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My Ten Favorite Books

Raphael Johstoneaux

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When accepting the assignment to list my ten favorite young adult novels, I figured a few minutes at the computer would suffice. After interminably staring at the screen and only growing frustrated by the flashing cursor, I again realized the dilemma of choice.

First of all, I wrestled with the idea that the novel must be acceptable to both the young and the adult. It certainly must rise above the insipid Harlequin series and yet not soar to the heights of *A Passage to India*. Somewhere on this spectrum I looked for a believable plot, plausible characters, ideas or a theme worth reading about, symbolic depth, a lucid style; in other words, I wanted a good novel to challenge, not overwhelm, young readers.

Suddenly I realized I was acting like an English teacher, one to whom the key of all wisdom and most understanding had somehow been entrusted. A favorite is a favorite, I finally told myself, and I need no other justification than I LIKE IT. Thus I submit the following list, with no order of preference:

- *Sounder* by William H. Armstrong
- *Dandelion Wine* by Ray Bradbury
- *The Chocolate War* and *Beyond the Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier
- *I Am the Cheese* by Robert Cormier
- *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* by Hannah Green
- *The Summer of My German Soldier* by Bette Greene
- *House of Dies Drear* by Virginia Hamilton
- *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles
- *A Day No Pigs Would Die* by Robert Newton Peck
- *Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls