
Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by The Purple Cow - 28-04-2008 18:56

Paula reads to our eight year-old twin boys for about 45 minutes every night. For the last several months this has involved reading the Harry Potter books, which has become a family ritual that the boys have grown to love and look forward to. To the extent that they throw a major wobbly if they even suspect that she is planning to give it a miss for a night.

So now we are about a quarter of the way through the last book in the series, and the boys are just starting to panic at the thought of the end of the series approaching.

So where do we go from here?

Does anyone have an idea of what two reasonably intelligent, cricket and chess obsessed eight-year-olds might want to read?

Cheers.

Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by Inca - 28-04-2008 19:06

The Lemony Snicket series is supposed to be pretty good. I haven't read any of them, nor have I read any of the HP books, so I don't know if they're comparable. I do know that they're darkly humorous, so not sure if you've want to read them to your little ones.

Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by Matej - 28-04-2008 19:07

Lemony Snicket

Garth Nix (Abhorsen Trilogy, Keys to the Kingdom...)

Lloyd Alexander (Prydain Series)

Philip Pullman (Dark Materials Trilogy)

Cornelia Funke (Inkheart, Inkspell, etc...)

Eoin Colfer (Artemis Fowl)

I really highly recommend the first and the last for that age, but the Lloyd Alexander's are classics.

Also the Earthsea novels by Ursula K. Le Guin

Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by And I am the Life - 28-04-2008 19:09

the william books? I liked them when I was 8. Don't know if they've stood the test of time

Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by ursus arctos - 28-04-2008 19:12

Another vote for Lemony Snicket.

As for cricket obsessed, ursus minor really enjoyed Lawrence Booth's From Arm Ball to Zooter.

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Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by Pan Tau - 28-04-2008 19:49

Go back to the classics... Pippi Longstocking. The first book at least is utterly wonderful. I watched the TV series on DivX a couple of months ago, and was quite captivated by it all (partly for nostalgic reasons. Annika was my first TV crush).

I read it with Tau Junior back when he was 7 or 8, and he absolutely loved it.

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Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by The Boxing Kangaroo - 28-04-2008 20:09

If they like fantasy, why not The Chronicles of Narnia?

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Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by Bored Of The Dance - 28-04-2008 21:56

We are just getting to the stage with Marley of reading him books that he probably will be reading himself soon and the main series is The Secret Seven which we have just done about five books of.

We have just finished a book called "Say Cheese and Die" by R.L. Stine which not only kept him interested but we were fighting to read to him as well which is a good by-product. At the end, I found out that there is 44 horror-ish books by the same guy so I shall be looking for them.

"Treasure Island" is a good one and I was surprised how much he enjoyed "Winnie The Pooh" as well

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Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by Bored Of The Dance - 28-04-2008 21:57

By the way, 45 minutes? Bloody hell, the woman is a saint

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Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 29-04-2008 05:54

Where to begin?

- The Silver Sword by Ian Serrailler
- The turbulent term of Tyke Tiler by Gene Kemp
- Private Peaceful - Michael Morpurgo
- Fire, bed and bone - Henrietta Branford
- The Giggler treatment - Roddy Doyle
- Kensuke's Kingdom - Michael Morpurgo
- The firework maker's daughter - Phillip Pullman

I could go on, but anyone of these will bring enormous pleasure.

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Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by Antonio Gramsci - 29-04-2008 07:24

I don't know if it's still in print, but The Voyage of QV66 by Penelope Lively is brilliant.

The Percy Jackson series is much more enjoyable than Harry Potter, I find. Funnier and less self-conscious, and lots of great Greek mythology.

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Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by King Mob - 29-04-2008 08:58

Lemony Snicket's 'Series of Unfortunate Events' is certainly the first place to go, for something a little more ingenious and subversive than the Harry Potter novels. If you're after something more traditional, Puffin have reissued a dozen children's classic titles with some pretty smart new cover designs and appendices featuring facts about the story and author.

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Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by Lyra - 29-04-2008 10:09

My nephew in law is into chess and cricket and Harry Potter. I recently gave him a couple of the Terry Pratchetts for younger readers and he really likes those.

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Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by Bafflin Smoke Signals - 06-05-2008 06:59

For the chess angle, I would have suggested Walter Tevis's The Queen's Gambit, because it's a great story about a lonely, eight-year-old orphan girl who discovers a natural ability for chess, and her subsequent battle to attain grandmaster status.

However, there are themes that are probably not for eight-year-olds - she develops an alcohol problem, for one thing.

