

3.19 20 books for 20 years of my life

Angourie [host]

Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation as the traditional custodians of the land on which this work was developed and is presented. I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

[fade in: theme music with violins, clarinet, and twinkly triangle]

Angourie [host]

Hello, and welcome back to The Community Library: a podcast and book club for anyone interested in stories, and how and why we tell them. I'm your host, Angourie Rice.

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Angourie [host]

So, after a quick break from social media and making podcast episodes, I am back and, ah, hopefully better than ever? It was really nice to take a few weeks to myself to just recharge and spend some time with family. But of course, I did miss making content for you all, and so here are a few more episodes in this season – in season 3 – to take us to the end of 2020.

Now, on the topic of 2020 – wow, what a year this has been! I am turning twenty years old in early January of 2021. And this is a big deal for me, because turning twenty means I'll no longer be a teenager! I will officially be in my twenties, which is just wild to me. I feel like I was literally just fifteen. But anyway, it's a big thing! So, to mark this special occasion, I want to bring you a special episode in the lead up to my birthday. It's like, now just over a month away. So here is a list of 20 books for 20 years of my life –[laughs] – a little conceited. But the point is, I just want to share with you 20 books that have been influential in my life and made an impact on me. And I don't know, maybe if you read them, they'll also make an impact on you. So, here we go.

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It's hard to say for sure, but I would say my reading journey – or, my solo reading journey – began around 2007, and this is because I actually started writing in notebooks in 2007. So I was getting more independent and confident in reading and writing. So I was six years old in 2007, and in grade 1 at school. And I learnt to read when I was pretty young, but this year was when I first started reading chapter books by myself, and my author of choice was Enid Blyton. Enid Blyton was a prolific English children's author who wrote and published so many books between the late 1920s and the mid 1960s. And she explored a range of themes and genres, from the magic-folk who populated world of *The Wishing Chair*, to the boarding school fables of *The Naughtiest Girl in School*, to the mystery and adventure stories of *The Secret Seven* and *The Famous Five*. Now, it's really hard to choose just one book that was instrumental to my development at this age, because I owned so many of her works and I loved them all. But I would say that the book that started my love of Enid Blyton was *The Enchanted Wood*. The copy I owned was an old hand-me-down from my mum from when she was a kid. Most of the books that I read I got from the library, so *The Enchanted Wood* was the one that I owned myself, and so I was able to read it over and over again

whenever I wanted. *The Enchanted Wood* was first published in 1939, and it is the first in the *Faraway Tree* series. In it we follow siblings Jo, Bessie and Fanny, who move to a cottage in the country situated on the edge of an Enchanted Wood. There they find the Faraway Tree, an enormous magical tree home to all sorts of magical folk, and whose top-most branches reach through the clouds to a different ‘land’ each week. Some of my favourite lands include The Land of Take What You Want and The Land of Birthdays, but there were nasty lands, too, like The Land of Dame Slap. Dame Slap ran a boarding school for naughty children, and she slapped them as punishment. In subsequent editions of the book, Dame Slap was changed to Dame Snap, and all allusions to corporal punishment were removed. But I think *The Enchanted Wood* was one of the first books that taught me how books can be a comfort. You know, I read this book so many times I know it almost by heart now. It became my go-to whenever I felt sad or scared or couldn’t sleep. It was like a warm hug. And every time, without fail, the chapter about The Land of Birthdays would cheer me up. I loved it so much that sometimes I would just read that chapter over and over again. And so began my love of storytelling.

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In 2008 I was seven years old, and in grade 2. My solo reading journey continued, and I started reading classics for slightly older children. The one I remember most clearly is *Charlotte’s Web* by E. B. White, and that’s because it’s the first book that made me cry. *Charlotte’s Web* is an American children’s novel first published in 1952, about a farm pig named Wilbur and his friendship with a spider, Charlotte. I remember staying up way past my bedtime to finish reading this book because I just had to get to the end and find out what happened. And I won’t spoil it, but the ending made me sob uncontrollably. And I was so devastated – and I remember this so clearly – I remember shamefully tiptoeing downstairs to be comforted by my parents, not caring if I was told off for staying up too late, because I was just so heart-broken. And I think this was the first time that a book had ever made me feel this way. You know, I had always had a vivid imagination, but I had never cried over my attachment to a book character before. And I knew it wasn’t real, you know, I knew these farm animals who could talk weren’t real, but the important thing was that they felt real to me. They really existed in my mind, and the way I responded to the book – the emotions that I felt, they were real.

