

# BookWorm

I was always an avid reader, but then I took an almost decade hiatus from reading books. Because I did (and do) my reading before bed, I think the hiatus was due to the combination of getting used to parenting and also being fresh out of college which meant that I wasn't used to getting to read what I wanted rather than what was assigned to me. But a few years ago, I took up the hobby once again, and I've been thoroughly enjoying it. I began by reading non-fiction because I liked the idea of learning something while I was reading. I read biographies and stories that ranged from fun to inspirational, and my favorite reading was centered on true crime.

I read [\*In the Presence of My Enemies\*](#), the inspiring true story of the Burnham couple who, after years of missionary work in the Philippines, were taken hostage during a vacation there and held for a year. I read [\*My Lobotomy\*](#), the biography of a man named Howard Dully who underwent a forced frontal lobotomy at the age of 12. I read [\*How Many Hills to Hillsboro\*](#), an account of a family of 5 who attempted and almost made a cross country trip together in the '60s – on their bicycles. I delved into fiction, reading the entire Harry Potter series and loving it. And now I call myself an avid reader with a “to read” book list a mile long – and by the way, all of the above mentioned books I enjoyed immensely, and I highly recommend them.

I think that's how I ended up reading 3 books at the same time. It began when I was looking for something to read that would compare to Harry Potter, so I tried C.S. Lewis' Narnia series and began with *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe*. While enjoyable, it wasn't quite the can't-put-it-down book that I was looking for, so I consulted my “to read” list and decided to try a Stephen King book that had been recommended by a local newspaper columnist – [\*Under the Dome\*](#). With the exception of some short stories, I haven't read Stephen King

before, but I've enjoyed a few of his movies. So far, *Under the Dome* has been exactly what I'm looking for – page-turning excitement that is hard to put down! The novel is about a small town in Maine that is suddenly and inexplicably cut off from the rest of the world by a mysterious, invisible – yet very real barrier. Between trying to draft and enforce their own laws, keeping lawless individuals under control and townspeople from going crazy – literally – and attempting to figure out what the dome is and how to get rid of it, the little town has more than its fair share of strife.

A few weeks before my request for *Under the Dome* came in at the library, I had decided I wanted to read the Bible, and so I find myself switching between two 1000+ page books in bed at night – I am so grateful we found a great sale on that e-book reader, which makes switching between these two books easy on my arms and my bed partner. I know a lot of people are intimidated by the complex language of the Bible, but the NIV version is fairly easy reading, and I really enjoy reading it and especially learning more about the chapters I've read when I go to church on Sunday.

As if reading two 1000+ page books at the same time weren't enough (though on the plus side, it's not like I can possibly get the characters in the Bible and those in *Under the Dome* mixed up – a complication I used to run into in my heavier reading days when I would try to read a book for pleasure and a book for school at the same time), another one of my requests came in at the library – *Caril* by Ninette Beaver. Being a more obscure book, I don't know that I will get the opportunity to get it from the library again, so I'm attempting the book-reading tri-fecta. *Caril* is the unauthorized biography of Caril Fugate, the alleged accomplice to [Charles Starkweather](#) who went on an infamous murder spree centered in Lincoln Nebraska in 1958. Although Caril was tried and convicted in a court of law, there has been much debate about her actual role in the murders because of her age

at the time – 14. The book follows the cases and Caril's incarceration and is written from the media's point of view in the 1970's before Caril was released from prison. It's been interesting to read about other news items of the day (breaking news items in 1958 included: Liz Taylor's husband killed in a plane crash and Elvis being drafted into the Army) and also how differently people reacted to news reporters taking interviews for the brand-new medium of the day: television. Family members of suspects, law enforcement, and attorneys were all much more willing and able to talk to reporters and share details for the camera than they are today. You may have seen one of a number of movies made about the Starkweather cases; the most famous is Natural Born Killers, although that movie DOES NOT follow the cases accurately and is, in my opinion, a terrible movie. I guess the reason I'm so interested in these cases is because Charles Starkweather was a different type of serial killer and one who has escaped the major notoriety of say, Ted Bundy and John Wayne Gacy. I also lived in the lovely city of Lincoln Nebraska for a year, and I've seen many of the places where the crimes took place for myself – including the penitentiary where Starkweather was electrocuted and the cemetery where he is buried.

