

Life's lessons from children's books

I learned in my young adult life that there was a lot of good things to learn from Children's books. These books have good things to teach children and, if you let them, adults. As you read to a child, make sure you pay attention to all of the things these books have to say.

I enjoyed reading to my girls, but I really enjoyed sitting back and listening while my wife read to each daughter. From the works of various authors we learn that life can be fun, sad, scary and comforting.

Through stories, you learn that you shouldn't touch things that do not belong to you. While in real life the town does not fill up with pasta, things can break and that could hurt someone you care about.

You learn that being polite should be a good habit and not something you need written on your hands. You learn that good friends can have fights and still be friends.

Sometimes bunnies do the wrong things, but they find that their mother still loves them. Yes, I've learned a lot over the years just from reading children's books. More than I can remember, but maybe after some bread and jam, I will try something new.

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!

ZZZ

Oh no a bad e-book The story sounded so good. Man tries to investigate the mysterious death of his father. Father died when the son was young. Nobody wants him to look into it. Leave the past alone.

Where did it go wrong. I really gave up counting the ways. The prologue was good, and I thought the rest of the book would be another page turner. I was wrong. I forced myself to read a few chapters, maybe it would get better. Nope.

The mystery and plot to drive that was given in the prologue. Up to chapter 7 were all the things that were going on in the main character's life. His business was having problems, he had problems with his mother, brother, daughter. He had problems with his business partner. Maybe if I continue reading he would have problems with his wife. I'm not sure, I quit. Except for finding some of his father's sailing journals (his mother than burned them), there was nothing happening about discovering the mystery death.

Quite frankly, I've been using this book to help me get to sleep. I stopped doing that because I was afraid I would drop my nook off the bed. That got me to the start of chapter 7. Yawn... I'm getting tired writing about it...

If you need an insomnia cure, run out to the library and see if they have Timothy Frost's "Final Passage". Cheaper than sleeping pills. Just don't load it on a book reader, you may fall asleep and then break your reader when you drop it.

Good point – It was free... ☐

I didn't know that.

A few years ago a movie came out and was release to critical defeat. As for myself I enjoyed the movie except for a few minor problems. I found it to be an enjoyable waste of time (just what I like in most movies).

The movie was [The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen](#). One of the biggest things that bothered me was the introduction of Tom Sawyer into the movie. On top of that he was a Pinkerton agent. I kept saying to myself, why bring in that character as a detective. Didn't make much sense to me. Of course Dorian Grey wasn't in the original comic either, but that didn't bother me as much.

Then I got my Nook! (Yep, another Nook post. Think I could get money to write reviews for my Nook?) I just finished a short story, from Mark Twain, that I never read or heard of before. The story was called [Tom Sawyer, Detective](#). While he was not a Pinkerton agent, he did use observation to solve a crime. So now after the years I've complained about Tom Sawyer being a detective in that movie, I guess that following the path that Twain left, it isn't that far out into left field.

There is another story that I have yet to read about Mr Sawyer and Mr. Finn called [Tom Sawyer Abroad](#). Tom and Huck are on a balloon expedition in Africa. I guess that allows the trip to England for Tom anyway.

Just one question about the movie, if the film people actually knew about these stories: Where was Huck? ☐

Nook again

I currently have around 200 books/stories on my Nook. I have read or started to read about 20 of those books/stories. I also have a number of MP3's. So I do have a wide selection to read or listen to. I can add research books that are available. I have new authors who started by publishing free books. I have old authors whose works are now being digitally archived and made available on the internet. A wonderful array of things to keep this old mind busy.

There is no physical way that I would have been able to read the past few selections in paper. Living in rural America, our local libraries can not be expected to have complete libraries of old classic books, they can't be expected to have all of the latest authors. And if a book is out of print? How will they get it? That doesn't even include books that are found only on the web. Stories only found in back issues of old magazines. Nope, I would not have been able to find all of the things I've read.

In my lifetime, I've had to move a 'library' of books from place to place. I've moved, my children have moved and we all have had books. A box of 20 hardbound books is heavy. 200+ books would be almost a truckload. I can carry them in the palm of my hand. And I can and will put more books on the Nook. I'm not sure I will ever read all of them, but it will give me something to do.

And I am assuming that in the years to come, more books will be available in electronic format. I will probably still buy books, go to the library or borrow a book or two from friends. Hard copy books and the feel in my hand are things I don't want to give up just yet. But I'm thinking if the improvements

to the reader itself and the books available, I may be able to carry a complete reference, entertainment library wherever I go. I think that is a wonderful thing.

Weekly EBook review

Well not quite yet, but maybe a new category if I keep reading at the rate I have been. Since this is an Ebook review, there will be some things about the books that you will only get from the ebooks I've been reading. Almost all of the books have been copied from original text and had OCR software run on them. I've notice in a few places the character recognition software just wasn't up to the task. I will have to note where I got the copy, how it was translated to digital text and the edition year it was copied from.

I'm thinking this will be a lot of fun for me, but my readers may be a bit bored by my reading selection. Oh well, you get what you pay for. I'm reading free books, and you are reading a free blog.

This week I finished 3 ebooks, so I have a choice as to which title to review. Decisions, decisions. Life sometimes complicates these things. ☐

Its not a Kindle...

I was looking at getting an e-book reader for some time. I've been loading old classics on to my computer and reading them

from the screen. There were a couple of problems with this. The first was that if I wanted to take the book with me, it meant that I had to have the book on the laptop and the laptop with me. The second was that the laptop was not conducive to late night reading in bed. I would just do other things on the laptop. Can't do that with a book.

So, I picked up a Barnes & Noble Nook reader. It had some advantages over the other readers that I really liked, so I decided to get one.

