



MY LIFE IN BOOKS JUDY BLUME

Her books have probably shaped your life. Now the author, 77, shares the ones that shaped hers

Madeline by Ludwig Bemelmans

When I was a child, my mother took me to the public library every week. I sat on the floor pulling books off the shelf and that's how I found *Madeline*. She was brave and I wanted to be brave. I was afraid of so many things as a child: the dog down the street, the dark, the Madonna in the stained-glass window in the church that we drove by every day. That's why I wanted to be Madeline.

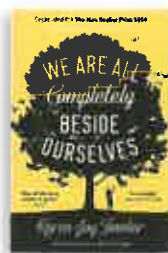


A Rage To Live by John O'Hara

I was 12 when I started reading from my parents' bookshelf. *A Rage To Live* [a social chronicle of America in the Forties] was the only book my mother told me I mustn't read. I told my aunt and she brought it over to me, and I stayed up all night reading it. There were certainly sexy passages that were thrilling and served me well for a long time.

We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves by Karen Joy Fowler

I just love [this book] and have been recommending it to everyone. It's an original and spontaneous take on family that grabs you and doesn't let you go.



Them by Joyce Carol Oates

When I was a very young mother, before I started writing, I read *Them*. I can't tell you today what it was about, but I do know that I could not stop reading it; there was something about *Them* that was different. I knew the writer was my age and that she had written what I thought was an absolute masterpiece. I read all day as my children played in the sandbox and, because I could not put down this book, there was no dinner when my husband came home. I went on to read many, many Joyce Carol Oates books.

Fear Of Flying by Erica Jong

To read *Fear Of Flying*, I locked myself in the little room where I wrote, pulled down the shades and sat there until I finished it - and then I read it again. For young women of my generation, the story of Isadora Wing and her search for no-strings, satisfying sex was daring and startling and wonderful. It was like, 'I am not the only woman who has fantasies - sexual or otherwise.' When I met Erica Jong, not long after the book was published, I couldn't even speak because I was so in awe.



The Year Of Magical Thinking by Joan Didion

An account of the year following the death of Didion's husband, this book made me cry for so many reasons. I'm old enough to have seen it happen to many people who are close to me. I was with my father when he died suddenly at 54. I was 21. A sudden death may be better for the person who dies, but very difficult for the person who's left behind. At the time, I had no idea what my mother was going through. She never ever talked about it.



Nancy Drew Mystery Stories by Carolyn Keene

I grew up buying a *Nancy Drew* mystery every week with my allowance; I think they were 25 cents. I loved to play at being Nancy Drew (my bicycle was my roadster). Now I drive around Key West, where I live in the wintertime, in a Mini convertible, still playing at it. *In The Unlikely Event* by Judy Blume is out now (Knopf/Doubleday)



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1 LUCINELLA BY LORE SEGAL
160 pages. A cult classic about the New York literary scene. Ambitious, whimsical, witty and imaginative.

2 DEPT. OF SPECULATION BY JENNY OFFILL
192 pages. The 46 intense chapters unpack the delicate details of marriage. Precise and profound.

3 THE AWAKENING BY KATE CHOPIN
128 pages. This landmark feminist novel, first published in 1899, remains startlingly relevant.

4 HEARTBURN BY NORA EPHRON
192 pages. A bittersweet confessional novel about the end of a relationship. It also features 16 recipes.

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