

DYSTOPIA

What is it about dystopian fiction that keeps readers going back for more? Are we suckers for punishment? Maybe we find comfort in the reminder that yes, things could be worse. Humanity aims for constant progress and a movement towards a superior standard of living, but what happens when everything goes wrong instead?

The Learning Curve have put together a list of Dystopian Fiction books that are available from the library, these can be borrowed using our Click & Collect Service once lockdown has ended.

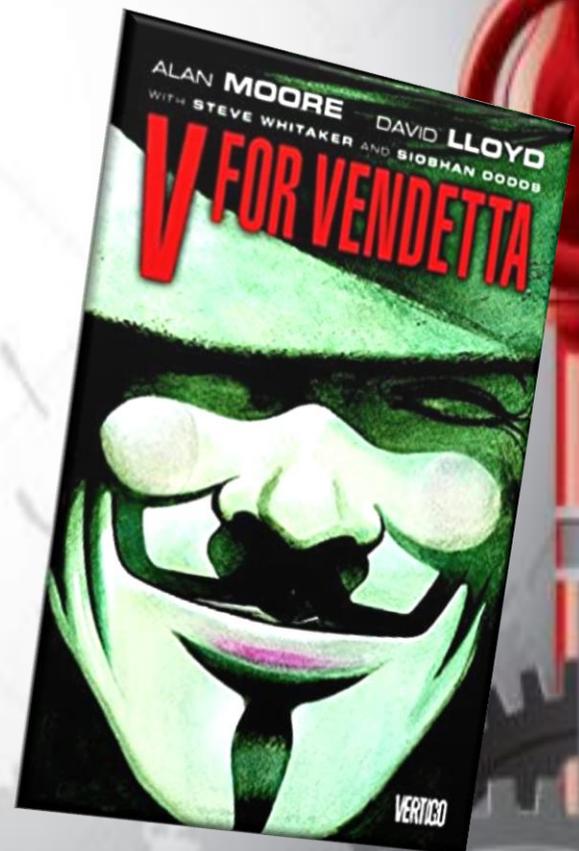
You think you have it bad! Well, you only have to read these stories to find out someone has it worse than you!

V For Vendetta

By Alan Moore

A frightening and powerful tale of the loss of freedom and identity in a chillingly believable totalitarian world, V for Vendetta stands as one of the highest achievements of the comics' medium and a defining work for creators Alan Moore and David Lloyd.

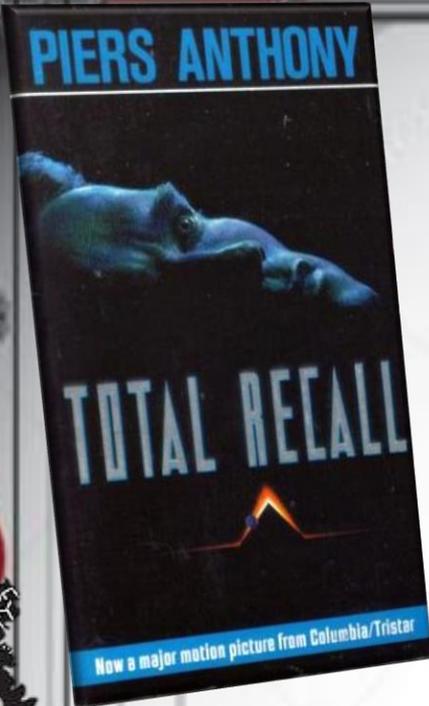
Set in an imagined future England that has given itself over to fascism, this ground-breaking story captures both the suffocating nature of life in an authoritarian police state and the redemptive power of the human spirit which rebels against it. Crafted with sterling clarity and intelligence, V for Vendetta brings an unequalled depth of characterization and verisimilitude to its unflinching account of oppression and resistance.



