

*“Houghton Rifflin’:  
An Autobiography in 41 Page-Turners”*

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Bibliography List

A note on editions: This list was compiled while a large bulk of my collection is inaccessible, in storage at my parents' house. As this list is a chronology of my life, and most books were purchased new as I grew, I can only assume that these books were printed around the same time - therefore, the children's books are generally from the 80s and early 90s, the middle and high school books from the 90s, and so on. Therefore, the dates included are the earliest edition by that publisher. Editions marked with an asterisk (\*) are confirmed.

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**BOOKS AND FAMILY**

Before I could read for myself, my parents took it into their capable hands to find great books for me to listen to and fall in love with. I was able to read books in the car without getting motion sickness, a skill that got me through many long car trips.

Aardema, Verna. *Why Mosquitos Buzz in People's Ears*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1980.

Whenever I see a copy of this book, I can still hear the books on tape version with a woman saying "buzzzzzzzzzz" that my parents kept in our Toyota. I was able to read without getting motion sickness, a skill that saved me on long car trips, but also resulted in me having almost no navigational skills when I learned to drive.

Tresselt, Alvin. *The Mitten*. New York: HarperTrophy, 1989.

We have an obscene amount of holiday books that we always used to set in a basket on the coffee table. This tale of too many forest creatures trying to cram into a mitten was my favorite. My mom would be crushed I didn't pick *The Polar Express* as my favorite, but I couldn't, because it always made her cry. To a seven-year-old, that's a little awkward.

Thomson, Peggy (with David Small illustrations). *The King has Horse's Ears*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991.

I love this book, as well as Imogene's Antlers (also by Small), so imagine my excitement when David Small came to my elementary school and signed my book. Imagine my even greater delight when I learned my mom had brought my large painting easel to the gym for Small to use during his talk with us. My books and easel were returned to the house that evening, the latter with a fresh set of antlers drawn on it.

## EARLY STEPS

As I began to read on my own, I voraciously went through anything put in front of me. Luckily, I had relatives who were very good at giving book gifts, which I immediately read (sometimes before they went home). To this day, my parents still give me a "book box" at Christmas, where most of the books below came from.

Berenstain, Stan and Berenstain, Jan. *The Berenstain Bears Almanac*. New York: Random House, 1984.

This was my favorite book to learn about the months, seasons, and nature. The one thing that always bothered me, though, was that in order to start at the beginning of the year, they made January through March winter, and October through December autumn. Clearly the Berenstain Bears don't live in Michigan.

Ahlberg, Janet. *The Jolly Postman: Or Other People's Letters*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1986.

I loved getting mail, so this book, which contained real "letters" to storybook characters, was a treat.

Laura Ingalls Wilder. *Little House on the Prairie*. New York: HarperCollins Children's Books, 1976.

The Little House books had probably the greatest impact in my childhood on imaginative play. I wanted to be Laura. Something about the adventure and charm of living like she did drew me to her. I was her for Halloween two times. Games of house turned into keeping up the homestead, and I snatched up every book by or about or in any way connected to Laura as possible.

Martin, Ann M. *Mary Anne Saves the Day, Baby Sitter's Club #4*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1986.

My junk food reading. I got attached to these books and couldn't stop reading them, even when I got to be in middle school and it was simply embarrassing to be associated with them (luckily, my mom still worked at the bookstore, and could pick them up for me). I wound up collecting the series up to #100, including the Super Specials and Mystery Editions.

Coerr, Eleanor. *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers, 1979.

I must have checked this book out of our classroom library a dozen times. I think the brevity of the story combined with my fourth-grade budding-scientist interest in sicknesses like cancer led to compulsive repeat-readings.

O'Dell, Scott. *Island of the Blue Dolphins*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers, 1979.

I read this book when my teacher had the "advanced reading group" read books outside our textbook. My enjoyment of a girl building a home and finding food on her own was perhaps a first sign of wanting to become independent, to live alone on an island and take care of myself.

Juster, Norton. *The Phantom Tollbooth*. New York: Random House reissue, 1988. This book delighted me with its plays on words. It was my first experience humor that didn't necessarily have a punch line.

### COMING OF AGE

I was a book-ish kid, but I was by no means introverted. From my Little House stage on, I wanted to explore, which is probably why so many of these books have characters having adventures on their own.

Dahl, Roald. *Matilda*, New York: Viking, 1988.

A gifted girl who feels totally out of place with her family and at school? What elementary-aged bookworm can't relate? While my parents were nowhere remotely as terrible as hers, I still sometimes wished I had my own sweet teacher to take me away from people who didn't understand.

Warner, Gertrude Chandler. *The Boxcar Children*. New York: Whitman reprint, 1989. I dabbled with the thought of being a detective. I loved mystery books like Encyclopedia Brown and Nancy Drew, but the thought of making a home in a boxcar and finding all necessary provisions in a dump AND solving mysteries on top of everything just took the cake.