I'm really enjoying all 3 of my books right now, but reaching my goal of re-reading the last installment of the Harry Potter series before the final movie comes out mid-July is going to prove to be quite challenging!!

And one more note – further encouragement to read Under the Dome is the movie being made due to come out this year – looks like a made-for-tv movie, which is difficult for me to imagine based upon the violence involved and intensity of the story. But if Stephen King's other tv mini-series are any indication, Under the Dome the movie version will not disappoint and is an excellent reason to pick up this great book for some perfect summer reading!

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# Are we there yet?

The next story will be totally made up from bits and pieces of the stories I heard about the road trip...

Many years ago, my oldest daughter was around 9 (almost 10) and the next daughter was 5. They took a road trip out to California with their grandparents. It was the oldest's second trip out. What I remember from the stories is that the youngest on the trip would be able to find any McDonalds, even with her eyes closed. They were able to visit relatives. There were fireworks, but somebody slept through them. I think Uncle Butch had a Hot Tub. There littlest sister was born that year (I think). If the little sister is correct, then a new cousin was waiting for them in California. It has been so long, I think I need input from the people who actually went. I have bits and pieces in my memory, and it must have been some road trip for the grandparents. Maybe, just maybe I will transpose different people and really make the thing up. ☐

Ready for a road trip of my own...

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# A slightly different twist

A complete story this time. Some who have heard it before, may see a different spin on it.

It was a warm sunny day in the early spring. A young mother was waiting for her daughter to get home from kindergarten. Her youngest was getting rambunctious and really needed her

older sister to play with. It was a trying time for the mother, she spent most of her day alone with only children to talk to. If you've ever been the parent of young children, you can understand the yearning for adult conversation. Yes, motherhood could be trying, but to see the smiles in her children's eyes made it all worthwhile.

Little Katie finally made it home from school with a big "Hi Mommy, I'm home."

Hugs were given and received. Lunch was served and eaten. The two girls went off to play. Finally, the mother could get some things done. There was laundry to do of course, but she really wanted some time to sit with a project she had going. Who knows what the project was for the day. It could have been anything from finishing a dress for one of her children, or knitting a blanket for someone's new baby. These were much easier to handle when the two girls were playing together. And with the older one gone part of the day, it seemed like they didn't have as many fights.

It didn't take too long before the girls wanted to go outside. It had been wet and rainy recently, and this was the first sunny day in a long time. Jenny came to ask her mother if she could go outside with her sister.

"As long as you don't get your clothes dirty, you can go out to play." , was her mother's reply. And she returned to her project.

It didn't take long before Katie came into the room and wanted to use the hose. Of course her her mother said, "No Katie, I don't want you to touch the hose."

Slightly saddened, Katie went back outside to play.

A long time passed, the project was finished and it was quiet. Too quiet. From some premonition that some parents get, she knew that something wasn't quite right. The mother went

outside to see what was going on with her two darlings.

She found them. Oh yes, she found them kneeling in a puddle, covered with mud and the hose was running, slowly making the puddle bigger. They were playing, splashing and laughing. They didn't see their mother come up to them.

With her temper rising, the mother first asked her youngest daughter, "Why are your clothes dirty? I thought I told you not to get them dirty."

Jenny's response was "But these aren't my clothes mommy, Katie said I could wear hers."

Her mother looked and sure enough, the clothes were a bit too big.

"What about you young lady? I told you not to touch the hose."

"But mommy," piped in Jenny again, "Katie didn't touch the hose. I'm a big girl now, I can turn on the hose myself."

What was a mother to do? Her daughters followed her instructions exactly. Oh yes, the letter of the law was stretched, but the elastic didn't break. What would she do?

Firmly she said "Stay here!" to her daughters. She went inside. Her daughters trembled with a little fear. Of course they knew their mother was mad. They had no idea of what was to come. They didn't like thinking about it, but they didn't want to make matters worse, so they stayed right where they were.

In a few minutes the young mother came out again. In her hands, she held a camera. Pictures of two very muddy girls were taken. Excess mud was rinsed off. Baths were taken. Snacks eaten. All was right with this little family. The rest of the day was as normal as any other.

May you find, as this family did, that it is usually best to

keep your temper, and try to find something good in every situation.

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## **Would you read stuff like this?**

It was a fairy tale life. Everything went well for them. They had beautiful, loving daughters. They had a roof over their heads, and food on the table. They were living their happily ever after. Now don't get me wrong, the two were not a king and queen. They weren't even a prince and princess. They had no royal blood to speak of, but they had each other. This meant that they had everthing.

