

2-1-2022

My Own Private Library: A Peek Inside the Personal Library of a Librarian

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Recommended Citation

Grant, M. (2022). My Own Private Library: A Peek Inside the Personal Library of a Librarian. *Georgia Library Quarterly*, 59(1). Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/glq/vol59/iss1/7>

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My Own PRIVATE LIBRARY

Since I could remember, my life has been centered around books. I have collected them, lost them, and given some away to others. I guess you could say I'm old school; I still haven't gotten used to reading a full book electronically, and don't own a Kindle or any such device. I love holding the book in my hand and turning the pages, letting the story take me away to a faraway land and adventure. My avid love of reading started right at home with my favorite person: my mother. Every day I would longingly wait for her and before her feet could reach inside, I would say my daily catchphrase: "Whatcha got, Momma?" On one particular day, it wasn't a doll or the small TV that I adored, but something that would change my life: a collection of Dr. Seuss books. When my mother came into my room, the only thing I could see were the books she had in her hand. She giggled as I jumped for joy. I loved the bold colors and characters of each book; *The Cat in the Hat* stretched my imagination and *Green*

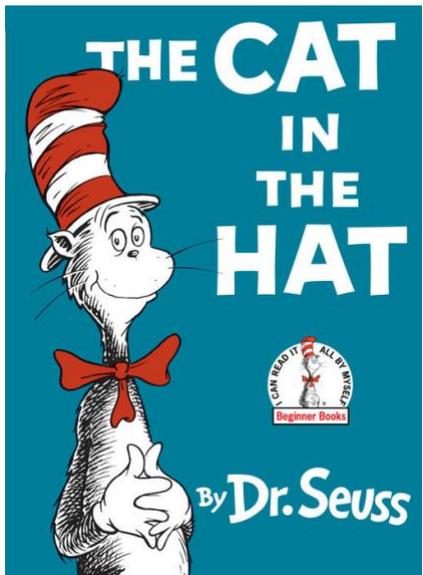


Image from the publisher

eggs and Ham made me laugh out loud. The books were brand new and as I turned the pages, I liked the way they felt against my hand. As a little girl this had to be the best

day of my life. That night I slept with those books. I learned to read early so that I could read aloud to my mom so she would be proud

of me. Now that I am a mom, I have shared my love of Dr. Seuss with my son. When he was really little, he would want me to read *The Cat in the Hat* every day, as he was fascinated by the large hat the cat wore.

Reflecting on the books that have meant the most to me, this list wouldn't be complete without the coming-of-age book *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret* by one of my favorite

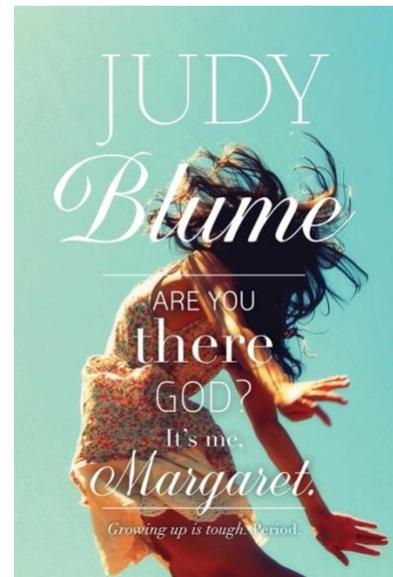


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authors, Judy Blume. I first discovered the book in the neighborhood library and I immediately checked it out. I subsequently checked it out many times and I often had to be on a wait list for it. It was worn from many uses. Eventually, I was able to buy the book with money my grandmother gave me, but somehow, I lost it while moving, or maybe it was tossed out by accident. I haven't read it as an adult, but I think I'm going to buy it just to relive those days. Judy took a story about everyday life and situations and gave a unique perspective. I was and am enamored of her. It was almost as if she wrote it just for me and captured all of the things I was going through as a young adolescent. The young lady in the book wrote daily passages in her diary to God chronicling her tribulations about boys, puberty, and parents that just don't understand! My friends and I were all

experiencing these same growing pains and Ms. Bloom had written a book that we could see ourselves in.

There are certain books that I have read over and over. One of them is *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker. I first read it when I was about thirteen years old. The story is about sadness that turns into determination and triumph. I have never read a book before that has gotten into my soul the way this one has. In the many times that I have read it, there is always something that I didn't see before. I imagined what each character looked like, and I could see in my mind the vivid colors and hear all of the sounds. The main character, Celie, battles through the hardship of her marriage and abuse, and finds meaning in her life by way of

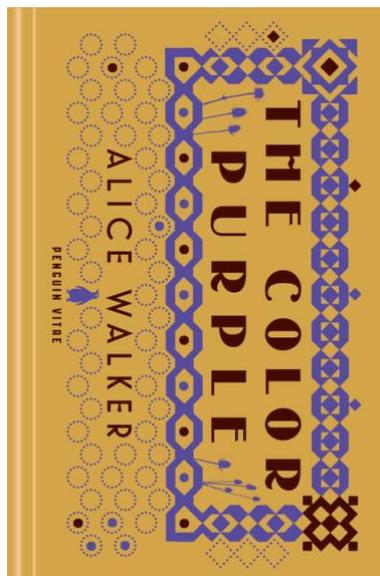


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friendship with Shug and love with her sister Nettie. The story weaves its way from Celie's childhood struggles to her hunt for her children and finally being reunited with them.

Another novel that I can never tire of is *Murder on the Orient Express* by Agatha Christie. I love this story and finally managed to get a leather-bound copy. This master storyteller takes the mystery (my

favorite genre) to the next level, keeping the reader on edge until the last page. I found myself staying up all night reading it because I had to know what happened next. A major page turner! I was caught up in the cast of colorful characters and each of the personalities and stories. Hercule Poirot with his stiff mustache and fine use of his "little grey cells", which is how he described using the brain to its fullest potential, fascinated me. I wanted to have his mind and Agatha's writing acumen.

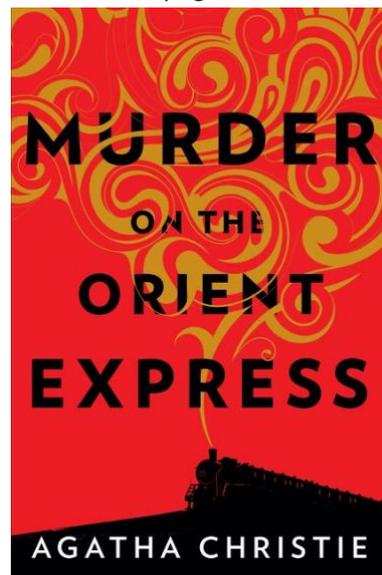


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There are many books that I have enjoyed, but the ones in this writing marked various important stages of my life. I hope that I can pass my love of reading and a good story down to my son. I want him to be carried away by times of the past, present, and future, and immerse himself so far in a book that he loses track of time. My mother, who is no longer here with me, saw her daughter who was shy and quiet and instilled the love of books. To her I am forever grateful.

Maame Grant is a public services associate I at Georgia Tech Library