

Library Lines by Dennis May, KTL staff

Despite the subject of my last article, I did a lot of painting but very little spring cleaning in April. In prepping for my painting job, I removed all of the books from my shelves and sorted through them. But once the paint was dry, all of the books went right back on the shelf. Every. Single. One. I just didn't have the heart to part with them! Maybe it's a fear of having an empty library, a true desire to get around to reading them one day, or just because books are awesome decorations for any home. This got me thinking about those titles that we have owned for years and, for whatever reason, haven't made their way to the top of my reading stack. Are there any particular reasons these books have remained unread (other than pure intimidation and lack of time)? While I ponder this existential question, here are a couple of books that have collected dust on my shelves for years, but are treasures without a doubt.

Stieg Laarson's *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. This book has been around for awhile, originally published in Swedish in 2005. This is the first of the Millennium series following a journalist, Mikael Blomkvist, teaming up with Lisbeth Salander, an unconventional private investigator, to solve the 40-year-old cold case of a wealthy man's niece's disappearance. Since its publication, the novel has been made into two movies, one in Swedish and the American remake from 2011. The original trilogy of books has also since expanded by three more books, with another set of three on the way. Why is it on my shelf? I found the first two books of the series at a used bookstore in Manhattan almost seven years ago and decided to buy it, because I knew it was a book that should be on everyone's shelf. In fact, my wife and I have even made sure that each of the books (we now have four in the series) was the paperback version so that the set looks good on our shelf. This was more difficult than it seems. Although the book is intriguing, it has remained on my shelf collecting dust for three reasons: it's lengthy and dense, the character and location names intimidate me, and (the biggest sin of all) I've already seen the movie.

Will I read the book eventually? Absolutely. I've heard awesome things about Laarson's writing style, imagery, and characters, and pretty much anyone who has read the book loved it. On Goodreads it's rated a solid 4.15/5 out of almost 3 million ratings. I'm looking forward to finally reading it after I finish my current book -- *The Great Alone* by Kristin Hannah -- which I am sure couldn't be any more different from *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*.

The second book is one that my wife, Brenna, has been meaning to read but hasn't gotten around to yet. Published in 2019, *Things You Save in a Fire* by Katherine Center follows Texas firefighter Cassie Hanwell as she moves to Boston to take care of her estranged and ailing mother. This book is newer than *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, so it doesn't have the recognition or movies that the latter one boasts, but it has all of the possibilities. It features everything from romance to forgiveness to conquering your fears and learning to love yourself. Why is it on my shelf? My wife spotted it at a bookshop in Ithaca and thought the title and cover looked interesting, and the synopsis on the dust jacket was more than intriguing. It was also on sale. So, why hasn't this book been read? To quote my wife, "I just can't bring myself to read it when there are so many other books that I've been wanting to read!"

So will Brenna ever read this book? Yes. She definitely will. She reads everything and the reviews for *Things You Save in a Fire* are awesome. People praise Center's care for her characters and her inspirational insightful story. It currently boasts a Goodreads rating of 4.02/5 out of over 85,000 ratings.

These books are only two of many that have been sitting on our shelves for a long time. Are there any books you've been meaning to read but haven't made it onto your list quite yet? If so, I hope this article encourages you to finally pick the one that has been either waiting for you the longest, or the one that sparks your interest the most. I also hope, by sharing a couple of my own dust collectors, that I will finally discover what I'm missing by letting a book sleep on my shelf.