



I'm a writer, and I'm only a writer because I started out as a reader. I hit the local libraries early and often—I kept my card in a special drawer in my room so it was always at the ready. This could not, my parents can tell you, be said for any other article I owned—I consistently misplaced house keys and lunch money and jackets, but I could always produce my library card.

I can mark my growth as a reader—and a person—by my library visits.

- The first book I checked out in the kids section: Audrey and David Hirsh's *A Home for Tandy*.
- The first book from the young adults section: Willo Davis Roberts' *The View from the Cherry Tree*.
- First novel from the adults section: Agatha Christie's *Mysterious Affair at Styles*.

I remember them all, and can rattle off dozens more, and when I think of them, I can also *smell* that great library-book smell of them—the scent that books get after being well-loved and much-read.

Libraries have continued to be important to me in my adult life. Whenever I hit a rough patch writing one of my novels, I find myself instinctually retreating to a library. I walk through the aisles and let myself visit with my favorite novelists: Dickens, Twain, Joyce Carol Oates, Margaret Atwood.

I believe strongly that libraries are absolutely crucial to learning, connecting and creating community and possibility, and so I am very proud to be the chair of the Johnson County Library Foundation's Stay Home and Read a Book Ball, where all that is required of you is to sit in your favorite chair, or bath, or bed, and treat yourself to a book.

You can take your act of literature love to the next level by taking to social media the day of. Share your read, your leisurewear, your guest list. You can also make a gift to the Foundation in support of the library's mission. Go to www.jocolibraryfoundation.org make a gift.

What will I be doing that night? My favorite thing: reading. First to my kids (my one-year-old daughter loves Taro Gomi; my son, who keeps his library card in a box on his desk, likes anything with teeth), and then I'll make myself a mug of tea and flop on the sofa with a book (and my husband and *his* book) happily knowing that I'm helping libraries by simply doing what I do each night: opening a book.

Best,
Gillian Flynn