

Best Fantasy Books for Older Children (or Adults Who Want to Catch Up)

As I've said [before](#), reading to my children has given me the opportunity to catch up on some great children's literature that I did not read when I was younger. If you wish to do the some catch-up work yourself, or to recommend some books to your own children, you may want to check out some of the following books for older children in the fantasy genre. The recommendations come from Elizabeth Wilson's ever-helpful *Books Children Love: A Guide to the Best Children's Literature*. (N.B. Wilson published her list in 1987, so there's definitely an argument to be made for the inclusion of some more recent fantasy books.)

1) Lloyd Alexander, *The Book of Three*

This is the first of Alexander's The Prydain Chronicles, which are inspired by Welsh mythology and follow the protagonist Taran's adventures fighting evil forces that threaten the land of Prydain.

2) Martha Bacon, *Moth Manor*

"A haunted dollhouse, New England antiques and a Gothic flavor are some of the ingredients of this fantasy/reality story."

3) Nancy Bond, *A String in the Harp*

“This well-received novel is an unusual time travel story, with its focus on the emotional pain and separation the Morgans experience after the death of their mother and the gradual healing they find through their experiences.” (from Wikipedia)

4) Elizabeth Goudge, *The Little White Horse*

Goudge is a wonderful author who wrote both children and adult books. This one was a favorite of J.K. Rowling when she was a child. It has also been made into a movie called *The Secret of Moonacre* (the book is better, of course).

5) Madeleine L'Engle, A trilogy: *A Wrinkle in Time*; *A Wind in the Door*; *A Swiftly Tilting Planet*

“These imaginative stories are sometimes spoken of as ‘science fiction,’ but they actually have little in common with that genre. They may be more accurately classified as fantasy in which events (and the people involved) transcend the usual limits of time and space.”

6) Edward Ormondroyd, *Time at the Top*

“A lively, well-written fantasy about a girl of 1960 who goes back in time to 1881.”

7) Robert Siegel, *Alpha Centauri*

“A visiting professorship brings Becky’s father to London from

Massachusetts, and he invites his daughter to come along. Reveling in being surrounded by reminders of people and events of the past, Becky is unaware that soon she will be plunged into dangerous adventures in the Britain of thousands of years ago."

8) Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*

"Swift's story of the seafaring Lemuel Gulliver is a masterpiece of adult satire, but the wonderfully and playfully imagined worlds of the tiny Lilliputians, the immense Brobdingnagians, the eccentric Laputans, and the dignified Houyhnhnms so captured the imaginations of children that *Gulliver's Travels* has been a children's classic for generations, while at the same time it continues to be studied in college literature classes."

9) J.R.R. Tolkien, *Farmer Giles of Ham*

"In this insightful, somewhat satiric story, a reluctant hero eventually becomes wealthy and powerful and is finally made king. The story includes hilarious encounters with a devious and calculating dragon and a pompous king."

10) J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings Trilogy*

It's not really necessary to include a description of this one.

11) Jules Verne, *From the Earth to the Moon*

“An exciting and suspenseful story of space travel—written in 1865. Youngsters interested in today’s space shuttles and interplanetary travel will be especially intrigued by Verne’s detailed descriptions of his fictional space ship and how it works and the trip to the moon.”

12) Jules Verne, *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*

Again, no description necessary.

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