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I remember my eighth birthday party very well. I had a sleepover party with three friends and we went to see *Bolt* at the cinemas, and my cake was shaped like a pink handbag. 2009 was a simpler time. At this age, I became obsessed with Jacqueline Wilson. Jacqueline Wilson is a British children’s/middle grade/YA author. She received acclaim with her 1991 kids’ book *The Story of Tracy Beaker*. She’s known for writing accessible stories for children and young adults about heavier topics such as divorce, poverty and grief. I borrowed most Jacqueline Wilson books from the library, but I owned a few myself which I read over and over again, one of them being *Best Friends*. This book was published in 2005 and is illustrated by Nick Sharratt – as all Jacqueline Wilson books are, and that’s also part of the reason why I love them so much, I love his illustration style. *Best Friends* tells the story of Gemma and Alice, who are, of course, best friends. But when Alice moves out of town to a new school, their friendship is put to the test. What I really liked about Wilson’s books at this age in particular, was that they were modern and felt very relatable. Wilson’s main characters are often reserved, bookish girls who like writing stories, and, look, as an eight-year-old I related to

that a lot. You know, this was around the time when I started becoming self-conscious and worrying about friendships and social interactions and where I fit in at school. And Jacqueline Wilson's books helped me feel very seen and understood.

I also think 2009 might have been the year I started reading the *Harry Potter* series by J. K. Rowling. Now, I was a bit behind the curve on this one, because I was about ten years younger than the audience who grew up with the books. By 2009, all the books had been published and *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* had just come out in cinemas. I devoured the books at this age. Just read one after the other, read them so quickly and just fell so in love with the story and the world that I actually don't remember my experience of reading the individual books for the first time. What I do remember is finishing the first book for the first time. Again, it was a case of staying up way past my bedtime to see how it would end. And I remember so vividly that that night, I had nightmares about Voldemort in the back of Quirrell's head. Once I was done with all the books, I watched all the movies that were out at the time, and then I read the books all over again. This isn't surprising, I'm sure – you guys know how much I love *Harry Potter*. If you want to hear me talk about J. K. Rowling's recent transphobic comments and how I've dealt with that as a *Harry Potter* fan, I've made a whole episode about it. It's called *Choosing Between What is Right and What is Easy: Discussing J. K. Rowling*. So I've linked that in the show notes if you are interested in listening.

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By 2010, I was nine years old and in grade 4, and a total bookworm. Most of my memories of the books I read in my childhood come from around this time. I read, like, anything anyone gave me, and these next two books I want to talk about are prime examples of that. So around this time, my mum was participating in an online workshop through The School of Life, and she maybe won a prize or something, and she received, like, a goody box or a prize box in the post. And in this box were things like inspirational postcards, and notepads, and things like that. And one of the things she got was a book called *How to be an Explorer of the World: The Portable Life/Art Museum* by Keri Smith. Keri Smith is an artist and author best known for her activity books and journals on creativity and exploration, including *Wreck This Journal* and *Finish This Book*. So when my mum gave me *How to be an Explorer of the World*, it blew my tiny nine-year-old brain. This book is an activity book/journal for grown-ups. And the thing that made me so excited about it was that it wasn't all glittery and colourful with easy-to-read bubble text for kids, but instead it encouraged me to take field notes, and collect rocks, and plot data. Here was a nonfiction book telling me that it was good to be curious about the world, to analyse the things around me and pick them apart and take notes. And I think I've carried this mentality with me ever since I read that book ten years ago. I also think it was also very important in developing my love of science. At that time, I didn't know that that's what science could be. Science in school was something totally different. And when I got to high school and discovered that science incorporates all these note-taking and data entry things that I love about this book, it really changed my perspective on science.

