

## Book Review

By Marilyn Reeves

I could probably fill a thousand pages describing all the wonderful books I have read in my lifetime, but lucky for you, I'll share just a few.

My first taste of classic literature happened in Junior High, when the Bronte sisters swept me away to the moors of England with their tragic, romantic tales. I fell in love with the dark and brooding Heathcliff and wept with Jane Eyre over her long and lonely plight.

Somehow I also managed to wade through "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" by Victor Hugo, although James Joyce's "Ulysses" and Herman Melville's "Moby Dick" are still on my to-do list, should I happen to live so long.

Usually I gravitate towards fiction – all kinds of fiction, from the grizzly tales of Cormack McCarthy to Larry McMurtry's Western saga "Lonesome Dove" to the beautifully written character studies of Wally Lamb. A few books have become a part of my life's reference, such as Richard Llewellyn's "How Green Was My Valley," Margaret Mitchell's "Gone With The Wind" and "The Thorn Birds" by the late Colleen McCullough.

I've read nearly all of Stephen King's offerings, although my favorites are not his famous horror stories, but rather some of his tales that seem a bit more plausible – and therefore all the more frightening. To me, the scariest one of all was *Cujo*, in which a rabid Saint Bernard held a mother and young son captive in a stalled and stifling hot car. Many of his books have been made into movies, including *Stand By Me*, *Misery*, and *The Shawshank Redemption*, to name a few.

I read a number of books recommended by Oprah when she featured her book club, my favorite of which was "Songs in Ordinary Time" by Mary McGarry Morris. It's a tale of a single mother trying to make ends meet while raising three children, when the "flimflam man" comes to town and takes advantage of her vulnerability ... in more ways than one. Told through the eyes of her youngest son, it's a great read filled with fascinating, colorful characters that linger in my mind like old friends.

A heart-wrenching story I recently read was called "The Darkest Child" by Delores Phillips, about a crazed and violent mother who treats her children like virtual slaves. The tragedy is that women like that actually do exist and the abused and neglected children suffer the consequences.

But one of the best books I ever read was a non-fiction story called "The Path Between the Seas / The Creation of the Panama Canal" by David McCullough, a detailed accounting of that mammoth achievement and of the thousands of lives that were lost to malaria alone during its undertaking.

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