

You was little i spent
my summer vacations



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

You live his or her life. Books compel you to get out of your skin and into the skin of the different characters in them. You share the character's triumphs-his joys, his defeats.

Despite coming home to an empty house, when I was in primary school, I was never lonely. That's because my house was always full of my friends-my books. They were a magic world all my own just at the turn of a page. My first book was the seemingly ordinary Champak which was a monthly children's magazine that was eagerly awaited. The depiction of animal characters in its stories was and is something that all kids still love about Champak.

It's most popular animal character, a rabbit named Cheeku, continues to be a hot favourite with children. Children readily identify themselves with the quick-witted Cheeku who uses his wit to get his friends out of trouble. When I was little I spent my summer vacations with Noddy, then with the Golliwogs, and Enid Blyton's. "The Faraway Tree" was my favourite holiday destination.

I read the book in the day and in the night dreamed that the Ashoka tree outside my bedroom window was the Faraway Tree. In my dreams I climbed the tree to reach the magic island at the top. These pictures are so vivid in my mind even today that often I can taste the Faraway Tree's magic toffees that grow in your mouth. Growing up, there were the Famous Five and the Secret Seven. My summers were spent sprawled on the floor reading about their wonderful adventures liberally interspersed with their picnic lunches. I can still remember the spreads. It's amazing how much I learned while I read too.

There are so many things that I have just absorbed along the way. Then came Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys. However the best of all was and is Harry Potter. The orphaned boy wizard character of Harry Potter mesmerized me, it even turned a reluctant reader like my sister onto the magic of books. Harry Potter opened the door and I walked giddily through it, giving into the potency of his magic.

Perhaps, to Harry Potter goes the singular credit of pulling children away from their game stations. Children find it riveting. The moral lessons in these books could not be more unequivocal. It makes you believe that the forces of good will always triumph over evil. The author Rowlings with her intriguingly drawn characters draws you into her magic web with her exquisite yarn which is tightly plotted and fast paced like the children are today.

If you haven't started reading yet it is never too late. There is no right time or wrong time to get started. Just pick up a book that you like and let the book work its magic on you.