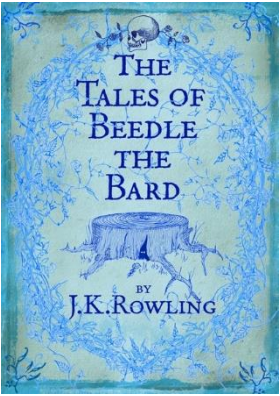
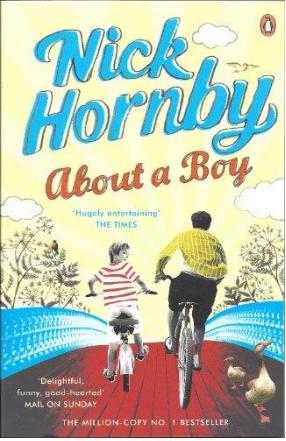
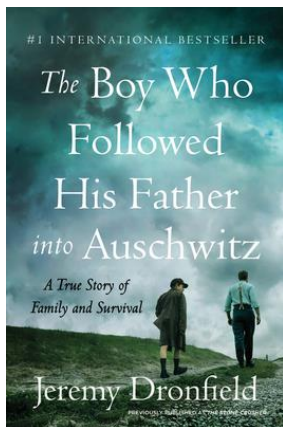


Mr Burt's Desert Island Books

Book cover	Book Title and Author	Blurb	Reason for choice
	<p>'Nicholas Nickleby' – Charles Dickens</p>	<p><i>'I shall never regret doing as I have – never if I starve or beg in consequence'.</i></p> <p>When Nicholas Nickleby is left penniless after his father's death, he appeals to his wealthy uncle to help him find work and to protect his mother and sister. But Ralph Nickleby proves both hard-hearted and unscrupulous, and Nicholas finds himself forced to make his own way in the world. His adventures gave Dickens the opportunity to portray an extraordinary gallery of rogues and eccentrics: Wackford Squeers, the tyrannical headmaster of Dotheboys Hall, a school for unwanted boys; the slow-witted orphan Smike, rescued by Nicholas; and the gloriously theatrical Mr and Mrs Crummles and their daughter, the 'infant phenomenon'.</p>	<p>As a historian I find Dickens' work to be bold and entertaining in how he weaves fantastic fiction against the backdrop of 19th Century England and challenges the social injustices and cruelties of the day in his writing. Out of all of Dickens' novels that I have read I find this to be one that sticks in my mind and the most entertaining and thought-provoking also. There are some dastardly characters such as Squeers and his wife who I always find the most interesting in fiction and Dickens writes them well.</p>
	<p>'Schindler's Ark' – Thomas Keneally</p>	<p><i>'Jokes aside, Oskar, my dear fellow, you'd be a fool if you got a real taste for some little Jewish skirt. They don't have a future Oskar. That's not old-fashioned Jew-hate talking, I assure you. It's policy.'</i></p> <p>As thousands faced death in Nazi-occupied Poland an unlikely saviour materialised in the shadow of Auschwitz. Oskar Schindler was a heavy drinking, womanising German industrialist whom the war transformed into a man with a mission. This is an incredible story of huge risks and enormous gains, as Schindler defied and outwitted the SS to protect the beleaguered Jews who worked for him.</p>	<p>One of the most influential books I have ever read about the extreme capabilities of human beings in the face of such horror. I read this in secondary school after watching the award-winning Spielberg film adaptation 'Schindler's List'. This well researched account taken from primary sources and testimonies of survivors really digs deeper into the major characters involved in the perpetration of Jews in Krakow but also the rescuers, the survivors, and the victims. It is a disturbing read to say the least, but the message of</p>

