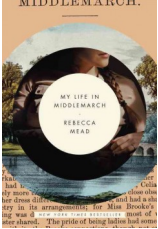


Information, Answers & Reviews

My Life in Middlemarch



[view in catalog](#)

Here's what author Rebecca Mead said about a subject dear to our hearts, "Reading does not feel like an escape from life so much as it feels like an urgent, crucial dimension of life itself."

This book is both a biography and travelogue of what many consider the world's best novel? *Middlemarch*. It also is a personal memoir by Mead.

In the first chapter Mead recalls how many times she has read the novel and how much it has changed for her over time. What drew her as a child to it was how full of adult life the book was. She also loved the intelligence of the characters, particularly the heroine, Miss Dorothea Brooke. Along the way we learn about the novel itself, how it was first published as a serial in eight parts with the subtitle "A Provincial Life." It bore a male author's name--George Eliot but even Charles Dickens, a contemporary of Eliot's knew immediately that it was written by a woman. He said, "I believe that no man ever before had the art of making himself, mentally, so like a woman, since the world began." Dickens also loved Eliot's writing. He said of her first novel, "*Adam Bede* has taken its place among the actual experiences and endurances of my life." [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on May 16, 2014

[My Life in Middlemarch](#)

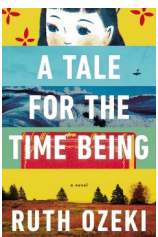
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A Tale for the Time Being



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This cross-cultural gem of a novel tells the story of two women: one, Nao, a young Japanese schoolgirl; the other, Ruth, a middle-aged writer who lives in a rainforest town near Vancouver, Canada. Their lives intersect when Nao's *Hello Kitty* lunchbox lands as jetsam on the beach of

the tiny town. Inside are letters, a WW II kamikaze wristwatch and most precious, Nao's diary, wrapped in layers and layers of plastic bags, so it is entirely legible.

The story is told in alternating voices. One belongs to the trendy, irrepressible, somewhat risqué and thoroughly jaded Nao who is bullied in school and mocked as an immigrant from America (she spent most of her childhood in California). The other belongs to Ruth who incidentally has the same first name as the author. Ruth has moved to Canada from another island town, New York City, because her husband loved the peacefulness of life in rural Canada and had major health issues. Also, Ruth brought her aged mother there to die.

Ruth is fascinated by the diary. Because she is suffering from writer's block on her new novel, she totally immerses herself in the diary and in trying to track down Nao. Did Nao's diary begin its journey in the destruction and flooding caused by the great Japanese tsunami of March 2011? [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on May 7, 2014

[A Tale for the Time Being](#)

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[International Settings](#)

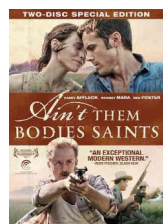
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[Ain't Them Bodies Saints](#)



[view in catalog](#)

I chose to highlight this film, released (and slightly forgotten) last year, because the holds queue has recently run its course. The plot concerns a small-town Texas man who escapes from prison to reunite with his wife and their child he has never seen. If you're looking for a crime picture that is equal parts emotional relationship drama and technical detail period piece (mid 20th century), check this out. The box advertises it as a "modern western", which I suppose it is, in the way a film like [Down in the Valley](#) or [Lonely Are The Brave](#) (the last "good Western", according to Sam Shepard's *True West*) is. It has a few action scenes, but this film is more [Badlands](#) than [Bonnie & Clyde](#). [Read more](#)

Posted by Brandon R. on May 1, 2014

[Sights and Sounds](#)

[Information, Answers & Reviews](#)

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[How To Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia](#)



[view in catalog](#)

Masked in the persona of a self-help book, this novel is really a love story and a tale of the ambitious struggle of a rural bumpkin to get ahead in a world madly developing at all costs. Unlucky enough to nearly die from hepatitis as an infant, because he is his mother's favorite, he is saved and the family soon follows the first theorem to worldly success in Asia: move to a big city.

Each chapter summarizes in the title that chapter's method of achieving worldly success; for example, the second chapter advises, "Get an education." Though normally the eldest son in this unnamed Asian country (probably Pakistan) would be pushed to study, in this family the narrator was lucky because his older brother was already learning a trade. And being bright, he succeeded at school despite contradicting a teacher who gave out false information. For in school, you never pointed out the failings of a teacher. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on April 29, 2014

[How To Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia](#)

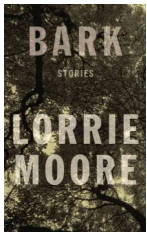
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Bark



[view in catalog](#)

No one else does wry humorous stories full of punch the way Lorrie Moore does. In *Bark*, her newest collection, she examines modern life after divorce and the difficult art of parenting teens. In the opening story "Debarking" she describes the dating life of a newly divorced man, Ira Wilkins. He meets a zany pediatrician Zora at a dinner party, and they begin seeing each other. Unfortunately, this also involves contact with Zora's teenage son—the zip-lock mouthed, Bruno. Does it give Ira the willies that Bruno and Zora have an uncomfortable habit of sitting close and touching? Yep. Yet Ira plows on with a romance that is hardly reciprocated. His confidence is down so he allows Zora and Bruno to take advantage of him—he buys them meals, movie tickets, etc. They even take the rest of his birthday cake home after a lackluster celebration because Bruno needs it for his school lunch. This can't end well and it doesn't but what fun happens along the way.

More eerie is "The Juniper Tree" a kind of new age ghost story where three women share their talents: art, dance, song with their recently deceased friend who still haunts her house. The first person narrator never made it to the hospital to see the friend, Robin Ross, and in fact came to this odd séance with no prepared gift. So on the spot, she sang a rendition of the "Star

Spangled Banner. [? Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on April 22, 2014

[Bark : Stories](#)

[Short Stories](#)

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Caribou



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It's National Poetry month, so I want to introduce a new book of poetry to you, Charles Wright's *Caribou*. Pulitzer Prize winner, Wright composes strong, elegiac poems in an easily accessible style and whatever subject matter they cover, all lead back to the world's incredible yet fragile beauty. Here's a sample from *Natura Morta*: "The tiny torches of the rhododendron leaf tips / Trouble our eyesight, / and call us into their hymnal deep underground."

The most touching poems discover the magical world of night while also exploring the mystery of death as in "Time and the Centipedes of Night": "When the wind stops, there's silence. / When the waters go down on their knees and touch their heads / To the bottom, there's silence, when the stars appear / face down, O Lord, then what a hush." [? Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on April 22, 2014

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