Total Recall

By Piers Anthony

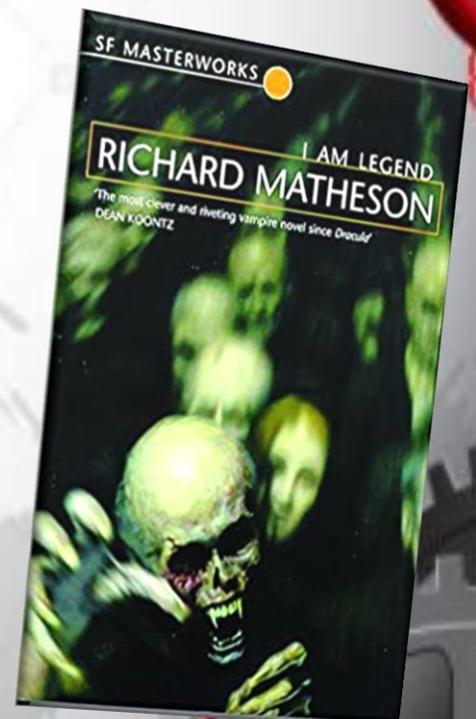
In 1966, the late Philip K Dick published the novelette "We Can Remember It for You Wholesale." A movie based on the story will be released next year; this book is a novelization of the script and the original novel. The first half of the book follows the original plot closely, despite transforming the unremarkable protagonist Douglas Quail into a musclebound man of action. Frustrated with his life, Quail decides to purchase a memory of a two-week adventure on Mars because he can't afford the real thing. However, while under heavy sedation preparatory to the installation of the memory, Quail remembers that he actually was on Mars as an intelligence agent and killer. Now that he has recovered the memory which had been suppressed by his employers, his life is in jeopardy. Here the novel deviates from Dick's philosophical original, becoming a more pedestrian if exciting slam-bang chase thriller. Judged on its own terms, the book works and its fun.

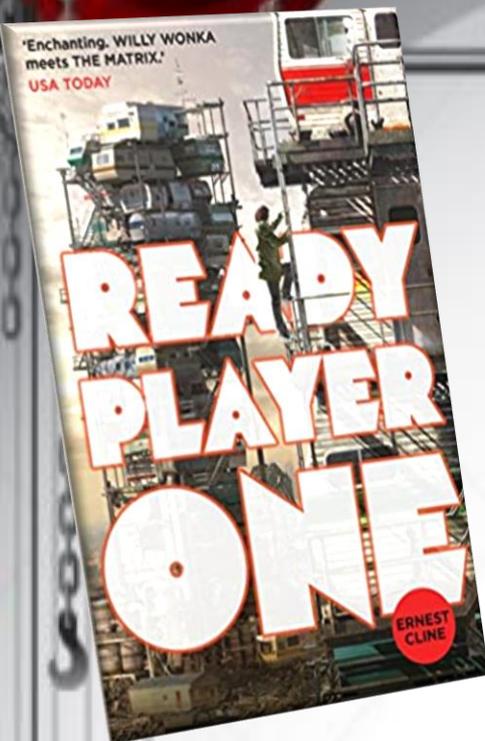


I am Legend

By Richard Matheson

I Am Legend, though, was a trailblazing and later much imitated story that reinvented the vampire myth as SF. Without losing the horror, it presents vampirism as a disease whose secrets can be unlocked by scientific tools. The hero Robert Neville, perhaps the last uninfected man on Earth, finds himself in a paranoid nightmare. By night, the bloodthirsty undead of small-town America besiege his barricaded house: their repeated cry "Come out, Neville!" is a famous SF catchphrase. By day, when they hide in shadow and become comatose, Neville gets out his wooden stakes for an orgy of slaughter. He also discovers pseudoscientific explanations, some rather strained, for vampires' fear of light, vulnerability to stakes though not bullets, loathing of garlic, and so on. What gives the story its uneasy power is the gradual perspective shift which shows that by fighting monsters Neville is himself becoming monstrous--not a vampire but something to terrify vampires and haunt their dreams as a dreadful legend from the bad old days.





Ready Player One

By Ernest Cline

IN THE YEAR 2044, reality is an ugly place. The only time teenage Wade Watts really feels alive is when he's jacked into the virtual utopia known as the OASIS. Wade's devoted his life to studying the puzzles hidden within this world's digital confines, puzzles that are based on their creator's obsession with the pop culture of decades past and that promise massive power and fortune to whoever can unlock them.

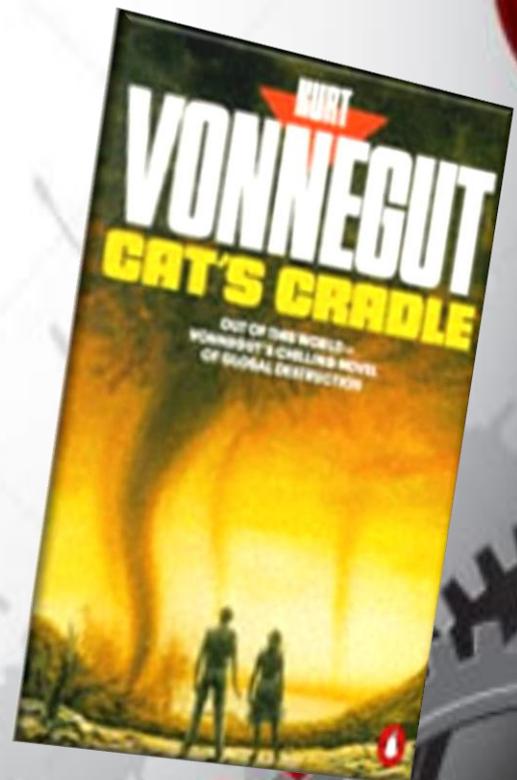
But when Wade stumbles upon the first clue, he finds himself beset by players willing to kill to take this ultimate prize. The race is on, and if Wade's going to survive, he'll have to win—and confront the real world he's always been so desperate to escape.

