



The Books They Gave Me: True Stories of Life, Love, and Lit

Jen Adams

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THE GIFT OF A BOOK BECOMES PART OF THE STORY OF YOUR LIFE. Perhaps it came with a note as simple as “This made me think of you,” but it takes up residence in your heart and your home. *The Books They Gave Me* is a mixtape of stories behind books given and received. Some of the stories are poignant, some snarky, some romantic, some disastrous—but all are illuminating.

Jen Adams collected nearly two hundred of the most provocative stories submitted to the tumblr blog TheBooksTheyGaveMe.com to capture the many ways books can change our lives and loves, revealing volumes about the relationships that inspired the gifts. These stories are, by turns, romantic, cynical, funny, dark, and hopeful. There’s the poorly thought out gift of *Lolita* from a thirty-year-old man to a teenage girl. There’s the couple who tried to read *Ulysses* together over the course of their long-distance relationship and never finished it. There’s the girl whose school library wouldn’t allow her to check out *Fahrenheit 451*, but who received it at Christmas with the note, “Little Sister: Read everything you can. Subvert Authority! Love always, your big brother.” These are stories of people falling in love, regretting mistakes, and finding hope. Together they constitute a love letter to the book as physical object and inspiration.

Illustrated in full color with the jackets of beloved editions, *The Books They Gave Me* is, above all, an uplifting testament to the power of literature.

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