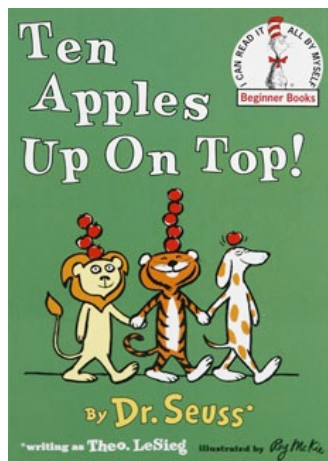


LIFE AND BOOKS OF A READER



BIRTH

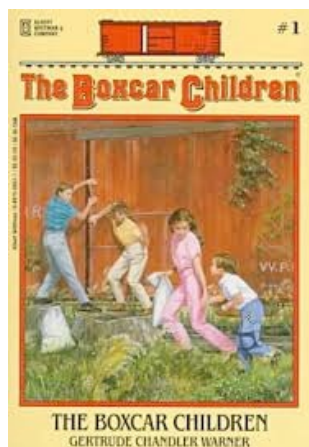
OCTOBER 29,
1995

TEN APPLES UP ON TOP!

When I asked my mother what my favorite book was as a child, all she could remember was *Ten Apples Up on Top*. According to her, I would ask for it over and over until she was sick of reading it. All I really know is that it is one of the most beat up books that we own. The front cover is falling off, the spine is frayed, and it is being held together by a bit of packing tape. My mother says that I went straight from this book to reading “big kid books.”

At the beginning of my life as an independent reader, I was obsessed with *The Boxcar Children* mysteries. For a couple months, I would read nothing else. My mother was worried that I would never grow out of this phase, and only ever read *The Boxcar Children*. Though I eventually moved on, I still think that living in a boxcar would be amazing, and that using a river as a refrigerator is the best idea ever.

THE BOXCAR CHILDREN



HARRY POTTER

When I was in second grade, I discovered the wonderful world of Harry Potter. Before this time, I thought that Harry Potter books were for boys, and since boys were yucky, why would I want to read boy books? However, one day at the Champaign Public Library I decided to give the Harry Potter books a try. I remember exactly where they were in the old library—the last row of shelves in the children's section. After reading *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, I was hooked, and to this day, the Harry Potter books are still some of my favorite books ever.

I always felt like a rebel checking out Tamora Pierce's books. The rebellious nature of my check out was due to the fact that the books had a little blue teen sticker on the side, and I was only nine when I was checking them out. Apart from the little thrill that I would get when looking through the teen section, Pierce's books enchanted me. I started with *Alanna: The First Adventure*, and worked my way through all of Pierce's books. Even now, I will reread them over and over, simply to relive the stories and lives that I feel in love with all those years ago.

TAMORA PIERCE



Tamora Pierce!!

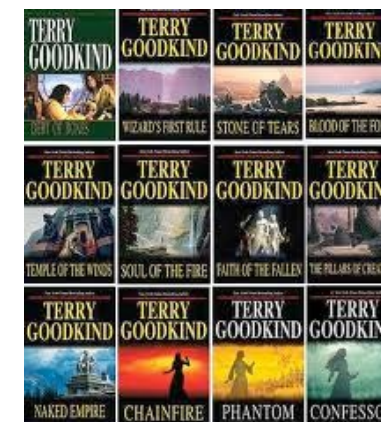


PRETTY LITTLE LIARS/ THE CLIQUE

Here begins one of the most embarrassing parts of my life as a reader—middle school. Upon entering middle school, I was introduced to two very popular series—the *Pretty Little Liars* series and *The Clique* series. Both series were very similar—groups of pretty people fighting, except *Pretty Little Liars* involved a bit more death. Looking back, the most amusing part of this phase was that I truly thought that I was reading the height of literature. Every time I whipped one of these books out, I felt so sophisticated—which was far from the truth.

The next phase of middle school self was the ever-famous *Twilight* series. The peak of my love for all things vampire was in seventh grade. It was so bad that one day, during the very strenuous fitness testing at Franklin Middle School, I read while doing push-ups. That is the sign of a true fan, though my friends thought I was insane. Another *Twilight* memory that I will never be able to live down is when my family was in Chicago, and then night before my mother was to run a race, I dragged everyone to a Borders so that I could purchase *Breaking Dawn*. That is one moment that my parents will never let me forget.

TWILIGHT



LEGEND OF THE SEEKER

My uncle first started introducing books to me at the beginning of my high school years. One year, for Christmas, I received *Wizard's First Rule* from him. It was the first book in the 12-book long series title Legend of the Seeker. I devoured the first one and then swiftly moved on to the other 11. This series is what started my love of long, complicated stories with dozens of characters.

I read this series from November 2012–to February 2013. Much like in Legend of the Seeker, I loved the complicated plot and many characters. Thus, when my family received free HBO for a weekend, and there was a *Game of Thrones* marathon, I decided to start watching with my family. Three minutes in, there is a lovely sex scene. Little did I know that HBO is a fan of tossing random sex scenes. Never less, I have now seen the majority of season two, and love the books all the more, after seeing them brought to life.

A SONG OF ICE AND FIRE