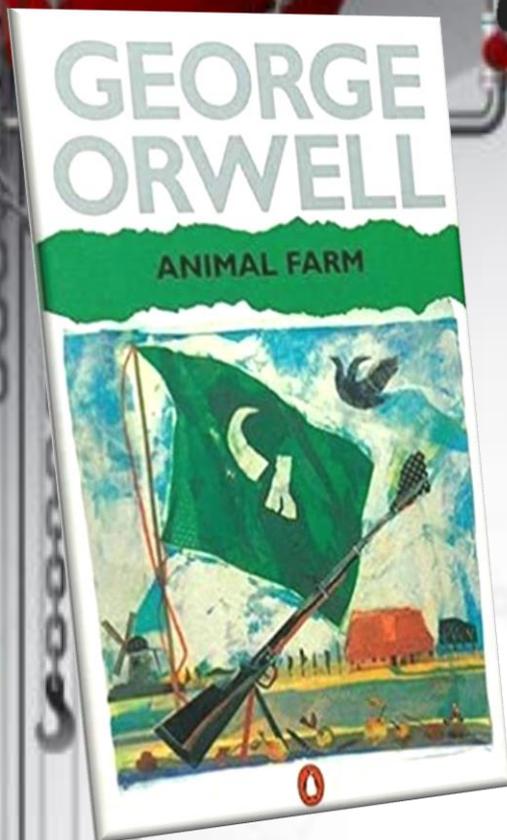
Cat's Cradle

By Kurt Vonnegut

Told with deadpan humour and bitter irony, Kurt Vonnegut's cult tale of global destruction preys on our deepest fears of witnessing Armageddon and, worse still, surviving it ...

Dr Felix Hoenikker, one of the founding 'fathers' of the atomic bomb, has left a deadly legacy to the world. For he's the inventor of 'ice-nine', a lethal chemical capable of freezing the entire planet. The search for its whereabouts leads to Hoenikker's three eccentric children, to a crazed dictator in the Caribbean, to madness. Felix Hoenikker's Death Wish comes true when his last, fatal gift to humankind brings about the end, which for all of us, is nigh...





Animal Farm

By George Orwell

A farm is taken over by its overworked, mistreated animals. With flaming idealism and stirring slogans, they set out to create a paradise of progress, justice, and equality. Thus the stage is set for one of the most telling satiric fables ever penned—a razor-edged fairy tale for grown-ups that records the evolution from revolution against tyranny to a totalitarianism just as terrible.

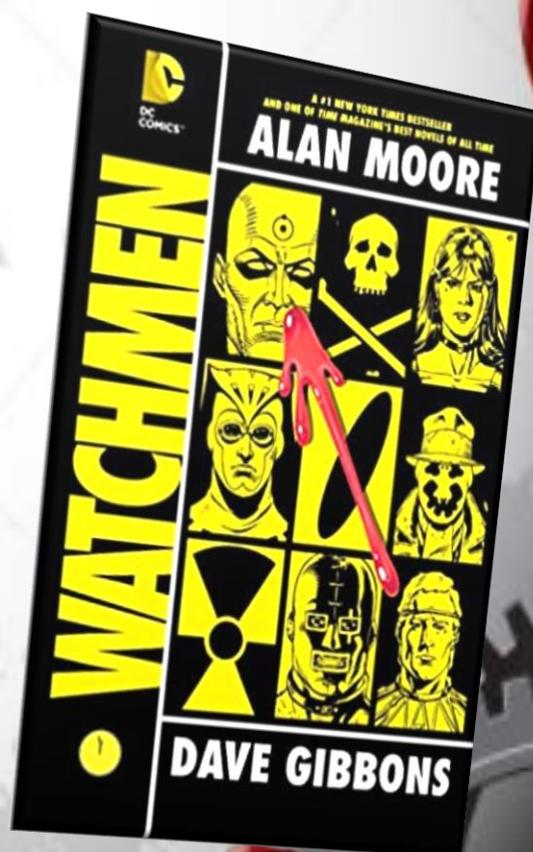
When *Animal Farm* was first published, Stalinist Russia was seen as its target. Today it is devastatingly clear that wherever and whenever freedom is attacked, under whatever banner, the cutting clarity and savage comedy of George Orwell's masterpiece have a meaning and message still ferociously fresh.

Watchmen

By Alan Moore

This Hugo Award-winning graphic novel chronicles the fall from grace of a group of super-heroes plagued by all-too-human failings. Along the way, the concept of the super-hero is dissected as the heroes are stalked by an unknown assassin.

