

Touching Infinity

The books chosen for this list all have a connection with the concept of infinity – but that’s where the similarity ends. Expect a vast range of reading matter including stories of space travel and fantasy adventure; and novels which explore the meaning of life – the 'big' questions. You’ll certainly meet some alien life forms – but not all of the intergalactic persuasion. Ghostly figures, ancient cave dwellers, throwbacks and angels also inhabit these pages.

Use this list to expand your reading universe. Be prepared to voyage into the unknown. Who knows what you might discover?

Read the introductions to each book and decide for yourself. Be generous, be daring – you can always swap the book for something else if it’s not your cup of tea. But if you don’t try... you’ll never know!

Quarantine by Jim Crace

Four travellers go into the wilderness for 40 days and nights to fast and pray. Sounds like a Bible story? Well, yes, it is, but it's also an extraordinary historical reconstruction of what the experience must have been like for Jesus and others; a meditation on the endless nature of belief; and a gripping drama played out in the searing heat of the desert. Atheist or believer, this book will push you beyond your limits.



The Fifth Elephant by Terry Pratchett

If you like your fantasy off-the-wall, and you haven’t experienced the manic universe of Discworld before, then now’s your chance. Expect loads of dialogue; dwarfs, werewolves and vampires; surreal humour with plenty of jokes and, surprisingly, much to make the grey matter work overtime. The story follows the fortunes (or misfortunes) of Sam Vimes, maverick police chief, as he undertakes the Pratchett version of ‘mission impossible’.



Entertaining Ambrose by Deirdre Purcell

Everything May Lanigan has ever held dear in life is crumbling before her eyes. But the last thing she expects to find in her living room is an angel; or that he will become a regular fixture – a sympathetic ear and a trusted confidant. Even if celestial bodies aren’t your thing, don’t reject Ambrose without giving him a chance. This is really May’s story, told in her own voice; an intimate account of the most earth-shattering year of her life.

Kit’s Wilderness by David Almond

Kit is the new boy; but like John Askew, his family has lived in Stonegate for generations. The monument to the pit disaster of 1821 bears both their names. So when Askew invites Kit to play the game called Death, their future seems as inextricably linked as their past. First written for teenagers, this beautiful, haunting book, suffused with ghosts, dreams and ancient stories, deserves a much wider audience.




A Touch of... Get a sneak preview of ten great reads

Stuck for what to read next? Maybe you fancy trying something new but don’t know where to start. **A Touch of** is a great way for readers who use large print, Braille or audio books to find that good read everyone is looking for. Whether you're choosing for yourself or for someone else who can't get to the library, **A Touch of** gives you a sneak preview of tempting possibilities. There are ten different booklists in the series, including A Touch of Terror, A Touch of Mischief, A Ticklish Touch and A Velvet Touch.

A Touching Infinity features books available in large print and tells you which ones you can get in audio and Braille as well. If you prefer to start from what’s available in audio or Braille, please ask for the ten **A Touch of** samplers which give you friendly introductions and a short extract from each book to listen to or touch read.

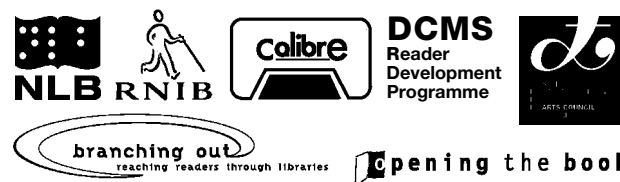
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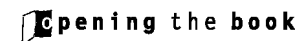
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 Available in audio through public libraries

If you would like more information about the services to readers offered by these organisations please ask a member of library staff. If you have internet access, you can check out www.nlbuk.org



 opening the book

The Business by Iain Banks

Kathryn Telman is a Level Three Executive (counting from the top) in a 2000 year-old organisation known simply as the Business. This novel will stretch your boundaries of belief; it's amusing, sinister and insidiously reasonable. Moving easily across vast distances of culture and geography, Kathryn's job is to buy a small country for the Business to gain a seat at the United Nations. Will she succeed? And, more importantly, do you think she should?

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Stardust by Neil Gaiman

Neil Gaiman is best known for his darkly elegant Sandman comics but he takes a lighter turn in this charming fairy tale for grown-ups. This is a love story and an adventure which takes place in an imaginary world full of witches, gnomes, magic trees and goblin press-gangs. It's the quintessential fantasy quest – go and catch a falling star. If you like Tolkien, or traditional fairy tales, this is the one for you.

Fludd by Hilary Mantel

A short, quirky and unforgettable novel set in a moorland English village in the 1950s. This starts out as comic satire on a church 'which bears some but not much resemblance to the Roman Catholic Church in the real world' but mutates into a rich and strange story of love, alchemy and liberation. But is Sister Philomena liberated or damned? That will depend on whether you see Fludd, the new Curate, as angel or devil.

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3001 The Final Odyssey by Arthur C Clarke

At the end of 2001 – A Space Odyssey, perhaps the most famous space story ever written, Frank Poole is left spinning helplessly in space. Thirty years in reality and 1000 in fiction passed before his creator returned to pick up the story. If you're a 2001 fan, you'll want to discover the fate of Dave Bowman and the chilling computer system called HAL. If you've never tried Clarke before, you'll enjoy the sense of wonder at the unknown, the concern for social issues and the dazzle of inventive technology.

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No Other Life by Brian Moore

Spirituality and politics make an explosive mix in this tense and profound story. Father Paul Michel, a missionary on the Caribbean island of Ganae, rescues a small boy from poverty. Jeannot grows up to be a revolutionary Catholic priest and the first elected president of a land previously ruled by incompetent dictators. Short and vivid, this book will leave you thinking long after you finish it; is Jeannot a saint or a rabble-rouser, a great leader or a failure?

NLB **calibre**

Ben in the World by Doris Lessing

Ben Lovett is 18 but looks 35. Words like 'throw-back' and 'alien' have been used against him all his life. Cut adrift from his family, he embarks on a quest to find his spiritual home. This story explores the role of the outsider in a hostile society. It pulls no punches, and the emotional impact is at times almost too painful. Read it for its intelligence and compassion; and because you may not find another like it for years to come.

calibre

A Touch of...

Touching Infinity

Touching Infinity offers a brief but meaningful encounter with ten very different books. You may be enthusiastic about travelling off-limits or rather apprehensive about visiting virgin territory. Either way, the world (and beyond) is your oyster...

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