

Book Dust That Stuck

By Molly Hegman

A few years after my mother died I was visiting my two younger sisters in Florida. We were reminiscing about our childhood. I spaced out for a moment thinking about my parents and their love of books. Suddenly I returned to the present when I heard them laughing about how they had smoked my dad's cigars. I asked, "Were we living in the same house?" They responded in one voice; "You always had your nose in a book!"

My parents enjoyed reading. My mom preferred fiction and my dad, non-fiction. We had so many books that Dolores talked my mom into letting us organize the books and create our own library. A few of the books they collected are about 100 years old. The ones I have are old and worn but still treasured. All six of my sisters and I loved books and became avid readers.

When I was in the seventh grade our class walked downtown to the Public Library. I had never been there! I was thrilled and decided that Heaven must be living in a library.

Because we shared most of our books, receiving a new book as a gift was a treat. I didn't have to wait for my mom and my four older sisters to read it. A new book has a crisp feel, a feeling of anticipation but waiting was not easy so I would open an old friend, shake off the dust and enjoy it again.

Along with a few really old books, I still have a few books that were just mine. One is "Tell Me Another Story" by C.S. Bailey. It was a collection of stories intended to encourage mental growth and satisfy story hunger. I am not sure about the mental growth but it definitely satisfied the story hunger as I read it enough that I could tell the stories to my siblings.

Another new book I remember and read many times was "Cricket, A Little Girl of the Old West." It made a big impression on me because I didn't know much about Native Americans and it had a character named Molly. With my wild imagination it caused me to lose sleep. I would wake up thinking that I heard someone on horseback coming to get us. When I discovered there actually was a rumbling noise coming from the lumber yard a few blocks away I ceased to be bothered.

Every year brought new adventures in books, new ones and old ones rediscovered. I allowed my girls to get library cards as soon as they could print their names. We spent many happy hours in the library. Today they are avid readers like their mom and grandmother.

So, Cathy and Terry, I missed out on smoking my dad's cigars but I still like to have my nose in a good book. Dusty or not, I would never trade a good book for a good cigar even it was a super good one.