In 2010, I was also moving out of the children's and middle-grade age group and reading more young adult fiction. But at this point I didn't know what I liked in a book, and so I still read anything that was put in front of me. And another book that was just handed to me and I read and loved, was one that my mum had read when she was young, and it was *Fifteen* by Beverly Cleary. Beverly Cleary is an American author of children's and young adult fiction, and she's probably most well-known for her series of books about Beezus and Ramona. *Fifteen* was published just one year after

Beezus and Ramona, in 1956, and it's about a fifteen-year-old girl falling in love for the first time. It really captures that quintessential American 1950s life, you know all those clichés, references to soda shops and cashmere sweaters and 'going steady'. And, look, it's a very old-fashioned book, but for some reason when I read it when I was ten [editor's note: I meant to say I was nine, here] I was obsessed with it. A scene I remember so clearly is one in which the main character Jane leaves for her date with a boy, wearing her best dress and feeling really pretty. But when they meet up with another couple, the girl from the other couple is wearing a something more casual and fashionable and suddenly Jane feels like the dress that made her feel so confident in the mirror at home, is just all wrong. And I don't remember if this sentiment rang particularly true for me at the time as a nine-year-old. I was always pretty confident in my fashion choices – I don't know if that confidence was well-founded! But that scene has really stuck in my mind, and I've always remembered it since I first read it, because since then, I've seen it play out so many times in my life.

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A year later, in 2011, I was ten years old: double digits, baby! And I also officially considered myself a tween. No longer a child, I was ready to tackle some more serious books, and so my dad gave me *The Outsiders* by S. E. Hinton. The second book that made me cry. *The Outsiders* is an American classic, and is often credited with being one of the first Young Adult novels. Published in 1967, it follows two rival gangs, the working class 'greasers' and the upper-class 'socials'. Through the eyes of Ponyboy, one of the youngest of the greasers, Hinton tells a coming-of-age story about friendship and violence. And it has a fucking tragic ending that will forever be etched in my mind.

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In 2012, I was eleven and living in Germany. And even though I learnt to speak German fluently, I preferred to read in English, but of course I had a limited selection of books to choose from. There was one English language book [editor's note: I meant to say 'bookstore' here] in the city that we went to a few times, and there was a small English section at my local library. So for my eleventh birthday, my parents bought me the *Inkworld* trilogy by Cornelia Funke. This a German fantasy series first published in 2003, and of course, they kindly bought me the English translation. I fell in love with this series for a few reasons. For one thing, I related to it a lot, you know, the protagonist was a twelve-year-old blonde girl who loved books and reading. But for another: it took place in a fantasy world that was built on a love of storytelling. That year that I spent in Germany was wonderful in so many ways, but I was still a moody tween who felt very misunderstood and alone at times, and so escaping to the fantasy world of *Inkheart* was my refuge at that time.

Later that year, when we returned home from Germany, I was looking for more adult novels, because I was about to turn twelve and start high school like a big girl. And I was looking for something short and interesting to read, and my dad recommended *The Moon is Down* by John Steinbeck. Now, look. I don't know what was going through my dad's mind when he recommended this World War II-era novella that was written to motivate the resistance movements in occupied countries, but eleven-year-old me strangely loved it. I will admit: I didn't *really* get it, but I understood enough to know that the ending was very sad. And think the important thing about this book, and why it sticks in my mind, is that it made me feel very grown-up and smart. And even though it was this kind of, like, hoity-toity, like, 'Oh, look at me, like, I'm an eleven-year-old and I'm so smart reading this smart book.' I do actually think that this was an important part for me as a

reader, because I learnt that I could challenge myself with what I read. And even if I didn't understand all the nuances or the political references, I still gave it a go and I still enjoyed the story. And I think that's something I've often forgotten if I've been too intimidated to read a particular book because I won't understand it, and it's too literary and too complicated. I think I put this pressure on myself to understand every single thing and have super smart discourse about a book, and that pressure doesn't really exist. It's self-inflicted. You know, all I have to do is spend time with these characters and their story. And that's the first step to understanding and loving a story.

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2013 was a big year for me. I was twelve years old, in my first year of high school, and definitely a big kid now. Except I was actually very, very, tiny and all my classmates towered over me and thought I must have wandered over from the primary school next door. But nevertheless, I persisted with my self-education of classic literature with *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. *The Great Gatsby* is a classic work of American literature, first published in 1925. It follows the protagonist's friendship with his elusive neighbour Jay Gatsby, who hosts roaring parties every weekend. It's labelled as a cautionary tale and critique of the American Dream. So, me reading *The Great Gatsby* coincided with the release of the Baz Luhrmann film adaptation, and I fell in love with the story and the time period so deeply that my 13th birthday party was 1920s themed. I dressed up like Daisy Buchanan and made all my friends dress up, as well. And then we all went and had fancy tea at a tea room in our outfits, sweating buckets because it was one of the hottest days of the year. And again, same with this book, I didn't get everything there is to get about *The Great Gatsby*, but it solidified my desire to keep reading classic literature, and just to keep giving it a go. It also started a whole 1920s-obsessed phase for me, and any book that starts a phase obviously has to be included on this list.