Konigsburg, E. L. *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers reprint, 1981. In addition to escaping to a boxcar, I also thought it would be great to hide out in the Met, bathe in the fountain, and gather income from change thrown into said fountain for food. I think all children's authors could learn something if they read E. L. Konisburg.

Avi. *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*. New York: HarperTrophy reprint, 1992. I learned that I could be cool for reading when I competed in the Battle of the Books in 8th grade. Each member on our five-person team chose a specialty book, and I lobbied to get this one, the memoirs of a girl caught on a mutinous ship.

### SCIENCE AFFECTIONADO

Berenstain, Stan and Berenstain, Jan. *The Day of the Dinosaur*. New York: Random House, 1987.\*

I had a lot of science books as a kid, probably contributing to my early proclamation that I wanted to be a chemist when I grew up, but it's always struck me as funny that the authors of the Berenstain Bears wrote a book on the history of dinosaurs.

Cole, Joanna. *The Magic Schoolbus In the Time of the Dinosaurs*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1995.\*

Any book about science that features characters going on wild field trips, and even includes speech bubbles to go along with the text, is great in my book. I loved dinosaurs, especially the stegosaurus. I wasn't allowed to have Barbies in the bathtub, so I used to play with plastic dinosaurs instead.

Lowry, Lois. *The Giver*. New York: Random House Books for Young Readers, 1993. Part of the reason I avoided sci-fi for so long was that I was afraid I wouldn't be able to follow a tale of other planets, lands, and races. This book showed me fantasy and speculative fiction can be used in manipulating the world around us.

Feynman, Richard. *Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman!: Adventures of a Curious Character*. Norton, W. W. and Co., 1997.\*

Scientists weren't supposed to be this funny. I went to a math and science high school, and whenever friends from outside the school mocked my classmates for being nerds with no personalities, I directed them to this book to prove we had a sense of humor too.

Greene, Brian. *The Elegant Universe: Superstrings, the Hidden Dimension, and the Quest for the Ultimate Theory*. New York: Knopf, 2000.

Another scientist with an excellent grasp on the importance of making "normal people" understand technical subjects. I was first smitten with Brian Greene after seeing him speak at Oakland University my senior year of high school. When he came to MSU in 2002, I had this copy signed by him. A picture of us together is still on my desk at work.

Card, Orson Scott. *Ender's Game*. New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1986.\*

I resisted reading sci-fi for years. It's put by the trashy romance and mystery novels for a reason, I thought. My boyfriend and several sci-fi lovers convinced me to read this, so I found a cheap copy at the used bookstore. I read it on the plane ride home from a visit to see my boyfriend in Seattle, and the first thing I told him when I called from Detroit was how much I loved the book.

### **CLASSICAL SNOB**

My teen angst period came and went early, leaving me with a pre-college snobbery that the only good books were the ones that had been checked out from the library a trillion times and analyzed by scholars and students worldwide. I emerged from this era with a few gems.

Kesey, Ken. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. New York: Signet, 1963.

I read this right after completing a semester with a teacher who was obsessed with religious symbolism. I thought I was so cool because I found a whole bunch of religious stuff in Kesey's commentary on mental institutions and society. It was a narrow view at the time, but I continue to find new interpretations each time I read it.

Heller, Joseph. *Catch-22*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996.\*

I thought ironic wit was the coolest thing in town when I read this book. It was one of the few novels I've read that has made me laugh out loud. Read at a time when I was worrying about college and my future, this was what I needed.

Salinger, J. D. *Catcher in the Rye*. New York: Little, Brown & Company, 1991.\*

I knew I was out of my second angst-y period when I read this book, like all the cool, "deep," kids were doing, and was unimpressed. I kept the copy partially so I could give it to my own insecure child someday, in the hopes that they would enjoy it more than I did.

## A SMATTERING OF POETRY

I've never been a big poetry fan, but there are two poets I always enjoy.

Frost, Robert. *You Come Too: Favorite Poems for Readers of All Ages*. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1991.

I've had this small collection of Frost's poetry since I bought it in an elementary school book club. I've always loved that his writing makes me instantly see images, instead of having to first stumble through complex metaphors.

cummings, e. e., *One Hundred Selected Poems*. New York: Grove, 1976.\*

cummings' unique syntactical choices are ones I actually enjoy stumbling through. I find him fascinatingly innovative and love the way he sees things.

## DRAMA QUEEN

I was involved with theatre ever since opportunities were available. When I realized I couldn't see (or afford) to see many shows in person, I snapped up inexpensive scripts and created my own plays.

Shakespeare, William. *Henry IV, Part One*. New York: Signet, 1998.

When we studied this play in school, I hated it. I kept the school's copy as their punishment for causing me so much grief - one more student wouldn't have to read about the Henries and Falstaff. Ironically, I saw this performed at the Stratford Festival while I was in college, and wound up loving it.

Ives, David. *All in the Timing*, New York: Vintage Books, 1994.\*

At an International Thespian Society festival in high school, I saw a hilarious scene between two would-be lovers in a café who can start their conversation over whenever they make a misstep. After scouring the Internet, trying to discover what the bit was from, I learned it was a part of a series of one acts by David Ives. I have since acted in it, and encouraged anyone doing a one-act festival to perform it.