	<p>'The Tales of Beedle the Bard' – J.K. Rowling</p>	<p><i>The Tales of Beedle the Bard</i> contains five richly diverse fairy tales, each with its own magical character, that will variously bring delight, laughter and the thrill of mortal peril.</p> <p>Additional notes for each story penned by Professor Albus Dumbledore will be enjoyed by Muggles and wizards alike, as the Professor muses on the morals illuminated by the tales, and reveals snippets of information about life at Hogwarts.</p> <p>A uniquely magical volume, with illustrations by the author, J. K. Rowling, that will be treasured for years to come.</p>	<p>hope lingers a long time afterwards.</p> <p>Despite the fact that Harry Potter deserves to be on every Desert Island Book list I simply love this short book with 5 magical fairy tales written by J.K. Rowling based on the book featured in Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows. I adore these short warm-hearted stories particularly Babbity Rabbitty and her Cackling Stump! They are frightening, gross, hilarious, and always entertaining.</p>
	<p>'About a Boy' – Nick Hornby</p>	<p><i>'How cool was Will Freeman?'</i></p> <p>Too cool! At thirty-six, he's as hip as a teenager. He's single, child-free, goes to the right clubs and knows which trainers to wear. He's also found a great way to score with women: attend single parents' groups full of available (and grateful) mothers, all hoping to meet a Nice Guy.</p> <p>Which is how Will meets Marcus, the oldest twelve-year-old on the planet. Marcus is a bit strange: he listens to Joni Mitchell and Mozart, looks after his Mum, and has never owned a pair of trainers. But Marcus latches on to Will - and won't let go. Can Will teach Marcus how to grow up cool? And can Marcus help Will just to grow up.</p>	<p>I don't tend to read a great deal of fiction and I am particularly picky when it comes to a genre but this book instantly grabbed my attention and I devoured it from cover to cover when I first read it in sixth form. It is aimed primarily at young adults and it is a very quick and easy read. It is just a funny, happy story about unconventional friendships and messed up adults and it really picks me up when I'm feeling a little blue.</p>



'The Boy Who Followed His Father into Auschwitz' – Jeremy Dronfield

'Where there is family, there is hope...'

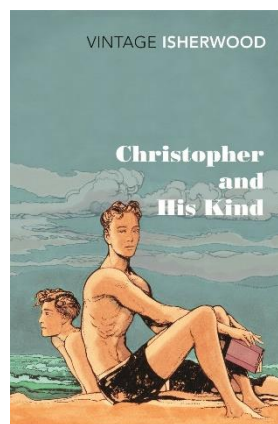
Vienna, 1939.

Nazi police seize Gustav Kleinmann, a Jewish upholsterer and his son, Fritz, and send the pair to Buchenwald in Germany. There began an unimaginable ordeal that saw the pair beaten, starved and forced to build the very concentration camp they were held in.

When Gustav was set to be transferred to Auschwitz, a certain death sentence, his son refused to leave his side. Throughout the horrors they endured, there was one constant that kept them alive: the love between father and son.

Based on Gustav's secret diary and meticulous archive research, this book tells their incredible story for the first time – a story of courage and survival unparalleled in the History of the Holocaust.

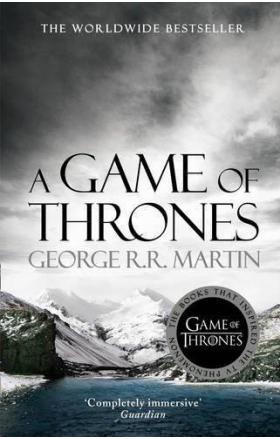
This is one of the more recent historical books I have read and for me sets itself apart from many of the popular (often historically dubious) Holocaust novels that are available at the present. This well-researched and poignant story of the Kleinmann family (focusing primarily on the endurances and fates of Gustav and Fritz, son and father) provides a harrowing yet engaging narrative of the Holocaust following the Anschluss in Vienna, Austria. I was fascinated by the indomitable spirit of these people in their experiences and I was shaken and moved at the fates of each of the Kleinmann family by the end of the book's inevitably emotional conclusion.

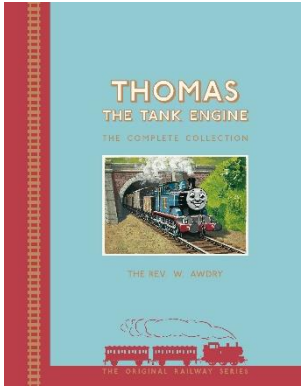
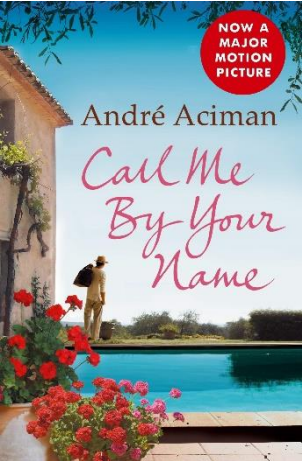


'Christopher and His Kind' – Christopher Isherwood

In November 1929, Christopher Isherwood - determined to become a 'permanent foreigner' - packed a rucksack and two suitcases and left England on a one-way ticket for Berlin. With incredible candour and wit, Isherwood recalls the decadence of Berlin's night scene and his route to sexual liberation. As the Nazis rise to power, Isherwood describes his dramatic struggle to save his partner Heinz from persecution.

