

## Take me out to the ballgame...

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Every year at this time I am invited to a Red Sox game...skybox seat! wine and shrimp and a private bathroom! Two years ago it was a great game. Last year, horrible. Last night? Mediocre.

I hang in there with the Sox in the same way that I stick with a favorite author even if he/she writes a bad book now and then.

Speaking of authors. Yesterday I got a phone call from a fact-checker at the New York Times. I like fact checkers and the fact that such people exist. A writer from the NYT had come to interview me, has written the article, and now the fact checker called to be certain that I actually said the things that I am quoted as saying.

One of the things he read back to me made me reply, "Yes, I said that, but yikes. Does it sound snide? I didn't mean it that way." He said no, it didn't sound snide to him. So there it will stay, forever in print in the NYT.

What I had said to the journalist was that I tend not to read childrens' books. I prefer to read adult books because I'm an adult.

And it's true. Of course there are many, many adults who love reading childrens' books. But I'm not one (unless I have a small child on my lap. That's a whole other thing).

I think I read fiction in the same way that most people...including kids...do. I look for a protagonist I can relate to, one who faces problems that I can imagine facing. Then I accompany that person on his/her journey, cringing when they make wrong choices, gasping when they encounter obstacles, rejoicing when they achieve their goals, grieving when they fail.

I mentioned in an earlier post a book called "The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry." The protagonist, Harold Fry, is, unlike me, male. He is, unlike me, British. But like me, he had experienced a long life and encountered losses and deep disappointments. There was something about his situation—his desperate and unswerving passion—that I could feel, and relate to, from the earliest pages of the book.

Now and then I can relate to a young protagonist in that way. But more often I seek out stories about those who have already found their way through the maze of youth and with some battles behind them are now facing those of adult life.

So the NYT journalist will leave in the fact that I said that. It was not said snidely and I assume that will be clear. What if he wrote, "*I read adult books because I am an adult,*" she said, with an

*arrogant sneer?*

*adult," she said, with a lewd wink and a knowing nudge?*

Or: *"I read adult books because I am an*

Oh dear, I am making myself very nervous.

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