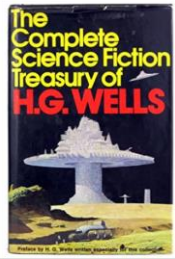


Dr Leatherland's Desert Island Books

Book cover	Book Title and Author	Blurb	Reason for choice
	<p><i>The Lord of the Rings</i> by J.R.R. Tolkien</p>	<p>Frodo Baggins inherits a magic ring from his uncle Bilbo, none other than the One Ring to rule them all, forged by Lord Sauron in the volcanic land of Mordor. Frodo must embark on a journey to destroy the One Ring before Sauron's servants recover it, a journey that will determine the fate of Middle-earth forever.</p>	<p>I won't claim to have read this before watching Peter Jackson's film trilogy. However, Tolkien's mythology has inspired my love of fantasy fiction and worldbuilding ever since, and <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> remains his best work. This book also features some of the most intriguing and vivid descriptions of an imaginary world I have encountered. Number 1 on my list!</p>
	<p><i>Dune</i> by Frank Herbert</p>	<p>Set on the desert planet Arrakis, <i>Dune</i> is the story of the boy Paul Atreides, heir to a noble family tasked with ruling an inhospitable world where the only thing of value is the "spice" melange, a drug capable of extending life and enhancing consciousness. Coveted across the known universe, melange is a prize worth killing for...</p>	<p>Inspired by the Cold War era of superpowers and proxy wars in which the book was written, this book features political intrigue and betrayal, rites of passage and transcendental experiences, and giant sandworms...which can be ridden. What more do you need from a book?!</p>
	<p><i>Necronomicon: The Best Weird Tales of H.P. Lovecraft</i></p>	<p>H.P. Lovecraft's tales are set in the fear-haunted towns of an imaginary area of Massachusetts, or in the cosmic vistas which exist beyond space and time, and feature a pantheon of alien deities, including the tentacled Cthulhu.</p>	<p>Lovecraft has to be my all-time favourite short story writer. For me, he somehow blends fantasy, sci-fi and horror into a perfect cauldron of terror. His stories have also inspired me to travel around the north-east United States at some point (it's on the bucket list). I expect to see crab-people or I'll be disappointed.</p>
	<p><i>On the Road</i> by Jack Kerouac</p>	<p>Sal Paradise strikes a friendship with the young, crazy and impulsive Dean Moriarty. Together they journey across America from coast to coast in a quest for self-knowledge and experience.</p>	<p>I read this book after I attended an after-school class on cult fiction and loved it. Once I started university, it began to make a great deal more sense to me. Friends like Dean Moriarty, however much you might idolise them, come and go.</p>

	<p><i>Watership Down</i> by Richard Adams</p>	<p>Fiver has a vision which spells potential doom for the Sandleford warren of rabbits. Trusting the prophecy, Hazel leads a company in search of a new home, but they encounter many dangers – human and rabbit alike – in a hostile world.</p>	<p>The “children’s” book in my top ten, although some passages nudge it ever so slightly into the young adult section for me. <i>Watership Down</i> is epic on so many levels. I love how it reconceptualises the world from a point of view seemingly alien to our own.</p>
	<p><i>Women in Love</i> by D.H. Lawrence</p>	<p><i>Women in Love</i> explores the lives of the Brangwen sisters, Ursula and Gudrun, and their love affairs with Rupert Birkin, an intellectual, and Gerald Crich, an industrialist. The despair of one sister’s relationship contrasts with the happiness of the other’s as the four clash in thought, passion and belief, in their search for a life that is truly complete.</p>	<p>I first read this at university and loved its mastery of language. Since then I’ve read most of Lawrence’s novels along with his poems and short stories. One metaphor I always use when describing his fiction is that of an electric current flowing through the pages. There are too many writers from the 1920s that I love, but Lawrence clinches the gold for me, and this book is his masterpiece.</p>
	<p><i>The Way of Kings</i> by Brandon Sanderson</p>	<p>The first book in The Stormlight Archive (4 books so far, 10 planned in total – epic!) <i>The Way of Kings</i> introduces us to a world with three moons, giant crustaceans, flying eels, stone giants and swords which materialise at the will of their owner. Oh, and gods that walk among mortals.</p>	<p>I love any work of fantasy which really tests the boundaries of what has gone before, but worldbuilding aside, Sanderson’s character development is superb. Plots and subplots are interspersed with flashbacks which evoke such intense levels of empathy with each character.</p>
	<p><i>Lord Jim</i> by Joseph Conrad</p>	<p>Jim, the first mate aboard the <i>Patna</i>, dreams youthful dreams of heroism and of the daring act that will prove his courage. But when the <i>Patna</i>, on a night crossing of the Arabian Sea, collides with a mysterious obstacle, Jim panics and jumps free.</p>	<p>I love this book because its story is a lesson in the value of forgiving yourself. Jim is so racked with guilt for one cowardly act the whole way through and it casts a shadow over him for the rest of his life.</p>
	<p><i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i> by Oscar Wilde</p>	<p>Enthralled by his own portrait, Dorian Gray exchanges his soul for eternal youth and beauty. Influenced by his friend Lord Henry Wootton, he is drawn into a corrupt double life, while only the portrait bears the traces.</p>	<p>My favourite Victorian Gothic novel! This book encapsulates the importance of living a moral life and not simply living according to every selfish impulse, even though a part of me secretly roots for Dorian in places – and I suspect that’s what Wilde wanted.</p>



*The Complete
Science Fiction
Treasury of
H.G. Wells*

Including novellas such as *The Time Machine*, *The War of the Worlds* and *The Island of Dr Moreau* (perhaps inappropriate for a desert island), this collection represents the greatest work of the progenitor of science fiction himself.

I love Wells' fiction – and this collection in particular – because each of his stories reimagines yet another concept – time travel, alien invasion, splicing – in a disturbingly believable way.