

∞ READING ROUND ∞

My Reading Habits

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MY READING HABITS HAVE changed over the years, and I find that **M** has a lot to do with what time I have available to me for such a luxury. As a youngster I was rarely seen without my head in a book. I was a dreamer and books gave me permission to escape into other worlds. As a child I would enjoy entering the mysteries and adventures that Enid Blyton created. I would take a walk through an enchanted wood, climb a Faraway Tree, or solve mysteries of disappearing cats, all within the comfort of my own home.

As a young adult I discovered the Black American women writers, like Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, Terry McMillan, Alice Walker and Ntozake Shange and I followed the road of self-discovery. These phenomenal black women told me a lot about myself. Even though these writers are American, and I live in England, I had an immediate connection with what they were saying and how they were saying it. It was as if they knew me personally and understood me completely. I will never forget how I felt the first time I read Shange's *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf*. I felt seen. Her writing has been a big influence on my own style of playwriting ever since.

Nowadays finding time to read is not always easy. First, I have to make room in my head — find a quiet, still place, for me to take time out from real life. This was much easier to do when I was younger, when family, though always a big part of my life, did not take up head space in the same way. Being a mother, grandmother, wife — there always seems to

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be some distraction or other from ‘me time’ (and I consider reading to be ‘me time’). I have piles of books I want to read, and I look forward to carving out the moments when I can bury my head in these books. These moments are usually at night if I’m not too tired, after a day of multi-tasking. Tired eyes mean reading for pleasure can become a task and often mindless TV is more easily accessible, though I have recently downloaded an audio book app, to rectify this problem. Hope this works. Holiday time away is when I do most of my reading. I choose, from the pile of books I have saved, which ones will come to the sunshine with me, and my choice is often based on which of these books will keep my suitcase the lightest (I am not a fan of Kindle, I love to feel the paper between my fingertips as I turn the pages). My latest holiday reads were *The Archer* by Paulo Coelho and *Skin of the Sea* by new Young Adult fiction writer, Natasha Bowen. I look forward to reading the sequel to this book, *Soul of the Deep*.