

Lost Classics: Writers on Books Loved and Lost, Overlooked, Under-read, Unavailable, Stolen, Extinct, or Otherwise Out of Commission

Michael Ondaatje (Editor) , Michael Redhill (Editor) , Esta Spalding (Editor) , Linda Spalding (Editor) , Michael Turner (Contributor) , Margaret Atwood (Contributor) , Russell Banks (Contributor) , Bill Richardson (Contributor) , more... Ronald Wright (Contributor) , Caryl Phillips (Contributor) ...less

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An Anchor Books Original

Seventy-four distinguished writers tell personal tales of books loved and lost—great books overlooked, under-read, out of print, stolen, scorned, extinct, or otherwise out of commission.

Compiled by the editors of *Brick: A Literary Magazine*, **Lost Classics** is a reader's delight: an intriguing and entertaining collection of eulogies for lost books. As the editors have written in a joint introduction to the book, "being lovers of books, we've pulled a scent of these absences behind us our whole reading lives, telling people about books that exist only on our own shelves, or even just in our own memory." Anyone who has ever been changed by a book will find kindred spirits in the pages of **Lost Classics**.

Each of the editors has contributed a lost book essay to this collection, including Michael Ondaatje on Sri Lankan filmmaker Tissa Abeysekara's **Bringing Tony Home**, a novella about a mutual era of childhood. Also included are Margaret Atwood on sex and death in the scandalous **Doctor Glas**, first published in Sweden in 1905; Russell Banks on the off-beat travelogue **Too Late to Turn Back** by Barbara Greene—the "slightly ditzzy" cousin of Graham; Bill Richardson on a children's book for adults by Russell Hoban; Ronald Wright on William Golding's **Pincher Martin**; Caryl Phillips on Michael Mac Liammoir's account of his experiences on the set of Orson Welles's **Othello**, and much, much more.

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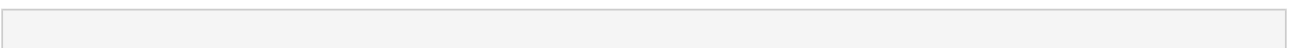
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From Reader Review Lost Classics: Writers on Books Loved and Lost, Overlooked, Under-read, Unavailable, Stolen, Extinct, or Otherwise Out of Commission for online ebook

Eustacia Tan says

This book sounded interesting and I figured that I was either going to give up within 50 pages, or I'd love it so the most I'd waste is a little bit of time. Books about books tend to be polarising like that. Luckily for me, this book was under "love it" for me.

Lost Classics contains 74 recommendations from various authors (I've heard of two of them, have read maybe one). All the books recommended here are somehow lost, and some of them are just books that the authors met and was unable to read on their reading journey.

What I enjoyed about this book was the sheer variety of books that were recommended. Not every book appealed to me but plenty of them did and now I have a list of books that I'd want to read but probably won't get the chance to. And just so I've written them down somewhere, the books are:

- Too Late to Turn Back by Barbara Greene
- Codex Seraphinianus by Luigi Serafini
- Glimpses of World History by Jawaharla Nehru
- Classics Revisited by Kenneth Rexroth
- The Five Nations by Rudyard Kipling
- Bernadette, French Girl's Annual
- Beyond the Pawpaw Trees by Palmer Brown
- Address Unknown by Kressmann Taylor (sounds like a really powerful short story set in Nazi Germany)
- The Gate of Horn by G. R. Levy
- The Mouse and His Child by Russell Hoban (it sounds like a lost fairytale which is amazing)
- The Peterkin Papers by Lucretia P. Hale
- The Ten Thousand Things by Maria Dermout (apparently this book is set in Indonesia)
- Jigsaw by Sybille Bedford (sounds like a great autobiography)

The problem with having all these books on my TBR list is that they're lost. I hope that with the advent of the ebook, most of these books will once again be available to the general public. After all, one of the advantages of ebooks is that you don't have to print hundreds of books at a time, which means that you can

have books available for the proverbial "long tail."

Fingers crossed.

P.s. Anyone have their own lost book? I have quite a couple but I'm working on getting a copy of them. It's a good thing that the internet exists because I doubt I'd find the books in Singapore or Japan (and anyway I need the internet to find their titles).

Some of my "lost classics"

- The Girl With the Green Ear by Margaret Mahy: It took me forever to find this book (which was really lovely), but it was totally worth it. It makes me want to go and find more of my personal "lost classics".