As their children grew, they knew that they would need to adjust their lives to accommodate knowing each other again. They started when the youngest was almost five years old. They made time to be friends again. During this time they talked of their children, of course. Their daughters were an important part of their lives, and their well being was discussed often. But they also talked about themselves. They talked about their problems and joys. Most of all they talked about their futures.

I will have to say that the future looked bright for this pair. Everyone who knew them would have said the same thing. It was funny, but they really seemed to be on the same page. Most of the time, if you saw one of them, the other would not be far away. They liked it that way. Together, they were more than they could be apart.

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# Make the day special

This is one of those days, a day made special. What makes it special? Not much going on, other than a breakfast of pancakes, sausage and real maple syrup. My little family looks forward to this day all year. The pancakes are pretty ordinary. The sausage is usually top notch. The maple syrup is locally produced heaven in a bottle. In all of that, the day is just another day. But for my little family, this day is special. It has been special for many years.

I'm not sure what year it began, but our little town has a Maple Syrup Fest every spring. This was not the first maple syrup festival I went to, but it has been one that I've been to the most. Our local Maple Syrup Producers use this day to advertise their product, and share it with the community. An educational day, to see how the syrup is produced. Of course you get to taste the finished product in many forms. But really, once you've seen it a few times, you could give the tour yourself. Again, not much there to make it special is there? But for us the day is still special.

You may ask yourself why. I have many times. The answer is quite simple. We took an ordinary event and made it that way. We found a shared joy in family and friends. A simple task of sharing a meal of sticky sweet syrup, combined with a wagon ride to see a few maple trees. A choice was made to make this day a little different than the rest.

This day had its beginnings in the shadow of a slight bit of depression. It was a day to help someone get out of the "winter blues". One year, a choice was made to get out and enjoy an earlier spring day. And so, our yearly visit to a maple syrup festival was born. It became the thing to do in



early spring. It continued, year after year, to be a source of fun for the entire family.

Other days were added to that list, not just in spring time, but all year round. Not just to combat a bit of the seasonal blues, although that was on the top of the list, but to enjoy family and the company of others. We make those days special.

This is very important in life. We go along day by day. We do the same things over and over again. We go to work or school, we come home after the day has ended and we wait to start all over the next day. How boring that would be if that was all we did. But our society made some special days. Most of us call them the weekend. Days outside of the ordinary. Days we look forward to. I also think we need to add extraordinary days. Something to anticipate. Something to hold in heart. Those days need to be shared. They can be shared with family or friends. They are days that lift the heart and the mind. We make them that way and those days find their way into our stories and shared experience.

Some of the special days were started and shared with just one person. Those days are no longer shared, but they still hold a comfortable place in my life. They were days we made together.

A very important life lesson was learned many years ago. Any day can be special. Any day can be held above the rest. We look for those days and hold them dear, because we made them. They are ours. Maybe this is part of seizing the day?

... To be continued...

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# **I think it was in the Spring**

On an early spring day, I decided to host an apartment warming. There would be good food, good friends, wonderful conversation and maybe a game or two. All went as planned and a wonderful evening evolved. It was on that evening I met a very special person. When we were introduced, I received a quick, shy smile and a quick chaste hug. After that evening we became friends, started dating, got engaged and finally married. Our marriage lasted almost 20 years, until the time of her death. In the years that followed, I found that the seeds that marriage planted were far flung and all inclusive in my life. And to think, it all started with a smile.

I thought about writing a story of our life together. That is a story worth telling, but I have a feeling the audience would be limited. I think a better story, would be the story of the life lessons we learned along the way. Things that would and do impact most people along their lives. I found through the years that the things we hold dear and important in our lives are usually shared ideals with others. to be continued...

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## **It's the little things in life.**

I've been building up to writing a bit more on the blog. One by one, post by post there will be a story evolving. This is for me, it is for my family and I will share with my friends Things I've thought about over the past few years, but never put to written word. I'm open to all comments on this project, as it deals with the things I've found to be important in

life.

This first post will eventually form an introduction, chapters will follow. Things will be added, subtracted. Until I deem this to be a “finished project” Posts will be edited and changed. This is life, this is love and this is a smile.

I will start with a look back and end with a look forward, time will be filled.