Margaret Mahy's books are usually good - the short stories we've read are witty and anarchic. Try The Great Piratical Rumbustification & The Librarian and The Robbers (two short stories in one book).

Tove Jansen's original Moomin books are wonderful, sad at times, magical, but also unexpectedly funny. Her original drawings are far better than the cartoony versions that appeared later.

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Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by WornOldMotorbike - 06-05-2008 14:38

Kenneth Oppel does great boys-type stuff, including Airborn and Skybreaker, and his previous Darkwing, Silverwing, Sunwing stuff is popular.

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Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by Neil Kulkarni - 06-05-2008 20:25

Norton Juster - The Phantom Tollbooth
Sally Prue - Cold Tom

Both of these are incredible.

Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by Mighty Mudhsuden - 07-05-2008 07:37

I really liked the Fighting Fantasy series around this age.

Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by ursus arctos - 15-06-2008 07:54

Just bringing this back to note that Gramsci's nomination of the Percy Jackson series by Rick Riordan has garnered an ecstatic second from ursus minor, who has now finished each of the first two installments in a single sitting. Part of its allure is no doubt the Greek myth connection, and in that vein we can very heartily recommend the Stephanides Brothers series of retellings of those stories (as well as the Homeric epics, Oedipus, and Aesop), preferably in the now out of print larger format versions if one can find them. If not, the smaller pocket versions of the most popular titles are available here.

And while I'm here, I completely agree with Neil about the Phantom Tollbooth.

Do Colfer's Artemis Fowl books need to be read in order?

Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by Antonio Gramsci - 15-06-2008 14:59

The fourth Percy Jackson came out here about two weeks ago. Benito knocked it off in about two days and said it is the best of the lot.

Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by ursus arctos - 15-06-2008 15:37

UM just finished number three. In a way I'm glad that Amazon was temporarily out of stock of the latest one.

Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by Bafflin Smoke Signals - 16-06-2008 11:16

I forgot to mention PG Wodehouse's early school stories. They're public school-based and don't have his usual humorous touch, but they're good reads. Several feature house and inter-school cricket matches as the main plot, and there are a number set in fictitious schools, St Austin's and Wrykyn.

Penguin used to have three compilations of three short novels each (The Gold Bat and Other School Stories; The Pothunters and Other School Stories, and a third whose name I forget). You can still find these compilations easily on bibliofind.

The Mike stories are are often based around cricket, as he's a future county cricketer (although he doesn't have FEC on his bag). Mike at Wrykyn, and Mike and Psmith are the ones set in school.

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Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by delicatemoth - 16-06-2008 12:57

Tove Jansson, Susan Cooper, Alan Garner, JRR Tolkien - I think I was about eight when I first read these authors and they've stayed with me all my life. It's certainly high time for The Hobbit if they haven't yet encountered it.

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Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by Antonio Gramsci - 02-09-2008 12:47

For those with pre-teen children and a bent for the fantasy genre, my son is currently obsessed with the "heir" series (Warrior's heir, Wizard's heir, Dragon Heir) by a woman named Cinda Willams Chima. Percy Jackson-ish but not played for laughs so much - more "grown up".

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Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by Matej - 02-09-2008 13:53

Probably too late ursus, but the Artemis Fowl books definitely work better if read in order.

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Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by ursus arctos - 02-09-2008 14:04

Not too late, and good to know.

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Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by Mumpo - 02-09-2008 14:22

M'lovely daughter (8¼) is currently enjoying BB's The Little Grey Men, a pastoral account of the tribulations of a group of elves that reads very charmingly. In fact, the sheer density of references to the bucolic idyll in which the story set, is impressive in itself.

I'm reading it to her, but she's not far off being able to read it herself.

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Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by Purves Grundy - 02-09-2008 20:18

Young Master Grundy is, as every good 8-year-old boy should be, right in the middle of his Roman phase, and he loves Caroline Sullivan's Roman Mysteries series. Having been with him to a reading she gave she certainly seems to have teh right stuff, so they are definitely recommended.

Oh, and after much pestering by me he finally relented and read Robert Westall's magnificent The Machine Gunners while we were in Cornwall. And he loved it so much he immediately re-read it twice. Warned the cockles to see him loving a book I adored so utterly, it did.

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Re:Children\'s reading advice needed

Posted by Antonio Gramsci - 03-09-2008 02:56

The Machine Gunners was one of my favourite books, too. I don't seem to be able to get my son to read it, though.

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