

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

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My family is a book family. The basement, family room and dining room are lined with dozens of bookshelves. Even shelves in the kitchen sag under the weight of rows of cookbooks. My mom has a bag of books "to be read" that she hides away in her closet because there's no more room. My parents are huge supporters of the power of books. They have always encouraged me to buy whatever books I was interested in. My mom once told me to never worry if I went over a budget as long as I was buying a book.

The result is that I now have over 1,000 books in my bedroom, basement and dorm. I didn't utilize the library as much as I could have as a child and even now as a student, because I got into the habit of being in the middle of several books at once - a condition that generally doesn't work out well with two-week checkout limits.

Many of the books I choose to read off my mile-long list of future reading are selected because others have recommended them to me. After all, if I'm looking to find the best choices, who better to trust than likeminded friends? As a result of this, my reading selections shift as my friends do. One girl I met at school loved children's books, and introduced me to *Wicked*. My boyfriend finally broke my aversion to sci-fi.

The categories in this collection are not listed chronologically. Think of them more as eras of my developing character, with years that overlap, rather than a strict timeline. Within categories, I have kept books chronologically in terms of when I first read them.

I started as an imaginative girl with no siblings, so I'd create my own scenes to play in. I loved to discover, and I saw myself as a scientist peering into a microscope or a detective looking through a magnifying glass. These pursuits became too solitary for me, however, but instead of simply abandoning science, I added a love of theatre. Practicality led me to see I was not talented enough at acting to make a living at it, so I continued making appearances in the occasional play while I pursued journalism.

That's where I am now. As a journalist, I meet lots of exciting and diverse people, and along the way I am acquiring equally exciting and diverse book recommendations.