- The Year of Miss Agnes: I do not remember much about the book, except that it was about a wonderful teacher and I read it while on vacation or just before a vacation (to Genting - anyone used to go there all the time too?) and I don't know, it just stuck with me. Can't even describe why. And I remember the smell of fish.

- True Blue: Read with The Year of Miss Agnes and I went back to MG and snuck into the library to search for this.

- The Search for the Lost Keystone: Actually found this in Singapore, so yay! But I loved the description of the house in this book and that stuck with me for a long time. I also forgot the title but remembered it had the word "stone" in it and eventually found it. Rereading it was pure joy.

This review was first posted at Inside the mind of a Bibliophile

astried says

Here's the thing. Avid reader can be really snobbish. They want to make sure they've read all the "in" books (including the pretentious ones I suppose) but they also want to be seen as discerning reader, the one that read the marvelous book that nobody else is smart enough to find. Is that why I was reading this? To find some forgotten jewel of a book, read it and stick my nose up on the air? maybe.....softly i whisper my answer..

3stars... some of them couldn't be defined as lost in any interpretation. most are interesting not because the book itself is interesting but the way the writer told it.

Anne says

It's kind of a literary sampler, and "Lost Classics" probably reveals a lot more about the 74 contributors than the titles they have personally selected as elusive lost classics. Beyond their general obscurity, the common thread in most of the choices is that the champions of each book are delighted with how inventively and persuasively their authors use language to communicate. Most enjoyable are the remembrances from childhood and adolescence where books are truly discovered for the first, but most certainly not the last time.

It would be a great waiting room book.

Avis Black says

This volume contains essays about various writers' favorite books that have slipped between the cracks. Lost Classics is much more interesting reading than many 'I recommend this book' books, which tend to repeat the same small number of boring bestsellers and ephemeral mid-list books about the fad-of-the-day.

Sean says

this book is great. it led me to Akutagawa Ryunosuke and Haldor Laxness

Wes says

Good reviews and recommended reads.

Susan says

The subtitle of this book pretty much says it all: "Writers on Books Loved And Lost, Overlooked, Under-read, Unavailable, Stolen, Extinct, or Otherwise Out of Commission." The writers are mainly Canadian and American, but Australia, Japan, France, Spain, the UK, and Ireland are also represented. The wide assortment of essayists includes Margaret Atwood, Russell Banks, Anne Carson, Robert Creeley, Jeffrey Eugenides, John Irving, Philip Levine, Alan Lightman, W.S. Merwin, Michael Ondaatje, Colm Tóibín, and Edmund White. Warning: This book could be dangerous to your to-be-read list....

Magdelanye says

Gathered here, an impressive array of literary heroes from Margaret Atwood to Edmund White recall a memorable book, almost lost to them, but fondly reconstructed for this edition. The best kind of anthology, even the few essays here by authors I don't particularly fancy, or books I have no intention of reading, proved to be interesting.

And of course there are the gems that intruige and have jumped into my tbr list.

Already some of these titles have been transferred to my eternal quest list, as, like the title indicates, many of these classics are lost. Some of the authors are still listed in the new data bases but most of them are not, however lauded their books in their time. Some of them are rumors. I have heard of Haldor Laxness and Philip Levine and Paul Eluard although the library hasn't.

Where shall I find find them? At least they are no longer lost to me, and as long as a book is remembered, it

is not entirely lost.

Deb (Readerbuzz) Nance says

A keeper. Authors write about obscure books that changed their lives, books we readers should find and read.

Nan says

It's a nice anthology. Lost, overlooked, loved, and forgotten authors write about loved, lost, and overlooked books. My reading list grew exponentially.

Sydney says

Different people describe a favourite book that is out of print now. Actually a very enjoyable little book but frustrating because you know the books are not available. Interesting idea though. Like a conversation between friends.

Jon says

I picked up *Lost Classics* because one of its essays reviews the *Codex Seraphinianus*--a book I'm mildly obsessed with at the moment. The essays, like the books they review, are a mixed bag. Some are wonderfully written odes to lost gems, and I've added several books to my "to read" list because of them. Some are deeply personal descriptions of childhood reading experiences that can never be recovered. Some I just don't get, but that's okay. Many of the reviews are for books of poetry, and there are a lot of British and Canadian authors represented.