One of the most influential graphic novels of all time and a perennial best-seller, *Watchmen* has been studied on college campuses across the nation and is considered a gateway title, leading readers to other graphic novels such as *V for Vendetta*, *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* and *The Sandman* series



Neuromancer

By William Gibson

Hotwired to the leading edges of art and technology, *Neuromancer* is a cyberpunk, science fiction masterpiece—a classic that ranks with *1984* and *Brave New World* as one of the twentieth century's most potent visions of the future.

The Matrix is a world within the world, a global consensus-hallucination, the representation of every byte of data in cyberspace...

Henry Dorsett Case was the sharpest data-thief in the business, until vengeful former employees crippled his nervous system. But now a new and very mysterious employer recruits him for a last-chance run. The target: an unthinkable powerful artificial intelligence orbiting Earth in service of the sinister Tessier-Ashpool business clan. With a dead man riding shotgun and Molly, mirror-eyed street-samurai, to watch his back, Case embarks on an adventure that ups the ante on an entire genre of fiction.



The Hunger Games

By Suzanne Collins

In the ruins of a place once known as North America lies the nation of Panem, a shining Capitol surrounded by twelve outlying districts. The Capitol is harsh and cruel and keeps the districts in line by forcing them all to send one boy and one girl between the ages of twelve and eighteen to participate in the annual Hunger Games, a fight to the death on live TV.

Sixteen-year-old Katniss Everdeen, who lives alone with her mother and younger sister, regards it as a death sentence when she steps forward to take her sister's place in the Games. But Katniss has been close to dead before—and survival, for her, is second nature. Without really meaning to, she becomes a contender. But if she is to win, she will have to start making choices that weight survival against humanity and life against love

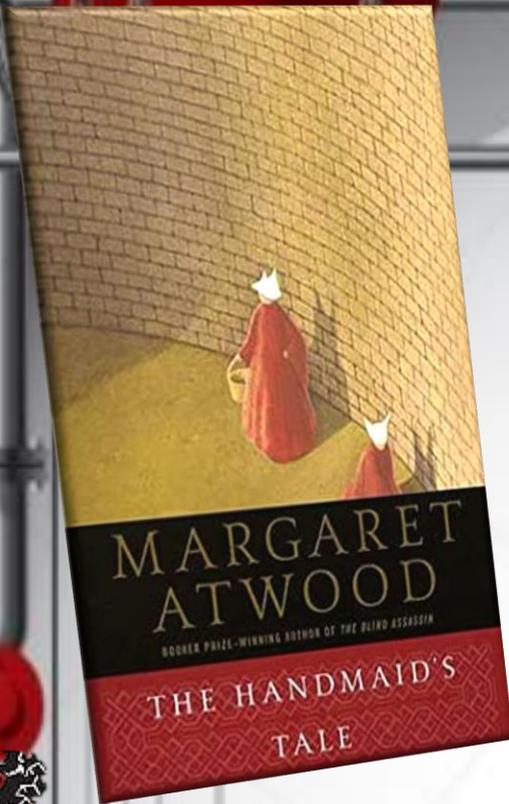


The Handmaid's Tale

By Margaret Atwood

Offred is a Handmaid in the Republic of Gilead. She may leave the home of the Commander and his wife once a day to walk to food markets whose signs are now pictures instead of words because women are no longer allowed to read. She must lie on her back once a month and pray that the Commander makes her pregnant, because in an age of declining births, Offred and the other Handmaids are valued only if their ovaries are viable. Offred can remember the years before, when she lived and made love with her husband, Luke; when she played with and protected her daughter; when she had a job, money of her own, and access to knowledge. But all of that is gone now . . .

Funny, unexpected, horrifying, and altogether convincing, *The Handmaid's Tale* is at once scathing satire, dire warning, and tour de force.



I, Robot

By Isaac Asimov

They mustn't harm a human being, they must obey hitman orders, and they must protect their own existence...but only so long as that doesn't violate rules one and two. With these Three Laws of Robotics, humanity embarked on perhaps its greatest adventure: the invention of the first positronic man. It was a bold new era of evolution that would open up enormous possibilities—and unforeseen risks. For the scientists who invented the earliest robots weren't content that their creations should ' remain programmed helpers, companions, and semi-sentient worker-machines. And soon the robots themselves; aware of their own intelligence, power, and humanity, aren't either.

As humans and robots struggle to survive together—and sometimes against each other—on earth and in space, the future of both hangs in the balance. Human men and women confront robots gone mad, telepathic robots, robot politicians, and vast robotic intelligences that may already secretly control the world. And both are asking the same questions: What is human? And is humanity obsolete?

