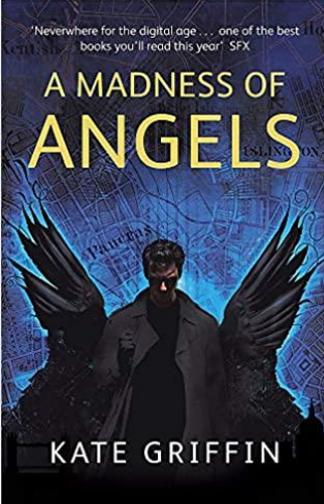
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Desert Island Books

Book cover	Book Title and Author	Blurb	Reason for choice
	<p>Reaper Man – Terry Pratchett</p>	<p><i>'Death has to happen. That's what bein' alive is all about. You're alive, and then you're dead. It can't just stop happening.'</i></p> <p><i>But it can. And it has.</i></p> <p><i>Death is missing – presumed gone.</i></p> <p><i>Which leads to the kind of chaos you always get when an important public service is withdrawn. If Death doesn't come for you, then what are you supposed to do in the meantime?</i></p> <p><i>You can't have the undead wandering about like lost souls - there's no telling what might happen!</i></p> <p><i>Particularly when they discover that life really is only for the living . . .</i></p>	<p>The very first Pratchett novel I ever read, and probably the book responsible for turning me into such a keen reader. Previously I'd enjoyed reading, but this made it indisputably my main hobby.</p> <p>Plus, there's just something fascinating about the idea that the Grim Reaper gets depressed and quits!</p>
	<p>The Heroes – Joe Abercrombie</p>	<p><i>They say Black Dow's killed more men than winter, and clawed his way to the throne of the North up a hill of skulls. The King of the Union, ever a jealous neighbour, is not about to stand smiling by while he claws his way any higher. The orders have been given and the armies are toiling through the northern mud.</i></p> <p><i>Thousands of men are converging on a forgotten ring of stones, on a worthless hill, in an unimportant valley, and they've brought a lot of sharpened metal with them.</i></p> <p><i>Bremer dan Gorst, disgraced master swordsman, has sworn to reclaim his stolen honour on the battlefield. Obsessed with</i></p>	<p>This is the novel that I think I've been most immersed in, ever - there's definitely something worrying about that, as it's very violent and unpleasant at times! – but I read vast chunks of this one into the early hours of the morning, and almost woke up my family with a loud 'YES!' when a favourite character steps up unexpectedly and kills a particularly horrible villain...</p> <p>I have a copy of this signed by the author, in person. We had a lovely</p>