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## Once Again Hollywood Has Come Up With A Creative Idea

Or maybe not so creative idea. It seems that ABC and Selma Hayek are combining forces to create a magical miniseries which is based on a popular novel which was based upon a beloved classic movie which was based upon another book. The popular novel was also the basis for a megahit Broadway musical which is (the last I heard) is being turned into a big-screen production. Whatever happened to an original, creative idea.

The miniseries in question is based upon the novel, [\*Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West\*](#) by Gregory Maguire. While the musical may be a blockbuster, one of Maguire’s newer “Fractured Fairy Tales” was made into a telefilm. Anyone remember *Confessions of an Ugly Stepsister*? That’s ok... neither do I.

I think I will stick with the Fractured Fairy Tales as ready by Edward Everett Horton as seen on The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle Show. For your enjoyment, I have chosen a classic Mr. Know-It-All segment.



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# Finishing what I started

Last evening I was feeling a bit of insomnia invading my room, so I decided to try to finish a [book that I blogged about some time ago](#).

Step one accomplished, I did finish around 3:00am. My view of the work itself changed very little. I can't honestly say that it was a sleep problem cure, but it never captured my interest. So here you have it folks, my final thoughts on Timothy Frost's "Final Passage".

So in my humble opinion:

The book had enough plots and subplots for multiple books. it was busy. Because of this, the character development actually suffered. I never really cared what happened to any of the characters. I found that I didn't like or dislike any of the characters. I was ambivalent. If they got in trouble, I wasn't driven to find out if they made it through. In fact at one crucial point in the story I was thinking, "Just shoot them all, it doesn't matter." Any other character could have stepped in to finish the story.

The initial plot, brought forth in the prologue, didn't seem to have any importance at the end. Oh, I do understand how it could have been important if revealed earlier, but too much other 'stuff' happened, and I no longer cared about that either.

I guess I won't give this book the "Insomniac Relief Award" now, I can't say that I would recommend it either. In some ways I feel a bit saddened by this. The prologue of the book grabbed my attention. I waded through many chapters in the hope that the book would turn back to that beginning. When it

finally got back there, I no longer cared.

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## Movie, book, nook review...

So, in my last post, I lamented about not posting movie, book or even my reviews of my e-reader, the nook. So here is an all in one post.

This summer [Barnes and Noble](#) offered free classic e-book collections every week. While I had downloaded a lot of these from [Project Gutenberg](#) the books downloaded from Barnes and Noble seemed to have a little better e-book setup. My little [nook](#) now has over 300 books loaded and ready for reading at any time. I think that this has been one of my better electronic investments. I've been able to re-visit many of the books I read in my younger days, and I don't even have to remember to put in a bookmark. Also Barnes and Noble has a wonderful ongoing program of free book Fridays. Every Friday is a new book. These can be old classics, new books in a series, or just other books that are offered for free. As you can tell, I'm all about free. Many books to read, and I wonder if I can get to them all.

But on the book itself. I just finished reading "King Solomon's Mines" by H. Rider Haggard. The story was definitely dated. The treatment and understanding of non-white people was from the period the book was written, and it would not be tolerated in today's publishing climate. Getting that out of the way, the story held my interest (even if I knew how it turns out) and I enjoyed the escape from the every day it gave me. And that got me to think of some movies with one of the heroes of this story.

King Solomon's Mines has been made into a movie many times.

Some were serious treatments of the book/story, while others were light-hearted romps. The narrator/hero of the story was Allen Quartermain. He also showed up in a movie based on a graphic novel/comic book. It was "The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen". I've already commented on that movie, so here is the one I remember.

Back in 1985 a movie came out called "King Solomon's Mine" and playing Mr Quartermain was Richard Chamberlain. This was the fun romp of a movie. Most people at the time did not see this as a spoof of the very successful "Raiders of the Lost Arc" but it was. Indiana Jones could have been seen as loosely based on the Allan Quartermain character, and the movie "King Solomon's Mine" definitely played on that connection. This movie even one-upped Indy, by having its hero dragged behind a moving vehicle, however it was a train. The movie also had daring escapes and of course dreaded Germans. WWI instead of WWII Germans, but they were still there (no mention of any German troops in the book).

I really enjoyed the fun time at this movie, and I'm again reminded of the wonderful company I had when watching it. I think it is time to watch that movie again.

I remember back when "The Last Crusade" came out that we thought it would have been fun to have another Allan Quartermain spoof. That didn't happen. Oh well.