

Storytime **CENSORED**

Rare editions of children's books from the collection of Stuart and Mimi Rose

Book list

Louisa May Alcott

Little Women

1868, 1869

Boston, Roberts Brothers

First edition, first state; first volume illustrated by May Alcott, youngest sister of Louisa.

Upon publication of *Little Women*, feminist and abolitionist author Louisa May Alcott received widespread criticism for her “radical” portrayal of Jo March, one of the sassiest and smartest female characters in American literature. However, modern-day feminists now challenge the novel for not being radical enough, pandering to the “weaker sex” mentality and failing to empower girls to succeed.

Source: University of Tulsa special collections and university archives

Hans Christian Andersen

Eventyr [Fairytale]

1850

Copenhagen, Forlagt af

Universitetsboghandler C.A. Reitzel

First collected edition in Danish, illustrated by Vilhelm Pedersen, based on the German *Gesammelte Märchen* published in Leipzig the previous year. This 45-story volume includes “Den lille Havfrue” (“The Little Mermaid”).

The Hans Christian Andersen fairytale *The Little Mermaid* was challenged as pornographic in 1994 for showing bare-chested mermaids. Other challenges criticized as “satanic” the transformation from a woman to half-fish.

Source: Ann Arbor District Library

Sir James Matthew Barrie

Peter Pan or the Boy Who Would Not Grow Up

1928

London, Hodder and Stoughton.

Proof of the first edition of the play with revisions and annotations by Barrie throughout the 23-page dedication. The play was first produced in 1904, though the script remained unpublished until this edition, which includes extensive stage directions.

Peter Pan and *Peter and Wendy* have been challenged over the years for what has been called an offensive depiction of Tiger Lily and the Native American tribe living in Neverland, though at the time the play opened in 1904, this was not yet a controversy. In the play, Peter uses the racial slur “piccaninny” to describe the tribe, members of which communicate in pidgin with lines like “Ugh, ugh, wah!”

Source: Smithsonian.com

L. Frank Baum

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz

1900

Chicago, Geo. M. Hill Co.

First edition; first state of the text, of the plates, and of the binding; with pictures by W. W.

Denslow.

Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain)

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

1885

New York, Charles L. Webster and Company

First American edition, early issue. Title leaf is a cancel, with the copyright notice dated 1884. The blue cloth binding is considerably rarer than the green cloth.

Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (Lewis Carroll)

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

1866

New York, D. Appleton and Co.

First edition, second issue (one of 1,000 copies); with forty-two illustrations by John Tenniel.

Roald Dahl

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

1964

New York, Alfred A. Knopf

First edition; illustrated by Joseph Schindelman.

Challenges to L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* typically involve criticism of "unwholesome and ungodly ideals." In 1928, the titles were banned from public libraries for "depicting women in strong leadership roles," an objection that persisted through the 1950s and '60s. The most publicized case took place in 1986 when seven fundamentalist Christian families from Tennessee argued against the depiction of benevolent witches and promoting the belief that essential human attributes were "individually developed rather than God-given."

Source: University of Tulsa special collections and university archives

First banned in 1885 and called "trash," Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is regularly challenged today for its use of racial slurs, offensive language, and insensitivity.

Sources: American Library Association, *Time* magazine

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland has been challenged and banned multiple times, most often for the presence of a hookah and mind-altering mushrooms, which objectors say promote drug use.

Source: University of Tulsa special collections and university archives

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory was originally challenged for what were called racist depictions of the Oompa-Loompas as small black pygmies. Author Roald Dahl changed the description of the Oompa-Loompas in the revised edition, published in 1988. In 1990, a Colorado librarian appealed to the American Library Association to censor the book, arguing that it promoted a poor philosophy on life and that Charlie, the main character, had no redeeming traits — only the absence of negative ones.

