

27 Funny Books for Adults and Kids | Julie Vick

I often look for funny books for myself or my kids or to gift to others. I have trouble reading overly dark or violent things and am often looking for comic relief. Humor is subjective—what some people like, other people don't—I don't personally love stuff that makes me cringe and lean more toward dry humor. That said, there is probably something for everyone in this list of humor book recommendations for kids and adults. *

Novels:

1. [*Where'd You Go Bernadette*](#) by Maria Semple. A funny novel with an element of mystery and an unusual format (a good portion of it is told in emails). I liked some of the commentary on modern parenting and that it was set in Seattle, where I lived for a bit.
2. [*Fleischman is in Trouble*](#) by Taffy Brodesser-Akner. This story about a marriage in trouble is not billed as a humor book but it definitely made me laugh. I heard Taffy describe it in a podcast as really being a book about middle age, and I think that is one of the things I really liked about it since I was about the same age as the characters when I read it.
3. [*Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*](#) by Gail Honeyman. I listened to this one on audio while commuting and laughed several times. There are some slightly dark elements to the story of a woman who is socially stunted, but they didn't feel overwhelming for me.
4. [*Dept. of Speculation*](#) by Jenny Offill. A short book written in an almost poetic prose style about a couple with a young child running into marital problems. The style is unusual but doesn't feel heavy or dense and the jokes come when you least expect them. I read this one on an e-reader and think it may be better as a print read vs. audio because of the unusual style.
5. [*Dear Committee Members*](#) by Julie Schumacher. An epistolary novel written as a series of letters from a beleaguered creative writing professor. I listened to the audiobook and the narrator has a Frasier Crane-like voice which delivered the dry wit of the letters well. Schumacher was the first woman to win the Thurber Prize for American Humor for this book and it's a rare book that made me laugh consistently throughout it.

Satire:

6. [*Ant Farm*](#) by Simon Rich: I started reading Simon Rich's humor pieces in *The New Yorker* several years ago and appreciated his style in this collection of short humor pieces. One I particularly liked is about a kid realizing for the first time that calculators exist and that teachers had just been making him do math without them.
7. [*What I'd Say to the Martians*](#) by Jack Handey. Growing up, I remember laughing hard at some of the "Deep Thoughts" pieces Handey wrote for *Saturday Night Live*. His style of random thoughts is also apparent in some of the pieces in this collection (e.g. "Eventually, I believe everything evens out. Long ago an asteroid hit our planet and killed our dinosaurs. But in the future maybe we'll go to another planet and kill their dinosaurs").

8. [*New Erotica for Feminists*](#) by Fiona Taylor, Carrie Wittmer, Caitlin Kunkel, and Brooke Preston. Full disclosure, I know the writers of this one, but love their satirical twist on feminist erotica. A quick and funny read for when you need some comic relief.

Parenting Humor Books:

9. [*The Honest Toddler*](#) by Bunmi Laditan. Laditan is a well-known and funny writer in the parenting humor space and this guidebook told from the point of view of a toddler is a good book to start with.
10. [*Welcome to the Club*](#) by Raquel D'Apice: Written by a comedian and mom, this collection of 100 humorous parenting milestones like "The First Time Baby Eats Dog or Cat Food" and is a good read/gift for new parents.
11. [*Sh*tty Mom*](#) by Laurie Kilmartin, Karen Moline, Alicia Ybarbo, and Mary Ann Zoellner. If you are ever feeling worn out by the perfect parents out there, then this book will make you feel better about slacking. Chapters like "Organized Sports Might Be Great for Your Kids, But They Suck for You" give tongue and cheek advice that many parents will relate to.

Memoirs and Essay Collections:

12. [*Born a Crime*](#) by Trevor Noah. This book about Noah's time growing up in South Africa admittedly has some heavier themes, but it was ultimately hopeful and has plenty of levity. It's an interesting window into apartheid and his life growing up in South Africa. I recommend listening to the audio version, which he reads. There is also a young reader edition of this book, that I will have my kids read when they are a bit older.
13. [*Me Talk Pretty One Day*](#) by David Sedaris. Sedaris is an extremely well-known humor essayist with a vast collection to choose from. This was the first one of his books that I read, so I have a soft spot for it. I particularly like the titular essay that I think anyone who has attempted to learn a foreign language will relate to.
14. [*Sorry I'm Late, I Didn't Want to Come*](#) by Jessica Pan: *As an introvert, I appreciated Pan's journey to attempt to push herself out of her shy/introvert comfort zone by doing things like standup comedy and talking to strangers more.* I picked up a lot of good useful tips and it's also really funny.
15. [*You'll Grow Out of It*](#) by Jessie Klein. I think I related to this essay collection a lot since Klein is about my age and I identified with some of her coming of age essays and the pieces that touch on becoming a mother. I also find it really interesting to hear how comedy people got where they are in their careers, and she touches on that in this collection too.

Picture Books

I feel like I am probably overly judgmental about the humor in picture books that I read to my kids – they tend to laugh at most anything that has the word "butt" in it but I often go for the clever storylines. These are some books that we all enjoy:

16. [*The Legend of Rock, Paper, Scissors*](#) by Drew Daywalt. You may already be familiar with Daywalt's extremely popular book *The Day the Crayons Quit* and *The Legend of*

Rock Paper Scissors offers another clever storyline driven by inanimate objects and the popular kids game. It also has the word butt in it, which always makes my kids laugh.

17. [**Spoon**](#) by Amy Kratz Rosenberg. This author has several clever picture books, but this is one of my favorites – the story of a spoon who is jealous of other utensils but learns to appreciate what he has.
18. [**The Book with No Pictures**](#) by BJ Novak. A really smart premise by Novak, who you may know from his role as Ryan on the TV show *The Office*. The book does not have pictures, but it has a lot of funny words that the reader has to read, which always makes my kids laugh.
19. [**Diary of a Worm**](#) by Doreen Cronin. A funny diary-style account of a young worm's life that my kids and I both like.

Bonus funny longer read aloud:

20. [**Dory Fantasmagory**](#) by Abby Hanlon. We discovered this series of early chapter books when my kids were young and have read the print books and listened to the audio versions many times. Hanlon has a really great way of capturing the wacky thoughts and imaginations of young kids and they make both me and my kids laugh regularly.

Books About Writing Humor

21. [**How to Write Funny**](#) by Scott Dikkers. This is a good, quick overview of different types of humor writing and some of the basics of humor writing techniques.
22. [**Just the Funny Parts**](#) by Nell Scovell. A really engaging look at Scovell's career as a woman comedy writer in a time when there were not many women in comedy rooms (there are still not a ton, but it has gotten better). It's an interesting view into her career and the reality of working in writing rooms (which, turns out does not always sound that amazing!)
23. [**And Here's the Kicker**](#) by Mike Sacks. This book and the follow up *Poking a Dead Frog* are a series of really insightful interviews with well-known comedy writers.

There are also many books in the funny person memoir category, and if you are already a fan of a person's work then reading their book will probably offer some interesting insights into where they got where they are and what their writing process looks like. Some well-known essay collections that are enlightening in this regard include:

24. Tina Fey's [**Bossypants**](#), (25). Amy Poehler's [**Yes Please**](#), (26). Mindy Kaling's [**Is Everyone Hanging Out Without Me**](#), and (27). Mike Reiss's book [**Springfield Confidential**](#) (especially for *Simpsons* fans).

**Disclosure: I've only recommended books I've read myself and enjoyed, and all opinions expressed here are our own. This post may contain affiliate links that at no additional cost to you, I may earn a small commission for purchases.*