

5 Lost Literary Works That Would Be Great to Read

These literary works were written by authors that are recognized as some of the best of all time. Though many titles which bear their names are still popular and in circulation today, each one of these authors composed literary pieces which have been lost to history. Though we may have a historical record of their existence, such a record only serves as a sad reminder of what we are missing.

1. Homer's *Margites*

As one of the most well-recognized poets to have ever walked the earth, Homer is best known for composing the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. However, [he wrote a third epic poem titled the *Margites*](#). Unlike the other two aforementioned epics, the *Margites* was a comedy. Unfortunately, it did not survive the Medieval Period despite its popularity in Ancient Greece. The epic centered around a hopelessly stupid man named Margites, which translates into English as “mad” or “raving.” We only have record of the work today because it was quoted in other famous works.

2. Herman Melville's *Isle of the Cross*

The widely recognized American author of *Moby Dick* [wrote a novel titled *Isle of the Cross*](#). However, when he sent his (allegedly) sole copy to the publisher, it became lost after the publisher turned it down and sent it back to Melville. The novel followed a female protagonist who was based on a woman whose story Melville had heard. The woman, Agatha Hatch, had met her husband when she saved him from a shipwreck, but he ended up abandoning her and their daughter not once but twice before disappearing from their lives forever.

3. Ernest Hemingway's World War I Novel

Though Ernest Hemingway remains famous for his many great literary works, he wrote several other stories that were never given the chance to be famous. [One of these stories is rumored to be a novel set during the first world war.](#) This novel, along with other works, was lost when Mrs. Hemingway packed up all of her husband's drafts and attempted to deliver them to Hemingway (who had arranged to meet with a publisher while on a business trip). Unfortunately, Mrs. Hemingway's suitcase was stolen before she was able to deliver the copies to her husband, thus taking away the world's opportunity to experience young Hemingway's writing. The unfortunate event came with another casualty: the Hemingways' marriage.

4. Shakespeare's *Cardenio*

Following the publication of Cervantes' 1605 novel *Don Quixote*, [Shakespeare supposedly composed a play titled *Cardenio*](#) which was based on one of Cervantes' characters. The play was recorded in history by means of two checks written out to the King's Men (Shakespeare's acting company) and by a publisher claiming to own the rights to it along with other plays known to be authored by Shakespeare. However, unlike Shakespeare's other plays, this one was never actually published, only recorded in the actors' scripts. In the eighteenth century, another playwright claimed to have found some of the original manuscripts of the lost play, a discovery which is still disputed to this day. The plot is said to have centered around two couples, and most assume it would have been quite the romantic comedy.

5. Jane Austen's *Sanditon*

When Jane Austen died in 1817, [she left an unfinished novel behind](#) that was only 11 chapters long. Like her other

novels, it details a female protagonist, Charlotte, and her romantic adventures. Since Austen's death, others have attempted to complete the work, but none have done justice to the author of those first 11 chapters. The title of the book, not chosen by Austen, comes from the name of the resort visited by Charlotte in the novel.