

A Tender Touch

The books chosen for this list are linked by a certain tenderness - but that is where the similarity ends. Relationships are at the centre of these stories but they go way beyond 'boy meets girl' and 'it all ended happily ever after'. There's plenty of romance but you'll find it in some unusual places. And there's also the tenderness between best friends, mothers and sons and even between zoo-keepers and orphaned gorillas.

Use this list to spice up your reading life. Take a chance on a relationship you haven't tried before - it might turn out to be the one you've been looking for.

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!

Araby by Gretta Mulroony

Recalled to his native Ireland by his mother's illness, Rory returns to his family home to confront the memories of his childhood and the yawning generation gap: a long-term fixture between himself and his parents. Shifting convincingly between past and present, this is a moving exploration of the relationship between mother and son. Expect bald truths and petty misunderstandings. But don't be afraid to laugh, even in the face of death. There's no malice or bitterness here, just a genuine tenderness combined with a spirit of understanding and reconciliation.

Who Will Run the Frog Hospital?

by Lorrie Moore

Can you remember what it felt like to be 15, with your best friend and the world before you? The story of Berie and Sils, now grown-up and gone their separate ways, will take you back with intensity, hilarity and sometimes sadness. And you're going to have to read it to find out where the bizarre title comes from!

 Calibre

The Girls' Guide to Hunting and Fishing

by Melissa Bank

Dubbed as America's answer to 'Bridget Jones's Diary', this is altogether a more sensitive and tender exploration of the mating game. We first meet Jane as a prickly teenager trying to suss out this thing called love. As she embarks on her quest to find Mr Right, a road fraught with diversions and dead ends, expect quirky one-liners, delicious humour and the promise of a snog on the last page.

 NLB

The Loop by Nicholas Evans

This is a story of a secret love affair between an older woman, still licking the wounds from a previous relationship, and a sensitive boy, cowed by years of failing his father's expectations. Add to this the glorious landscape of Montana, a clutch of divided loyalties and a battle to the death between local farmers and mountain wolves and you've all the ingredients for an epic adventure story, suffused throughout by an unexpected tenderness.


 NLB

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 Touching Infinity.

A Tender Touch 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.

 Available from RNIB Talking Book Service

 Available from NLB in Braille

 Available from Calibre Cassette Library

 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



The Last Lighthousekeeper by Alan Titchmarsh

If you like an old-fashioned love story but your feet are firmly planted in the here and now, then this might be for you. Will Elliot seems to have lost everything: his wife, his child, and now his job. It is only his dream to sail around Britain that keeps him afloat. His plans for the future are almost finalised when he meets Amy, a girl in need of a bit of TLC. But can she repair the damage of Will's tragic past and will they sail off together into the sunset?



Golden Lads and Girls by Angela Lambert

This story begins in 1911 with a special friendship between eleven-year old Sandy and nine-year old Hermione. As they grow, the possibility of something more tender, and much more serious emerges. Alarm bells ring in both homes and the children are swiftly and brutally parted: a separation that will last over 60 years. The deep and lasting effects of first love are explored here against the backdrop of the major historical events of the 20th century. If you're a sucker for a saga, then this is for you.



Larry's Party by Carol Shields

Carol Shields has a great talent for making ordinariness important. This is the story of Larry Weller: his parents; his work; his two marriages and his son. No dramatic scenes or passionate outbursts here; instead you get a rich and detailed picture of what it's like to be a man at the end of the 20th century. All the more fascinating because it's written by a woman.



My Gorilla Journey by Helen Attwater

This fascinating and true story goes a long way to explaining the reasons why a person should give up a job, a home and a safe, healthy lifestyle to care for orphaned gorillas in the volatile African jungle. The tenderness here lies in the selfless and exhausting care, given on a 24 hour basis, by Helen and her partner, Mark, to their charges at the orphanage in Brazzaville. Even if primates aren't your thing, it's impossible to remain indifferent to their plight once you've read this account.

Tara Road by Maeve Binchy

Welcome to Tara Road, Dublin. You'll soon feel that you've lived there all your life – popping in and out of the houses; eating in Colm's restaurant; sharing the bad times and the good. You may even begin to feel a tenderness for the neighbourhood – the people who live there and the bricks and mortar. Forget Coronation Street and Brookside; if you're looking for the feel-good factor, then this one's just for you.



The Girl at the Lion d'Or by Sebastian Faulks

Can past unhappiness be redeemed through new love? Or will damaged people always struggle to make a new relationship work? You will be on tenterhooks as to the outcome of this passionate affair between a waitress and a married war veteran, set in 1930s' France.



A Touch of...

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A Tender Touch offers you a brief, but memorable, encounter with ten very different books. You may be excited by the prospect of new relationships or you may prefer the companionship of old friends. Either way, a little of what you fancy does you good...

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