

**Margaret Atwood**  
Notebook

# Grand Theft Author: I'd wait 100 years to read Margaret Atwood - but many wouldn't

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Margaret Atwood is the first author to submit work for the Future Library project - while Douglas Adams' Hitchhiker is remembered in space

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Even though I'm a huge Margaret Atwood fan, I'm not at all sorry that I won't be able to read whatever she has written for the Future Library. Photograph: Murdo Macleod

For years I have owned a slim volume by [Jorge Luis Borges](#) that I've never opened. There are 11 stories in *Doctor Brodie's Report*, and (unusually for me) I haven't failed to read them because I shoved them on a shelf and then forgot about them. I have deliberately not read them because I can't bear the thought of never having a new Borges story to read again. I'd rather be hit by a bus with the stories unread than have read them all and not have them to look forward to. Well, I suppose I'd rather not be hit by a bus at all, but some of that is down to the driver. And maybe I shouldn't be reading as I'm walking along.

So, even though I'm a huge [Margaret Atwood](#) fan, I'm not at all sorry that I won't be able to read whatever she has written for [the Future Library](#), the brainchild of Scottish artist, [Katie Paterson](#). One author will submit a work to the library each year for the next 100 years (Atwood is the first to contribute), until they are all published in 2114. The texts will remain in sealed boxes and be kept in the [Deichman Library](#) in Oslo until then. Meanwhile, 1,000 trees are to be planted nearby to provide the paper for the books.

Everything about this idea is romantic. As Atwood said, "Future Library is bound to attract a lot of attention over the decades, as people follow the progress of the trees, note what takes up residence in and around them, and try to guess what the writers have put into their sealed boxes." And how beautiful to own a book made from trees that you had watched grow around you.

Someone could be writing a literary heist story, in which demented book nerds attempt a library break-in, sometime over the next 100 years, to read the words of their idols. George Clooney is probably halfway through the script. I offer *Grand Theft Author* as the working title.

### Hitchhiker reaches space

Authors have little say in how they are remembered: plenty of popular and critically acclaimed writers have been forgotten because their work fell out of fashion, or was simply overlooked. Others are suddenly rediscovered when their books are re-evaluated: remember the unexpected hit, [Stoner](#), a couple of summers ago?

But Douglas Adams is remembered each year on 25 May, known as [Towel Day](#) - the one thing no good hitchhiker should be without - because his fans are (even by the standards of sci-fi) incredibly devoted.

Not only is Towel Day celebrated here on earth, it is even marked at the International Space Station. The European Space Agency yesterday released a [video of Italian astronaut, Samantha Cristoforetti](#), upside down in a T-shirt which reads *Don't Panic*, reading aloud from the first few pages of the *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. So Adams' work will surely last. At least until someone builds a bypass through our galaxy and it's all over.