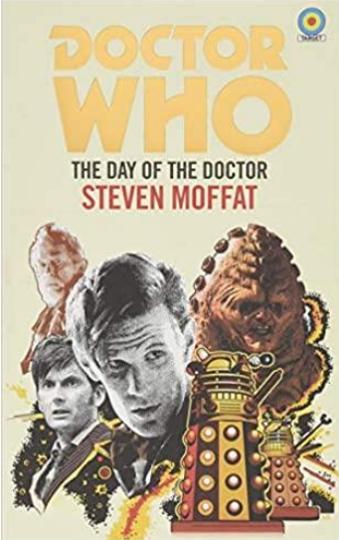
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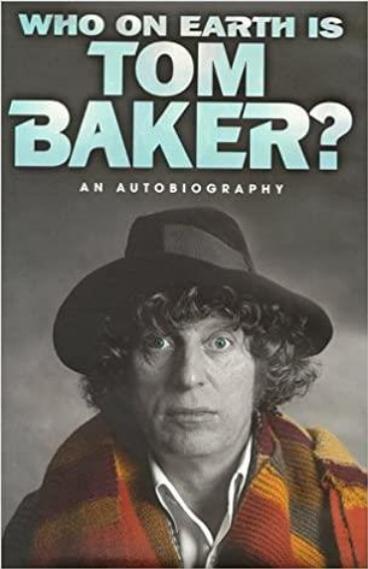
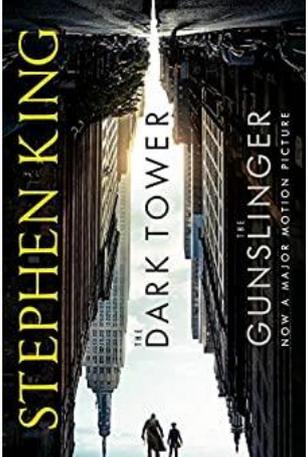
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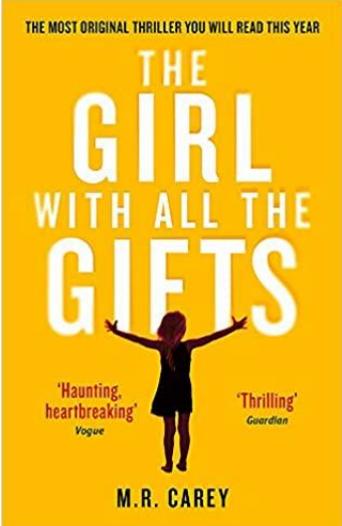
		<p><i>redemption and addicted to violence, he's far past caring how much blood gets spilled in the attempt. Even if it's his own.</i></p> <p><i>Prince Calder isn't interested in honour, and still less in getting himself killed. All he wants is power, and he'll tell any lie, use any trick, and betray any friend to get it. Just as long as he doesn't have to fight for it himself.</i></p> <p><i>Curnden Crow, the last honest man in the North, has gained nothing from a life of warfare but swollen knees and frayed nerves. He hardly even cares who wins any more, he just wants to do the right thing. But can he even tell what that is with the world burning down around him?</i></p> <p><i>Over three bloody days of battle, the fate of the North will be decided. But with both sides riddled by intrigues, follies, feuds and petty jealousies, it is unlikely to be the noblest hearts, or even the strongest arms that prevail.</i></p> <p><i>Three men. One battle. No Heroes.</i></p>	<p>chat. He told me off (mostly in jest, I think!) for lending people his novels... apparently I have to make people buy them instead.</p>
	<p>A Madness of Angels – Kate Griffin</p>	<p><i>When a man is tired of London he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford - Samuel Johnson</i></p> <p><i>In fact, Dr Johnson was only half right. There is in London much more than life - there is power. It ebbs and flows with the rhythms of the city, makes runes from the alignments of ancient streets and hums with the rattle of trains and buses; it waxes and wanes with the patterns of the business day. It is a new</i></p>	<p>I read this on a particularly lovely holiday in Center Parc with my family, when my eldest daughter was very little, so it has a lot of good memories attached.</p> <p>Think Harry Potter aimed squarely at adults (no offence intended at the Potter fans!), with a</p>

Name

Desert Island Books

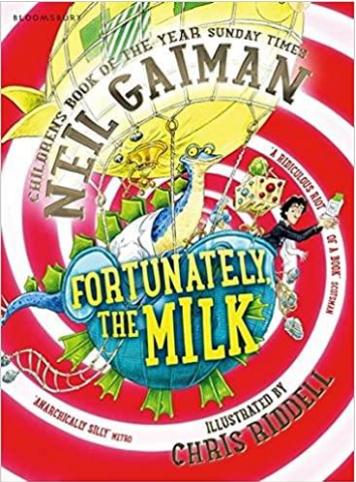
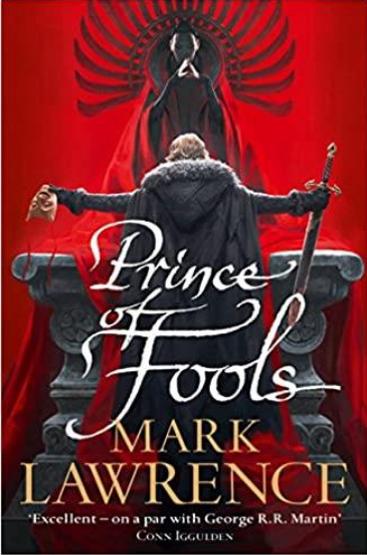
		<p><i>kind of magic: urban magic.</i></p> <p><i>Enter a London where magicians ride the Last Train, implore favours of The Beggar King and interpret the insane wisdom of The Bag Lady. Enter a London where beings of power soar with the pigeons and scabble with the rats, and seek insight in the half-whispered madness of the blue electric angels. Enter the London of Matthew Swift, where rival sorcerers, hidden in plain sight, do battle for the very soul of the city . . .</i></p>	<p>similar kind of 'magical world running unseen beside the real world' set up. Very imaginative, very odd... one of the few stories I've read that begins just AFTER the main character has been killed (he gets better).</p>
	<p>The Day of the Doctor – Steven Moffatt</p>	<p><i>When the entire universe is at stake, three different Doctors will unite to save it.</i></p> <p><i>The Tenth Doctor is hunting shape-shifting Zygons in Elizabethan England. The Eleventh is investigating a rift in space-time in the present day. And one other – the man they used to be but never speak of – is fighting the Daleks in the darkest days of the Time War. Driven by demons and despair, this battle-scarred Doctor is set to take a devastating decision that will threaten the survival of the entire universe... a decision that not even a Time Lord can take alone.</i></p> <p><i>On this day, the Doctor's different incarnations will come together to save the Earth... to save the universe... and to save his soul.</i></p>	<p>I had to get some <i>Doctor Who</i> in somewhere, obviously... this is just a treat for fans. The story was the big 40th anniversary special on TV (and cinemas), and was pretty darned good already, but here it has the benefit of no limits but the readers' imagination! Moffatt – who wrote the TV version too – recreates the story but goes wild, even bringing in unreliable narrators and a sometimes non-chronological structure. Very, very clever writing.</p>

