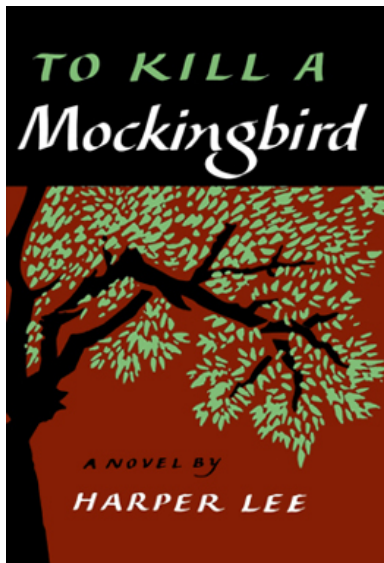


Five Literature Moments That Made Me Ugly Cry

For a year now on REO I have shared about how much I laugh and cry at fictional moments. Who doesn't like to feel deeply? Today is the fifth in this series, moments in literature that brought the ugly tears. Links to the others in this series can be found at the end of the article. Links to the books on Amazon are embedded in their titles. And please note that MAJOR spoilers will be revealed, so if you have not read a particular work and plan to, please skip it.

On to the list!



1. [To Kill A Mockingbird](#) (Harper Lee)

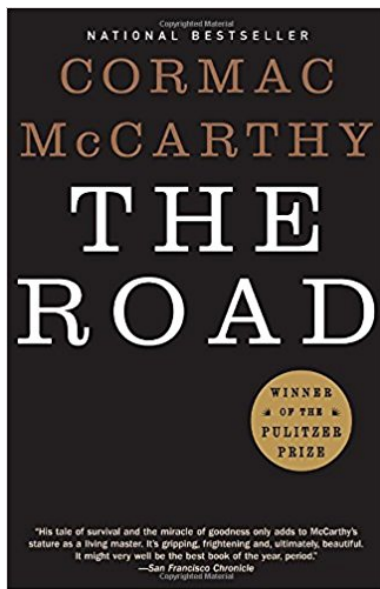
The Moment: Tom is Found Guilty

A jury never looks at a defendant it has convicted, and when this jury came in, not one of them looked at Tom Robinson. The foreman handed a piece of paper to Mr. Tate who handed it to the clerk who handed it to the judge.

I shut my eyes. Judge Taylor was polling the jury: "Guilty...guilty...guilty...guilty..." I peeked at Jem: his hands

were white from gripping the balcony rail, and his shoulders jerked as if each “guilty” was a separate stab between them.

Even knowing American history, I was foolish enough to believe that they may find Tom Robinson innocent. Atticus had argued so well. And I had seen “A Time To Kill” before I read this book, even though this movie came decades later. But I fooled myself. The moment was too much. It caused me to hate injustice real or fictional. Why don’t I hate it more?



2. [The Road](#) (Cormac McCarthy)

The Moment: The Father’s Last Words to His Son

“You said you wouldn’t ever leave me.”

“I know. I’m sorry. You have my whole heart. You always did. You’re the best guy. You always were. If I’m not here, you can still talk to me. You can talk to me. And I’ll talk to you. You’ll see.”

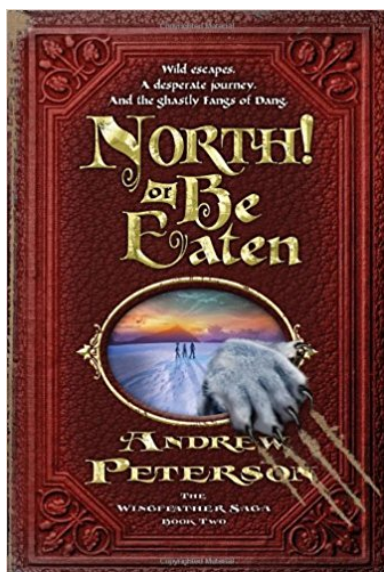
“Will I hear you?”

“Yes, you will. You have to make it like talk you imagine. And you’ll hear me.”

I listened to this on Audiobook and finished on a Sunday

morning very early while walking to church. The tears actually started before this part and continued until the very end of the book. The ending is incredible as well, with the boy finding a new protector and his family. But there was something special about the dialogue between the father and son throughout this story. I don't have kids, but I have an incredible father who would protect me until death. The dad here reminded me a little bit of mine in how simple of speech and blunt he was and in how he corrected his son.

Unlike three of the other books on this list, this one doesn't have an abundance of characters and geography in an elaborate fantasy world. Just two main protagonists in a crucial life relationship whose plight and conversations will rip your heart into a million pieces if you'll let them.