I find Isherwood to be a fascinating figure and I can empathise with him on many levels when I read his books. This is essentially an autobiography of his life in Berlin between 1929-39 and he does a great job of describing the decadence of Weimar Germany prior to the rise of the Nazis. Although the way it is written is quite unconventional and Isherwood's frankness in sharing his experiences are sometimes a little jarring, I feel Isherwood's

			writing to be an absolute gift.
	<p>'The Casual Vacancy' – J.K. Rowling</p>	<p>When Barry Fairbrother dies in his early forties, the town of Pagford is left in shock.</p> <p>Pagford is, seemingly, an English idyll, with a cobbled market square and an ancient abbey, but what lies behind the pretty facade is a town at war.</p> <p>Rich at war with poor, teenagers at war with their parents, wives at war with their husbands, teachers at war with their pupils... Pagford is not what it first seems.</p> <p>And the empty seat left by Barry on the parish council soon becomes the catalyst for the biggest war the town has yet seen. Who will triumph in an election fraught with passion, duplicity and unexpected revelations?</p>	<p>I adore this story because I think it has everything I want out of literature: loathsome characters, fitting comeuppance, and an uncomfortable reminder to the reader about social injustice. I can read this repeatedly and I think its such a brilliant piece of literature. It is character driven, throwing up some rather unlikeable people as well as a smattering of small heroes which I'm always looking for in a good book. I love how it is frequently humorous in the narrative but also completely unafraid to tackle some heavy issues such as domestic violence, drug addiction, abuse, neglect, I could go on...</p>
	<p>'A Game of Thrones' – George R.R. Martin</p>	<p><i>'When you play the game of thrones, you win, or you die.'</i></p> <p>Summers span decades. Winter can last a lifetime. And the struggle for the Iron Throne has begun. It will stretch from the south, where heat breeds plot, lusts and intrigues; to the vast frozen north, where a 700-foot wall of ice protects the Seven Kingdoms from the dark forces that lie beyond.</p>	<p>I was initially drawn to the 'Song of Ice and Fire' series after watching the first few seasons of 'Game of Thrones'. Like other novels I am drawn to, the vast array of complex and well-drawn out characters make this series of books and its first novel an absolute blinder. I am drawn particularly to the machinations and intrigues played out by the colourful characters in the royal court. For those who are interested in history and fantasy novels this first book in the series is a perfect opener.</p>

	<p>'The Railway Series' – Rev. W. Awdry</p>	<p>Thomas is a fussy, cheeky little tank engine whom we meet here for the first time. He proves to be such a Really Useful Engine that he is given a Branch Line all to himself.</p>	<p>THE ULTIMATE CHILDREN'S BOOK (in my not so humble opinion). This collection of short stories gave me so much joy as a child and I still look upon them fondly. I have a tattered, thoroughly loved edition of this book from 1996 on my bookshelf and this would most definitely be taken to a desert island.</p>
	<p>'Call Me by Your Name' – André Aciman</p>	<p>André Aciman's <i>Call Me by Your Name</i> is the story of a sudden and powerful romance that blossoms between a 17-year-old boy and a summer guest at his parents' cliffside mansion on the Italian Riviera. Each is unprepared for the consequences of their attraction, when, during the restless summer weeks, unrelenting currents of obsession, fascination, and desire intensify their passion and test the charged ground between them. Recklessly, the two verge toward the one thing both fear they may never truly find again: total intimacy. It is an instant classic and one of the great love stories of our time.</p>	<p>Strictly one for adults! I simply had to include this novel on my list because the author is such a talented writer and his descriptions of Italy in the 1980s summer and the storyline between two people falling in love is simply incredible. I think Aciman is a genius and I can't wait to read the sequel.</p>