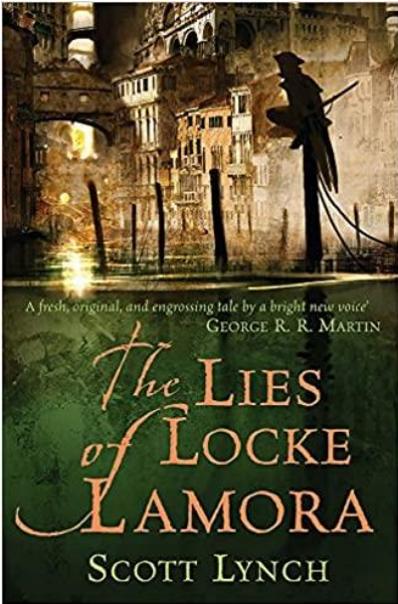
	<p>Who on Earth is Tom Baker? – Tom Baker</p>	<p><i>The hilarious, rumbustious and gloriously indiscreet autobiography of the most famous and best-loved Doctor Who</i></p> <p><i>Tom Baker's autobiography covers his childhood in the poor spirited Irish community in Liverpool, during which he developed a penchant for lying, a passion for football and a suspicion of priests; his six years as a monk – in which he spent much time trying to avoid eye contact with others; his struggling times as an out-of-work actor and; on to appearances alongside Olivier at the National Theatre, to work with Pasolino and, finally, his time as the ultimate Doctor Who.</i></p> <p><i>Far exceeding the usual expectations of an actorly autobiography, Who on Earth Is Tom Baker? is a blackly comic scream. Baker is the kind of man who could drink the old off-the-wagon Anthony Hopkins under the table. He is a natural writer of Rabelasian, or at least Spike Milligan, proportions and is, of course, one of the most familiar faces in the British acting world.</i></p>	<p>Tom Baker is a living legend, and is one of the most fascinatingly weird people to have ever lived. Fact. Here he shares – OVERshares, really – some of the formative experiences from his extremely odd life. It's hard to separate reality from his bizarrely overblown stories, but really, why would you want to?! There's no point in being grown up if you can't be childish sometimes, as a wise man once said.</p> <p>I got this signed by Mr. Baker himself... I'd like to say we had a nice chat, but the truth is I regressed to a nervously giggling child and managed to say very little. Never meet your heroes, or so I've heard! He did give me jelly babies, though.</p>
	<p>The Dark Tower – Stephen King</p>	<p><i>The final book in King's epic The Dark Tower series, sees gunslinger Roland on a roller-coaster ride of exhilarating triumph and aching loss in his unrelenting quest to reach the dark tower.</i></p> <p><i>Roland Deschain and his ka-tet have journeyed together and apart, scattered far and wide across multilayered worlds of wheres and whens. The destinies of</i></p>	<p>I do enjoy a Stephen King tale or two... he can always be relied upon to provide some effective horror and a well-written bunch of characters. Who mostly die. Nastily.</p> <p><i>The Dark Tower</i> was the last book in a long series, and had</p>