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Next year, in 2014, I turned thirteen years old. I was finally a teenager. And being a teenager meant I started reading books for teens. I became a regular at my school library and I just borrowed anything off the shelf that piqued my interest. And one book that made a distinct impression on me was *The Listmaker* by Robin Klein. This is a YA novel published in 1997. Robin Klein is a prolific Australian author, most known for her 1989 novel *I Came Back to Show You I Could Fly*, and *Hating Alison Ashley*, published in '84 – which I also owned and read. From the goodreads synopsis, I remember absolutely nothing about the plot of *The Listmaker*, except for the fact that the protagonist liked to make lists. So, why is it on this influential books list? Well, this is the book that truly kicked off my love of lists. It seems superficial, but like, this was very important to me. Now, before this I had always enjoyed writing things down and journaling, but after this book I categorised everything into lists, and it was magical. And I'm still a huge fan of lists to this day. Someone once told me I'm like Amy Santiago from *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, and yeah, I'd have to agree with that.

2014 was also the year the movie adaptation of *The Fault in Our Stars* came out, and so I read John Green's classic novel in preparation for seeing the movie with my friends. *The Fault in Our Stars* is an American YA novel published in 2012. It follows Hazel Grace, a sixteen-year-old girl with cancer, as she falls in love with Augustus, a seventeen-year-old boy she meets at her cancer support group. If you were a teenage girl in 2014, you could not escape the hype surrounding *The Fault in Our Stars*

– you just had to read it. And when I read it, I didn't love, but I also didn't hate it. I was very ambivalent about it. The reason it's made its way onto this list because it was popular. This was the first time that I connected with other girls at school over a book we had all read. Before this, reading was a really solitary experience for me. It was often an escape from the turmoils of friendships at school. But with *The Fault in Our Stars*, it suddenly became a shared experience that bonded my friendship group. I went to see *The Fault in Our Stars* in cinemas with three of my friends. We all sobbed, and had the best time.

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2015 was a rough year for me. I was fourteen and in year 9, and felt unsure in myself and my friendships. I was very mopey and felt misunderstood. And so what was my solace? Well, reading about other mopey and misunderstood fourteen-year-olds. This is when I discovered *Angus, Thongs and Full-Frontal Snogging* by Louise Rennison. This is the first book in the British YA series called *Confessions of Georgia Nicolson*, and it was published in 1999. Here we follow the tell-all diary of British teen Georgia Nicolson as she recounts her romances, her friendships, and how her parents, like, totally don't understand her. It was exactly what I needed at that age. You know, Georgia Nicolson became my best friend when I felt like I didn't have any friends. But I was always jealous because I thought her life was way more dramatic than mine.

On the other side of things, I was also seeking out some more modern classics and, I guess, solidifying my brand of, like, a vintage-obsessed girl – [laughs] – oh, God. So for a school project, I had to choose a film adaptation of a book and compare the two, so I chose *Breakfast at Tiffany's* by Truman Capote. Capote was an American novelist, short story writer and playwright most prolific during the mid-20th Century. He's, of course, well-known for *Breakfast at Tiffany's* of course, but also his 1966 true crime novel *In Cold Blood*. *Breakfast at Tiffany's* was published in 1958 and then adapted into a very successful film of the same name in 1961, starring, of course, the beautiful Audrey Hepburn. The story follows an unnamed narrator who befriends his glamorous neighbour Holly Golightly, and his musings on her extravagant yet lonely lifestyle. This book was very important in my journey, I think, as a reader and as a movie watcher, because this school project pushed me to think critically about films and books and how they each tell stories in a different way. It started a dialogue in my brain about film adaptations of books, also because at the same time I read this, I was working on a film adaptation of a book. And it was this type of thinking that eventually led to me creating this podcast. So I think this school project was very important for me. If you want to hear me talk more about book to film adaptations, I actually did a whole series of episodes on this topic, so I'll link them all in the show notes for you.

