

Reader of the Week - Mr Colligan



What was your favourite childhood book and why?

My favourite book when I was young was 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.' I enjoyed reading all the Narnia books. I was and am a big fan of comic books and I liked the fact that the Narnia books had a continuity that linked them together much like the Superman and Batman comics that my dad would buy me. When I was older I discovered that there was a strong religious theme running through CS Lewis' work that I had, understandably, missed as a 10 year old. This made me come back to them and view them in a new light. It is always enjoyable when something that was important to you as a child can still have an impact on you in later years.

What kind of books do you read now?

I mostly read non fiction. I enjoy books about social science by authors such as Malcolm Gladwell and Michael Lewis. History and biographies are also a favourite. I have a few favourite books of recent times - "The Last Pirate of New York" by Rich Cohen which is about the last man to be hanged as a pirate in Manhattan at the end of the 19th century. Also "Berlin 1936 - Sixteen Days in August" by Oliver Hilmes, a day by day account of the 1936 Olympic games which were held in Berlin during the time of the Nazis. My recent favourite would be "The Deficit Myth - Modern Monetary Theory and the birth of the People's Economy" by Stephanie Kelton. This is a very accessible look at a new way to think about the economy and how it can be changed to help people and society. Right now I'm reading "The Code Breaker: Jennifer Doudna, Gene Editing, and the Future of the Human Race" by Walter Isaacson which is about the scientist who developed world-changing gene-editing invention CRISPR, and asks whether the benefits of controlling our DNA outweigh the potential consequences of its misuse. I'm finding it tricky to keep on top of all the scientific terms and had to get Mr Mercer's S1 class to talk me through their work on DNA the other to help. I'll stick with it though because it is a fascinating story.

Oh and I still read comics all the time - 2000ad, X-men, Superman. You name it. You're never too old to enjoy a good comic.

Which 3 books do you think everyone should have read by the time they leave school?

I'd start with my favourite - "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" for the reasons I gave above. Then I'd suggest "The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists" by Robert Tressell which I read when I was in S4 because an English Teacher in my school thought I'd like it. Finally, I'd suggest "Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong About The World - And Why Things Are Better Than You Think" by Hans and Ola Rosling which explains in really straightforward terms why the world isn't the terrible place the media sometimes would have us believe.

Which fictional place would you like to visit?

Bag End, in Hobbiton.

Books or films first?

Books for good stories. Films for daft stories.

Who is your favourite fictional hero and why?

Superman. He stands for truth and justice. Don't buy into that rubbish Zack Snyder version of the character - read Alan Moore and Curt Swan's "Whatever happened to the Man of Tomorrow?" or instead go for two great Scottish creators - Frank Quitely and Grant Morrison's All Star Superman to get to the heart of what makes him such a great character.