Beckett, Samuel. *Waiting for Godot*. New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1981.\*

This was my introduction to drama that didn't have answers, that left with you when you walked out of the theater. I performed a scene from this at the International Thespian Festival and advanced to the National competition with my partner. I learned how much easier it is to study scripts when you can actually see them performed.

O'Neill, Eugene. *The Iceman Cometh, from Masters of Modern Drama*. New York: Random House, 1962.\*

Alternately, I would never want to see the four-hour Iceman Cometh performed. I started reading this script wishing it would be shorter because I had lots of homework to do. I wound up losing myself in it. The concepts of pipe dreams, of people having hopes that they just can't ever get a start on, and the idea of not being able to comprehend why someone would love you were all issues that had a strong impact on me.

## **JOURNALIST**

I became a journalist in part because I wanted to write pieces that would have an impact on people. These books helped me see I could eventually do that.

Agee, James. *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2001.  
About 30 years before Truman Capote made "new journalism" a household name in the 1960s, James Agee created the form by including himself in his account of Depression-era homesteaders. By working with photographer Walker Evans, the book is a powerful report and memoir.

Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1962.  
While this wasn't a piece of journalism, this struck a journalistic chord with me - it was written in the same vein as Ida Tarbell. It was inspiring to me that Carson's report completely changed the use of DDT in America.

## **UNINTENTIONALLY A FEMINIST**

Feminist literature crept up on me. I always knew I was in support of women's rights, even when I was little and got mad if boys and girls were treated differently in classes. Thus, my discovery of women's literature started with me gravitating towards books where women wound up being awesome, strong people.

Cushman, Karen. *Catherine, Called Birdy*. New York: HarperCollins, 1995.\*  
Starting with Laura Ingalls Wilder, I always wanted to live in a different time period when I was younger. This book taught me that it wasn't all about wearing dresses and using an outhouse - things were really different if you were a medieval girl.

Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid's Tale*. New York: Anchor Books, 1988.\*  
I didn't realize "real" novels incorporated feminist issues into them like this - I thought it was something only theorists talked about. This was one of the first novels that I enjoyed because I liked what the book was saying about women's issues, rather than liking it because I felt I "should" like it because it was a classic I went on to discover many other feminist authors.

Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1993.\*  
Calling this book feminist literature is perhaps a stretch, but I found myself cheering for Elizabeth and her refusal to sink to the coquettish to find a husband. Who needs soap operas or primetime dramas when there's even more suspense and frustration in a 19th century British novel?

Feinberg, Leslie. *Stone Butch Blues*. Ithaca: Firebrand, 1993.  
My first introduction to the concept of being transgender. I thought I was educated on lesbian and gay issues prior to this, but I almost doubled my knowledge from this book.

Ensler, Eve. *The Vagina Monologues: The V-Day Edition*. New York: Random House, 2001.\*

## BACK TO CHILDHOOD

As the pressures of class reading have increased, I have begun to return to middle school favorites, such as many of those listed above. I also discovered a few books I overlooked my first time around.

Konigsburg, E. L. *The View from Saturday*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996.\*

How it is that I missed a book about outcast, nerdy Quiz Bowl kids? My friend insisted I read this after she learned I loved *From the Mixed-Up Files...* I picked up this version of the book at a used bookstore in Seattle after I borrowed my friend's copy.

Rowling, J. K. *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2004.\*

I bought this edition in downtown Edinburgh at midnight on the night before I returned home from my study abroad. I forced myself not to read it on the plane ride home because I knew if I didn't, I would have the whole thing finished before I even touched down in Michigan. I love the Harry Potter series, and this one kept me busy for a good part of summer 2003.

Maguire, Gregory. *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*. New York: HarperCollins, 1996.\*

Last summer was the first in a long time where I wasn't working two jobs, so I chose my summer reading accordingly. I wasn't expecting this version of The Wizard of Oz to be as well-thought-out as it was, and I was delighted.

Tripp, Valerie. *Kit Learns a Lesson*. Middleton: Pleasant Company, 2000.\*

When I was in elementary school, I owned and incessantly reread every single one of the American Girls books, but Kit came around after my time. Mom bought me her books this Christmas, and I fell in love with the girl from the Depression (my favorite period of history) who was a journalist (like me) and loved baseball (ditto).

Bach, Richard. *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*. New York: Macmillan, 1970.\*

For years, whenever I asked my dad what I should read, he would suggest this book. I completely blew him off, thinking it was some silly short story. I finally brought his old edition up with me to school and read it one random evening. I wound up calling him at 11:30 at night sobbing. He asked what was wrong, I told him I read the book, and he laughed and said he understood. I'm listening to any future recommendations he makes.

Falconer, Ian. *Olivia*. New York: Atheneum, 2000.\*

My coworker bought this tale of a precocious pig for me after a particularly stressful week. I now read it to my suitemates and others on my floor when they seem frazzled.