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Now, I must confess. When I was fifteen and in year 10, I fell off the reading wagon a little bit. For one thing, I had my first boyfriend, and for another thing, I took three overseas trips that year for work. So I was very busy, and reading was put on the backburner. But somewhere towards the end of the year, I did manage to read a book that got me excited about reading again, and that was *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier. This is an English gothic mystery novel published in 1938. It's about a young woman who marries a wealthy widower. But when she moves into his secluded mansion, she discovers it to be haunted by the memory of his late first wife, Rebecca. The first time I read this book sticks out in my mind so clearly. It was a dark and stormy night ... no, literally, it was. I

woke up in the middle of the night because there was a thunderstorm raging outside. And I couldn't sleep for all the noise, and so I picked up *Rebecca* from my nightstand – I was about halfway through, maybe. And I said to myself: 'I'll just read until the storm is over, and then I'll go to sleep.' And so I read, and then I reached the beginning of the third act, and at that point I knew there was absolutely no way I could put the book down and go to sleep. I had to find out what happened in the end. By the time I finished the book, the storm was long gone and daylight was only a few hours away. And that is the magic of storytelling.

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2017. Ah, with my obligatory post-break-up haircut and sweet sixteen attitude, I was ready to take on a classic that had been looming on my shelves: *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen. If in case you haven't heard of it, this is an English comedy romance novel of manners published in 1813. It follows young, witty and single Elizabeth Bennett as she navigates social customs, her embarrassing family, and snap judgements. My mum had read *Pride and Prejudice* out loud to my sister and me when we were about ten and thirteen, but this was my first time reading it alone. And I loved it. Of course I loved it! It's charming, it's witty, it's relatable, it's romantic, it stands the test of time. And it is cliché to say this, but it truly is one of the most inspiring books I've ever read in my life. And every time I read Austen, I just get so inspired to write my own stories.

In late 2017, I also got more into contemporary YA fiction, and it was actually my sister who introduced me to this next book: *Moxie* by Jennifer Mathieu. *Moxie* is a YA contemporary published in 2017, and it's about a high school girl who is fed up with the casual and blatant misogyny at her school. In protest, she starts a feminist zine and distributes it anonymously among her classmates. I think I read this book just at the right time. I was on the edge of seventeen and in danger of becoming a snobbish elitist bookworm who 'didn't have time for YA books because, um, I'm basically an adult now.' So I think the great thing about *Moxie* is that it steered me away from that. It taught me that I still have a lot to learn and can benefit from reading new YA contemporary. And, above all, reading *Moxie* just made me so happy and excited for the next generation of YA readers who can read stories about intersectional feminism.

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In 2018, I was seventeen and in my last year of high school. Not that I went to school that much that year. For four months in 2018 I was in Europe filming *Spider-Man: Far From Home*. I managed to read quite a bit, still – I always had a book with me on set. But the book that changed everything for me that year was actually a school assigned book, and it was *A Room of One's Own* by Virginia Woolf. Virginia Woolf was an early 20th Century essayist and novelist, known for her experimental stream-of-consciousness style in her fiction and her progressive feminist ideas. *A Room of One's Own* was published in 1929, and is a short nonfiction work derived from two lectures that Woolf gave at two women's colleges at Cambridge. It's a feminist text that argues for making space for women writers in the literary sphere. In this essay, she talks a lot about all the women writers who have been lost or forgotten throughout history because female genius has been villainised. She writes, quote:

‘When, however, one reads of a witch being ducked, of a woman possessed by devils, of a wise woman selling herbs, or even of a very remarkable man who had a mother, then I think we are on the track of a lost novelist, a suppressed poet.’

So that year I went to a lot of museums and art galleries around Europe, just looking at portraits of or by famous old men. And the whole time, I was thinking about that single quote. When I walked through the National Portrait Gallery in London, Percy Shelley and John Keats and Charles Dickens all had beautiful large portraits in pristine condition, while Jane Austen just had a 4 by 3 inch unfinished watercolour painting done by her sister. Where were the other Jane Austens that were lost or discouraged or married and had children and never had the time or the space to create like she could? And it made me really sad, but more determined than ever to read more books from women – and not just women of that time like Jane Austen, and a little later the Brontë sisters – but a wider and more diverse community of women who are getting their stories out there.