Source: University of Tulsa special collections and university archives

Roald Dahl

James and the Giant Peach: A Children's Story

1961

New York, Alfred A. Knopf

First edition, first printing; illustrated by Nancy Ekholm Burkert.

Attempts to censor Roald Dahl's popular *James and the Giant Peach* have cited magical elements, references to drugs and alcohol, and the encouragement of disobedience, along with complaints that some of the subject matter in the book—specifically the death of James' parents and abuse by his aunts—is too scary.

Source: *The Christian Science Monitor*

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

(The Brothers Grimm)

Kinder und Haus-Märchen

[Fairy Tales]

1812

Berlin, in der Realschulbuchhandlung

First edition, first issue; this edition was published in a very small number and conceived by the brothers as part of a larger program of folklore gathering intended for a "scholarly" audience. The tales were rewritten in the second edition for children.

Excessive violence, negative portrayals of female characters, and anti-Semitic references have been among the reasons cited for a ban of fairytales by the brothers Grimm. A 1983 version illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman—a Caldecott Honor Book in 1984—was banned from a school in California because the cover illustration showed a bottle of wine in Little Red Riding Hood's basket.

Source: New York Public Library

A. A. Milne

Winnie-the-Pooh

1926

London, Methuen & Co. Ltd.

First edition; with decorations by Ernest H. Shepard.

Though the ALA has not documented any challenges to A. A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh*, objections have appeared in various news media over the years, saying that talking animals are unnatural and an insult to God. A state-run television station in Turkey is also said to have banned the animated film version of the story because one of the main characters, Piglet, is a pig.

Source: *Newsweek*

J. K. Rowling

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone

1997

London, Bloomsbury

First edition. Inscribed by author.

J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* books are frequent fliers on the American Library Association's challenged-books list. Objections most often come from parents and others concerned about the books' alleged occult/Satanic theme, religious viewpoint, anti-family themes, and violence.

Source: American Library Association

Maurice Sendak

Where the Wild Things Are

1963

New York, Harper & Row

First edition, first printing; inscribed by Sendak with an ink sketch of Max on the half title: “first printing recalled by publisher after receiving the '64 Caldecott medal, To stick medal on!” and signed below the drawing of Max.

Theodor Seuss Geisel (Dr. Seuss)

Green Eggs and Ham

1960

New York, Beginner Books

First edition.

Anna Sewell

Black Beauty: His Grooms and Companions. The Autobiography of a Horse.

1877

London, Jarrold and Sons

First edition; the Quaker author's only publication, written during periods of ill health between 1871 and 1877. Sewell died five months after publication.

J. R. R. Tolkien

The Lord of the Rings

1954-55

London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

First edition.

E. B. White

Charlotte's Web

1952

New York, Harper & Brothers

First edition; pictures by Garth Williams.

Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* won the Caldecott Medal for best picture book in 1964, but challenges to its circulation called the illustrations “too dark and frightening.”

Objections also have included Max's willful obstinance on the one hand and the abuse of being sent to bed without dinner on the other.

Source: Harper College Library

The Dr. Seuss classic *Green Eggs and Ham* was banned in China until the early 1990s because of its alleged portrayal of early Marxism.

Source: New York Public Library

Though the ALA does not have record of a challenge for Anna Sewell's *Black Beauty*, an oft-repeated story in South Africa is that it was banned during apartheid for its title. However, a 2011 memoir by a woman who grew up in South Africa at the time says the story was intentionally exaggerated to illustrate the ignorance of the country's censors.

Source: interestingliterature.com

J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* is frequently subjected to challenges. Contending that it was “satanic,” a group of objectors in 2001 actually burned it and other works by Tolkien outside Christ Community Church in Alamogordo, New, Mexico.

Source: American Library Association

Derided as blasphemous for its portrayal of animals as cogent and verbal, the 1953 Newbery Honor Book *Charlotte's Web* continues to be the subject of frequent challenges and even a 2006 ban in Kansas.

Source: *The Week*