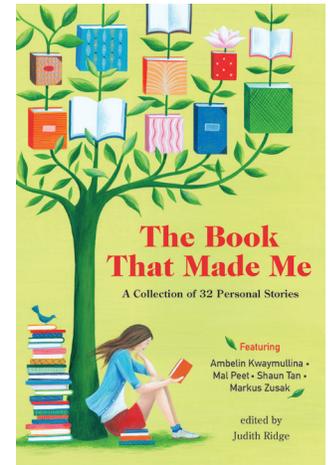


Summary

What if you could look inside your favorite authors' heads and see the book that led them to become who they are today? What was the book that made them fall in love, or made them understand something for the first time? What was the book that made them feel challenged in ways they never knew they could be, emotionally, intellectually, or politically? What book made them a reader, or made them a writer, or made them laugh, think, or cry? Join thirty-one top children's and young adult authors as they explore the books, stories, and experiences that changed them as readers—for good. Some of the contributors include Ambelin Kwaymullina, Mal Peet, Shaun Tan, Markus Zusak, Randa Abdel-Fattah, Alison Croggon, Ursula Dubosarsky, Simon French, and Jaclyn Moriarty.

The Book That Made Me

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 Age 14 and up
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Discussion Questions and Activities

“Books, and reading, can not only make a life; they can save it.” (Judith Ridge, page x)

What do you think Judith Ridge means when she says that books can save a life? Do you agree or disagree? Choose one essay from the book and discuss how this quote applies.

“The books we don’t enjoy, those we don’t connect with, can be just as beneficial.” (Will Kostakis, page 26)

Think of a book that you haven’t enjoyed. What positive experiences came from reading that book? As a group, discuss the positives and negatives of giving up on a book you aren’t enjoying.

“People love seeing themselves reflected in fiction.” (Queenie Chan, page 74)

Have you ever found a character in a book that you felt represented you? In what way did you feel connected to that character? Did they represent you completely or only partially? Do you think it’s important for all readers to find a character similar to themselves? Why?

“I was, of course, completely unaware that I was absorbing ideas about form and narrative that would be invaluable to me as an adult writer.” (Mal Peet, page 127)

Do you agree with the idea that the books you read or stories you consume affect the way you write or tell stories? Think of examples of how this applies to you and your writing. How can you strategically use this idea to develop your own writing or storytelling abilities?

Each author or illustrator takes a unique look at how a particular book “made” them. Shaun Tan was drawn to illustrations over words, Will Kostakis discusses a book he didn’t like or finish, Felicity Castagna explains how her book taught her to observe the world in a different way, and so on. Think of a book you have enjoyed or that has had an impact on you and try to establish the specific reason that book appealed to you. Do you think being aware of this makes it easier or harder to find more reading material that will affect you?

To identify a book that “made” you, you may need the perspective of time. In other words, you may not know how a certain book has affected you until you are older. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why? Do you think your opinion of the impact a book has on your life can change over time?

Do you have a book that “made” you? Discuss your chosen book and explain how this book has affected you. If you can’t identify a book that has had a life-changing impact on you, think of one to which you’ve had a strong reaction, positive or negative. Write an essay about this book and how it affected or spoke to you. You might find it interesting to keep this essay and read it again when you are older to see if your opinion has changed.