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So now we come to last year, 2019. It was my first year out of high school. I had deferred my place at university, and I didn’t have any work for the first half of the year. I was finally a legal adult and ... I really didn’t know what I was doing with my life. I still don’t know! But on a whim I decided to read *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky. This American coming-of-age novel was published in 1999, and it was Chbosky’s debut novel. Through the form of letters to an unnamed friend, the reader follows the life of introverted freshman Charlie. When I picked this book up, it felt weird to read about someone just starting high school when I had just finished it. Like, it was all wrong and I was five years late to the party. But I actually think it was the best time for me to read it, and that’s why it’s made it onto this list. In the novel, Charlie befriends a group of seniors who are graduating that year. And towards the end of the novel, they graduate and leave Charlie behind. And at the end, Charlie remarks on how it isn’t some grand, life-defining event, it’s actually quite anti-climactic. It was really comforting to read that and to think about how finishing high school didn’t have to be as life-defining as I always thought it was supposed to be. It was just another year gone. It almost – I think it gave me what I needed, actually, to move on from that.

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So finally, we come to this year. 2020. My last year of being a teenager, just over a month before I turn twenty. So, what is my 20th book? Well, I spent a lot of time in America at the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020, and I went back to America in September for two months. What with COVID and the election, I feel like the world has had its eye on America this year. When I facetedimed my friends from America, they asked me with horrified faces: ‘What is it like?’ What is America like? What is it like in a pandemic? What is it like leading up to an election? It’s really hard to define. But the book I think captures America exceptionally well is *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, which I read earlier this year. *Americanah* is a 2013 literary fiction novel about a Nigerian woman who moves to America to go to college. It’s a story about immigration, politics, and American culture. She really captures the experience of being an outlander in a country that has little to no prior knowledge or understanding of where this character comes from. I loved this book so much because I think I related to it in a lot of ways, but it also brought up so many aspects of American culture that I had never even considered or noticed before. And then the aspects that I had noticed and thought about, she put into words in such a real and truthful way. I think it’s very

enlightening to read a book set in and about America, told from the perspective of a non-American. I think that distance from it is what gives Adichie to really analyse it in a truthful way. The reading experience was one of feeling seen and understood, but also learning and discovering.

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So, what have I learnt in fourteen years' worth of books? What have I learnt in twenty years of living? Oh, God. Well, I would guess that around 75% of all the things I've learnt and thought and known and loved, has come from books. From *The Children of the Faraway Tree* to *Thongs and Full-Frontal Snogging* to *Americanah* – all of these books have played a big part in who I am as a person. What I believe in, what I love, what I think is good in this world, what I think is worth sharing. And even the books that I didn't mention on this list, you know books I hated, books that I thought were average, and even the books that I have forgotten all about, I think every single book I've read in my life has been important and influenced me in some way. All those words and stories that I read when I was a kid, even if I don't remember them now, they were still absorbed by my tiny, spongey brain. And they meant something to me in that moment. So, even though here I've picked a handful of books I remember very clearly as being important in my life – I guess I'm also thinking about the thousands of other stories I've encountered in just two decades of living. And not just from books, but from movies, TV shows, plays, magazines, imaginary games, YouTube videos, school yard gossip, family legend. I feel like I've lived thousands of years through the books I've read in just twenty. I can't wait to see what another year – and all the years after that – brings.

[fade in: theme music with violins, clarinet, and twinkly triangle]

Thank you very much for listening to this episode. I hope you're all keeping safe and happy and healthy this holiday season. Whether you're braving the northern hemisphere winter or basking in the southern hemisphere sun, like I am, I hope you're looking forward to a bit of time off for yourself. If you want to give me a birthday present, may I suggest subscribing to the podcast on iTunes or Spotify, or you can follow on The Community Library Instagram, we are @the_community_library. Or, to make my 20th birthday extra special, you could also leave me a 5-star review on iTunes! Ah, self-promo is difficult. I will be back on Wednesday the 2nd of December with another episode for you! I know, so soon! We are going out with a bang this year. But until Wednesday, I hope you're all reading some brilliant books that you'll remember in the years to come. And if not, that's okay, too. I reckon the mediocre and forgettable books are just as important. Chat soon.

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