3. [North! Or Be Eaten](#) (Andrew Peterson, *The Wingfeather Saga Book 2*)

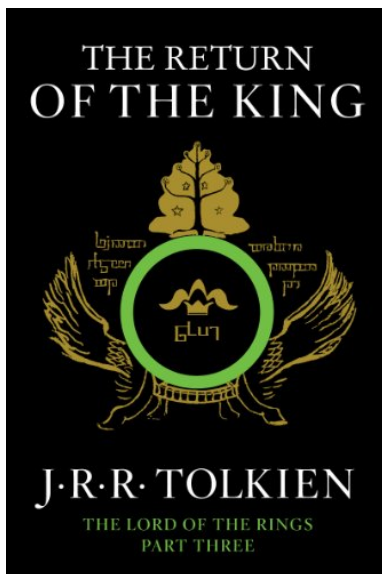
The Moment: Janner's First Night in the Coffin

"When he awoke again, he found that the box was not an awful dream but a black reality. He panicked again. He lay panting in the blackness, talking to himself praying aloud to the Maker, accusing, pleading, screaming things that, while no one could blame poor Janner for saying them, will not be repeated here.

And the Maker's answer was hollow silence.

Hours and hours passed. Janner wept again, a different weeping than before. These tears were not from fear but from weariness and a vast loneliness."

I have written honest words for REO a few times but I have never written about the darkest time in my life. Perhaps one day I will. Suffice it to say, I get what Janner went through above even though I was in a spiritual coffin and not a physical one. But our responses were the same. And so was God's. It was impossible for me to read this and not lose it. It is like Peterson had access to my own personal journal when he wrote this scene.



4. [The Return of the King](#) (J.R.R. Tolkien)

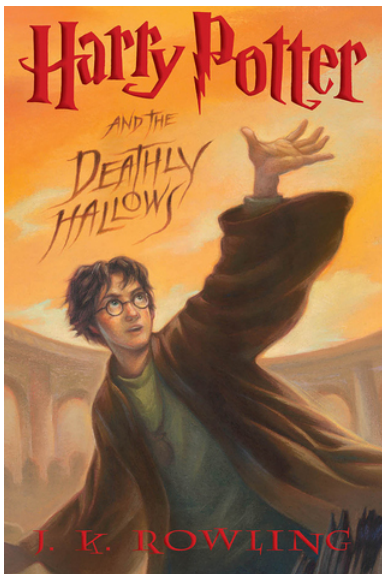
The Moment: Sam carries Frodo on Mount Doom

"Sam looked at him and wept in his heart, but no tears came to his dry and stinging eyes. 'I said I'd carry him if it broke my back,' he muttered, 'and I will!'"

"Come, Mr. Frodo!" he cried, "I can't carry it for you, but I can carry you and it as well. So up you get! Come on, Mr. Frodo dear! Sam will give you a ride. Just tell him where to go and he'll go."

I recall the moment I first read this like it were five minutes ago. I was on a plane to a youth retreat in Florida. And I tried to hold it in, not wanting complete strangers to see me openly weeping. But I lost that battle. Sam's character was too much. What he did for Frodo the entire length of the series was heart-wrenching at every turn and at this moment the emotional dam burst and the tidal wave of tears overcame me. I could not read the rest of the chapter for a few minutes.

It's funny to me how the books and the movies caused me to cry at completely different parts.



5. [Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows](#) (J.K. Rowling)

The Moment: Dobby Dies and Harry Buries Him

“‘DOBBY!’

The elf swayed slightly, stars reflected in his wide, shining eyes. Together, he and Harry looked down at the silver hilt of the knife protruding from the elf's heaving chest.

‘No–no–HELP!’ Harry bellowed toward the cottage, toward the people moving there. ‘HELP!’

‘Dobby, no, don't die, don't die – ‘

The elves eyes found him, and his lips trembled with the effort to form words.

'Harry...Potter...'

And then with a little shudder the elf became quite still and his eyes were nothing more than great glassy orbs, sprinkled with light from the stars they could not see."

I remember being in my church's auditorium a little while after my ESL class ended, reading this. I was standing up against a wall and I slowly and subconsciously started crouching to the ground in disbelief. But I kept reading, and Harry offered to bury him:

"'I want to do it properly,' were the first words of which Harry was conscious of speaking. 'Not by magic. Have you got a spade?'

And shortly afterward he had set to work, alone, digging the grave in the place that Bill had shown him. He dug with a kind of fury, relishing the manual work, glorifying in the non-magic of it, for every drop of sweat felt like a gift to the elf who had saved their lives."

Floods of tears. I have never been impacted by a fictional moment like this one. It still wrecks my soul after about 10 readings of the books. I am weeping even as I type this. I'll never get over Dobby, my favorite hero in the book, simply because of how humble he was. And although I didn't catch this detail until about my third reading, it deserves to be mentioned:

"Harry wrapped the elf more snugly in his jacket. Ron sat on the edge of the grave and stripped off his shoes and socks, which he placed on the elf's bare feet."

Ron gave him his socks. To know Dobby is to know what a heart-shattering touch of genius this was by Rowling, to this

already tear-stained scene. My heart feels empty and full at the same time.

As always, we'd love for our readers to share their moments below.

To read about Five Movie Moments That Made Me ROTFL go [here](#).

To read about Five Movie Moments That Made Me Ugly Cry, go [here](#).

To read about Five TV Moments That Made Me ROTFL, go [here](#).

To read about Five TV Moments That Made Me Ugly Cry, go [here](#).