



CLIFTON PARK  
HALFMOON  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY

# “BEGINNINGS”



First lines from the  
CPH Library Obelisk

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It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen.  
*1984* by George Orwell

Once there was a tree...and she loved a little boy.  
*The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein

To anyone who has ever been owned by a cat, it will come as no surprise that there are all sorts of things about your cat you will never, as long as you live, forget.  
*The Cat Who Came for Christmas* by Cleveland Amory

Once upon a time, sixty years ago a, a little girl lived in the big woods of Wisconsin, in a little gray house made of logs.  
*Little House in the Big Woods* by Laura Ingalls Wilder

Arma virumque cano, I sing of arms and of men.  
*Aeneid* by Virgil

I write this sitting in the kitchen sink.  
*I Capture the Castle* by Dodie Smith

The gales tore at him and he felt its bite deep within and he knew that if they did not make landfall in three days they would all be dead.  
*Shogun* by James Clavell

Claudia knew she could never pull off the old-fashioned kind of running away.  
*From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* by E.L. Konigsburg

What dire offense from am'rous causes springs, what mighty contests rise from trivial things.  
*The Rape of the Lock* by Alexander Pope

The mole had been working very hard all the morning, spring-cleaning his little home.  
*Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame

One fish two fish red fish blue fish.  
*One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish* by Dr. Seuss

I was an only child—and so I became an only man.

*The Tenth Commandment* by Lawrence Sanders

The courtship and remarriage of an old widower is always made more difficult when middle-aged children are involved—especially when there are unmarried daughters.

*A Summons to Memphis* by Peter Taylor

‘Christmas won’t be Christmas without any presents,’ grumbled Jo lying on the rug.

*Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott

Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again.

*Rebecca* by Daphne DuMaurier

Who is John Galt?

*Atlas Shrugged* by Ayn Rand

In the beginning, God created Heaven and Earth.

Holy Bible

At supper that night, as many times before, his father said, ‘Well s’pose we go to the picture show.’

*A Death in the Family* by James Agee

Life is difficult.

*The Road Less Traveled* by M. Scott Peck

There once lived, in a sequestered part of the county of Devonshire, one Mr. Godfrey Nickleby: a worthy gentleman, who, taking it into his head rather late in life that he must get married, and not being young enough or rich enough to aspire to the hand of a lady of fortune, had wedded an old flame out of mere attachment, who in her turn had taken him for the same reason.

*Nicholas Nickleby* by Charles Dickens

When I stepped out into the bright sunlight from the darkness of the movie house, I only had two things on my mind: Paul Newman and a ride home.

*The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton

Scarlett O'Hara was not beautiful, but men seldom realized it when caught by her charm as the Tarleton twins were.

*Gone with the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell

When I am an old woman I shall wear purple with a red hat which doesn't go, and doesn't suit me.

*Warning* (found in *When I Am an Old Woman I Shall Wear Purple: An Anthology of Short Stories and Poetry*) by Jenny Joseph

Mr. and Mrs. Mallard were looking for a place to live.

*Make Way for Ducklings* by Robert McCloskey

Once upon a time...

*Cinderella*

The boy was tall, dark-haired and left-handed.

*Look Who's Playing First Base* by Matt Christopher

When Mary Lennox was sent to Misselthwaite Manor to live with her uncle everybody said she was the most disagreeable-looking child ever seen.

*The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett

High up on the long hill they called the Saddle Back, behind the ranch and the county road, the boy sat his horse, facing east, his eyes dazzled by the rising sun.

*My Friend Flicka* by Mary O'Hara

Any time you bite into an apple, you should think about Johnny Appleseed.

*Johnny Appleseed* by Carol Beach York

It was not a dark and stormy night.

*The Celery Stalks at Midnight* by James Howe

In an old house in Paris that was covered with vines lived twelve little girls in two straight lines.

*Madeline* by Ludwig Bemelmans

Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive.

*Marmion* by Sir Walter Scott

In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit.

*The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien

In fairy-tales, witches always wear silly black hats and black cloaks, and they ride on broomsticks.

*The Witches* by Roald Dahl

Because she was only fifteen and busy with her growing up, Lucia's periods of reflection were brief and infrequent; but this morning she felt weighted with responsibility.

*The Robe* by Lloyd C. Douglas

The cosmos is all that there is or ever was or ever will be.

*Cosmos* by Carl Sagan

If you are a dreamer, come in.

*Where the Sidewalk Ends* by Shel Silverstein

Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.

Holy Bible, Proverbs 31

But, you may say, we asked you to speak about women and fiction—what has that got to do with a room of one's own?

*A Room of One's Own* by Virginia Woolf

This book begins with chapter 0 for a very important reason. You don't have to read it.

*Never-Say-Diet-Book* by Richard Simmons

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was a season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope.

*Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens

Once upon a time, there were four little rabbits, and their names were—Flopsy, Mopsy, Cotton-Tail and Peter.

*Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood.

*Road Not Taken* by Robert Frost

I'm still haunted by dreams of the time we lived on Mr. Carter's plantation.

*Coming of Age in Mississippi* by Anne Moody

As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a giant insect.

*The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka

Call me Ishmael.

*Moby Dick* by Herman Melville

For a human character to reveal truly exceptional qualities, one must have the good fortune to be able to observe its performance over many years.

*Man Who Planted Trees* by Jean Giono

There is a legend about a bird which sings just once in its life, more sweetly than any other creature on the face of the earth.

*The Thorn Birds* by Colleen McCullough

Sunday afternoon was clear, and the snow-covered prairie sparkled in the sunshine.

*These Happy Golden Years* by Laure Ingalls Wilder

O for a muse of fire, that would ascend/the brightest heaven of invention,/a kingdom for a stage, princes to act,/and monarchs to behold the swelling scene!

*Life of King Henry the Fifth* by William Shakespeare

The saddest shower of all is the one you take the night before school starts in September.

*Who Put that Hair In My Toothbrush* by Jerry Spinelli

My wound is geography.

*Prince of Tides* by Pat Conroy

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in the want of a wife.

*Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen

The sun sets in the west (just about everyone knows that), but Sunset Towers faced east.  
*Westing Game* by Ellen Raskin

It was a sultry, quiet afternoon in Auburn.  
*Joshua* by Joshua F. Girzone

In the light of the moon, a little gg lay on a leaf.  
*The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle

On they went, singing “Rest Eternal,” and whenever they stopped, their feet, the horses, and the gusts of wind seemed to carry on their singing.  
*Doctor Zhivago* by Boris Pasternak

The first place that I can well remember was a large pleasant meadow with a pond of clear water in it.  
*Black Beauty* by Anna Sewell

Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show.  
*David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens

Sunday, 14 June 1942/On Friday, June 12th, I woke up at 6 o'clock and no wonder; it was my birthday.  
*Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank

In our family, there was no clear line between religion and fly fishing.  
*A River Runs Through It: And Other Stories* by Norman Maclean

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.  
**The Declaration of Independence**

## The Story of the Obelisk



In May of 1991, patrons of the Shenendehowa Public Library were invited to take part in the Library's *Famous First Lines* contest. Selected first lines from favorite books would be chosen and engraved on the Obelisk being created by sculptor Bruno LaVerdiere,

who was commissioned by the Library Board of Trustees.

On October 6, 1991, the Obelisk and the selected first lines—62 in total—were revealed in front of the Library, then located on Clifton Country Road. The ceremony marked the Library's first anniversary since its expansion at that location. LaVerdiere said he hoped the sculpture would “make people curious, leading them within the Library to learn more.”



Sculptor Bruno LaVerdiere of Hadley, NY.

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