		<p><i>Roland, Susannah, Jake, Father Callahan, Oy, and Eddie are bound in the Dark Tower itself, which now pulls them ever closer to their own endings and beginnings and into a maelstrom of emotion, violence, and discovery.</i></p> <p><i>And as he closes in on the Tower, Roland's every step is shadowed by a terrible and sinister creation. Finally, he realises, he may have to walk the last dark strait alone...</i></p>	<p>a lot to live up to... we'd followed the protagonist on a rambling journey through many of King's earlier works, and it was all coming together... then there was THAT ending. I honestly threw the book across the room, I was so annoyed (no mean feat, it's a doorstep of a tome!). Once I'd calmed down and it'd sank in though, I realized that it worked. There had been hints and foreshadowing all along, and I can honestly say that it's now one of my favourite endings ever. Yes, I know, I'm fickle.</p>
	<p>The Girl with all the Gifts – M R Carey</p>	<p><i>NOT EVERY GIFT IS A BLESSING</i></p> <p><i>Every morning, Melanie waits in her cell to be collected for class. When they come for her, Sergeant Parks keeps his gun pointing at her while two of his people strap her into the wheelchair. She thinks they don't like her. She jokes that she won't bite. But they don't laugh.</i></p> <p><i>Melanie is a very special girl.</i></p>	<p>I can't really discuss this without mild spoilers, but here goes... I love a good zombie story (yes, that's what this is – but keep going!) and this is definitely the best approach to it that I've read. Melanie is a child born from an infected mother, so she and her 'classmates' are essentially half zombie. Trust me – it's bizarre, it's scary at times, and it has a killer of an ending.</p>

Name

Desert Island Books

			<p>The sequel and the movie version are good, too.</p>
	<p>Fortunately, the Milk... - Neil Gaiman</p>	<p><i>Mum's away. Dad's in charge. There's no milk. So Dad saves the day by going to buy some.</i></p> <p><i>Really, that's all that happens. Very boring. YAAAAAAAAAAWN.</i></p> <p><i>There are absolutely none of the following inside: GLOBBY GREEN ALIENS! INTERGALACTIC POLICE! PIRATES! And most definitely NOT a time-travelling hot-air balloon piloted by the brilliant Professor Steg ...</i></p> <p><i>Don't miss this gloriously entertaining novel about time-travel, dinosaurs, milk and dads.</i></p>	<p>Gaiman is one of my favourite writers, there are so many of his books that I could include on this list... this one, however, is a bit special: it's a favourite of both of my daughters, and I have read it to them/with them a number of times since they were very little.</p>
	<p>Prince of Fools – Mark Lawrence</p>	<p><i>The Red Queen is old but the kings of the Broken Empire dread her like no other. For all her reign, she has fought the long war, contested in secret, against the powers that stand behind nations, for higher stakes than land or gold. Her greatest weapon is The Silent Sister—unseen by most and unspoken of by all.</i></p> <p><i>The Red Queen's grandson, Prince Jalan Kendeth—drinker, gambler, seducer of women—is one who can see The Silent Sister. Tenth in line for the throne and content with his role as a minor royal, he pretends that the hideous crone is not there. But war is coming. Witnesses claim an undead army is on the march, and the Red Queen has called on her family to defend the realm. Jal thinks it's all a rumor—nothing that will affect him—but he is wrong.</i></p>	<p>One of my favourite book series, no doubt, and worryingly one of my favourite literary characters! Jalan is pretty unrelentingly awful, but once you get into the trilogy you realise that, as the narrator, he's lying to us... he does some amazingly heroic and selfless things, but tells us – and himself – that it's for entirely selfish reasons. Sometimes that's true, sometimes he protests too much. The massive, world-changing moral choice foisted upon him at the close of the third book had me on the (metaphorical) edge of my seat, I genuinely didn't</p>

			know what he was going to do...
	<p>The Lies of Locke Lamora – Scott Lynch</p>	<p><i>They say that the Thorn of Camorr can beat anyone in a fight. They say he steals from the rich and gives to the poor. They say he's part man, part myth, and mostly street-corner rumour. And they are wrong on every count.</i></p> <p><i>Only averagely tall, slender, and god-awful with a sword, Locke Lamora is the fabled Thorn, and the greatest weapons at his disposal are his wit and cunning. He steals from the rich – they're the only ones worth stealing from – but the poor can go steal for themselves. What Locke cons, wheedles and tricks into his possession is strictly for him and his band of fellow con-artists and thieves.</i></p> <p><i>Together their domain is the city of Camorr. Built of Elderglass by a race no one remembers, it's a city of shifting revels, filthy canals, baroque palaces and crowded cemeteries. Home to Dons, merchants, soldiers, beggars, cripples, and feral children. And to Capa Barsavi, the criminal mastermind who runs the city.</i></p> <p><i>But there are whispers of a challenge to the Capa's power. A challenge from a man no one has ever seen, a man no blade can touch. The Grey King is coming.</i></p> <p><i>A man would be well advised not to be caught between Capa Barsavi and The Grey King. Even such a master of the sword as the Thorn of Camorr. As for Locke Lamora . . .</i></p>	<p>Think Oceans 11 heist movie, set in a Game of Thrones world... great characters, great dialogue, subtle world-building and amazing twists and reveals. Such a fun series.</p>