

Collection name: How to be a Woman

There are very few fantasy and sci-fi books that deal with a girl's coming of age. As I was growing up, I was an avid reader and story-teller, and I wanted to read books about people like me. It took much sifting, but I found a number of tales that changed how I viewed being a girl (and then a woman) in the world. I started this collection so that others did not have to do the same massive volume of searching I did as a child; I wanted the girls and women around me to easily be able to find the books that inspired me when I was growing up, books that I hope will inspire them.

I started building this collection when I found an signed copy of Tamora Pierce's *Alanna: The First Adventure* in a thrift store. Just seeing the author's signature on that front page pulled me back into my childhood where I looked up the eponymous main character as the epitome of the woman I wanted to become. From there, I started to track down the books that I remembered having a strong effect on my opinions of womanhood.

The items of greatest interest would definitely be the two signed books: the one mentioned above and *Shards of Honor* by Lois McMaster Bujold. Both are very well-worn, a sign of how deeply I loved them, but I also found both of them in stores by completely random happen-stance. Both times, I was simply scanning the shelves when the books called to me. I pulled out the books only to find that they were signed! Both events felt magical, and whenever I go into used bookstores, I always long to feel that magnetic pull again, to find another signed copy of one of these remarkable books.

To me, this collection signifies the difficulties of growing up in a world which does not take any interest in a girl's growth. Each book depicts a young woman, at least somewhere in the work, trying to forge a path for herself despite existing in an apathetic or antagonistic world. These books, even though some are less progressive than others, all provided me with a sense of power as I tried to determine what it meant to be a woman, and I can only hope that these books will do the same for others who may feel helpless or misunderstood.