I will give a full review after I've had time to go over the ins and outs of the device. I will say that I am very happy with the service. I happened to get a bad device. It just would not turn on after I turned it off. The people at Barnes & Noble were wonderful in 1) trying to find out what was wrong with the device and 2) making sure I left the store with a working device today. I'm certain that the problem with my machine was a fluke, but it was handled in a very professional and friendly manner. My hat is off to the Barnes and Noble crew.

I have my first book loaded on the machine, So, I'm now going to settle back and read a chapter or two.

Harry Potter – Reading Vs. Watching

Now that I've read the first installment in the Harry Potter series, I decided to watch the movie make the story come to life. I wasn't disappointed, but I much prefer the book – the movie leaves out a lot of details. It was obvious that was going to happen otherwise the movie would be about 12 hours

long, but the excluded details were enough to make me prefer the book to the movie. Here is a run-down of thoughts I had while enjoying the movie last night:

- Did the beginning of the movie portray Professor McGonagall as a cat as she is in the book? I didn't notice it, but I also came into the movie a minute or two late due to an unplanned (though pleasant!) phone conversation. I would have liked to see her as a cat.
- I really liked seeing how the train station came to life, and especially how exactly they found platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$!
- Did the movie explain the resident ghosts of Hogwarts? I noticed lack of explanation for other characters as well – especially Neville! – but as stated before, it's a long movie, so maybe it was out of necessity that they had to cut some descriptions that were present in the book.
- The movie is well cast and directed. Everything is just like I pictured from the book, and that's a good thing. I had considered waiting to watch any of the Potter movies until I was finished reading the series for fear that movie would ruin my vision of Hogwarts, but I'm glad I didn't wait; the movie was very enjoyable. I was pleased to see that creatures like the Gringotts bank goblins, for example, looked just like the sketches in the book which also helped to make my expectations match the movie.
- Visually, the invading troll was cool, although its extreme smelliness was completely downplayed in the movie – one of the things I wish was not.
- This movie would be so cool in 3D!!
- The charcer Hagrid gained about 50 IQ points for the movie. He was likable, but reads dumber than he acted in the movie. I think I would have liked to see him more like he was in the book.

- The movie is a good representation of the book brought to life, but how is it to watch it on its own if you haven't read the book? I will talk to my husband about this because he did just that. And for me – the movie almost went too fast for me. I saw events happen in minutes that in real time, took me weeks to read about! But then again, there are over 300 pages being shown in under 3 hours.

- The character Severus Snape stood out as being very well cast – I'm not remembering a very vivid depiction of him in the book, and the movie did not disappoint in this regard.

FOLLOWING MIGHT BE SPOILERS – YOU MIGHT NOT WANT TO READ ANY FURTHER IF YOU HAVEN'T SEEN OR READ HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE

- Quirrell didn't seem to be stuttering much in the movie, which brings me to a minor complaint that I have about both the book and the movie. I felt that Professor's Quirrell's character was not elaborated upon enough to fully give the audience the big surprise ending. Sometimes I would even get Quirrell mixed up with Filch (while reading the book anyway), but I guess that could also be a side effect of reading while falling asleep!

- Did I miss something, or does neither the book nor the movie elaborate upon why Harry's scar hurts when he see Snape?

Overall, a very enjoyable movie-watching experience! Fun for everyone – the kids weren't scared by it and enjoyed it, and my husband liked it so much that he's been asking me when I'm going to finish the 2nd book because he wants to see the 2nd movie!

Reading a Book Series

Another tangents' blogger made comments on reading the Harry Potter series. I am currently reading a series by a different author. I'm reading "The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant" again. While I know that some people don't like reading a long series in succession, that is usually my goal. I like to finish the story. I really don't like waiting for the next book in the series.

Anyway I've had these books for years and they are finally wearing out. They are paperbacks, and they have been read repeatedly. The covers are starting to come off and the pages now have some tears. So I looked them up on the web to see how much it would cost to replace my series. Since I like them a lot, I was hoping to find them in hardback. What I found was that the series was continued. I really didn't realize this. I will have to do some research, but it looks like there are two additional books with two more on the way. I'm not sure how I feel about this, but I will have to get the books to see if I want to continue the series.

There is my problem. I like to finish a series if I start it and like it. I don't know how long I will have to wait for the additional books of the series. On one hand I hope the new books are good, on the other hand, I hope I don't have to wait for the additional two books. A puzzlement.

Harry Potter And The

Sorcerer's Stone

I did it. I've finished reading the first book in the Harry Potter series, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. And I really enjoyed it; I think I can officially call myself a Harry Potter fan! The book was very fast-moving, and because it's kind of a kids' fantasy book (but don't get the wrong idea – MANY adults like it too!), I was able to finish the entire 300 pages on my limited reading schedule without even having to renew it at the library once!

Tonight, I'm going to start the second book in the series, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, and if I can convince my husband, we'll be watching the movie of the first book this weekend. And now I am REALLY excited to see the new [Wizards World of Harry Potter](#) at Universal Studios in Orlando. They are being kinda secretive about the Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey attraction, but it promises to use "entirely new technology" to bring the Harry Potter series to life "in a way never before experienced"! Maybe something like The Mummy ride or The Amazing Adventures of Spiderman 3D? How cool would that be for Harry Potter!! And the shops and restaurants are all going to keep in the tradition of the boy wizard's world. Chocolate frogs, anyone? The world doesn't open until spring, and it doesn't look like we're going to get to Florida before the fall or next winter anyway, so if that becomes a reality, we will have to make sure we get to Universal – I really liked Islands of Adventure anyway, and now it's going to be even better! I just have to make sure I read all the Potter books by then. And I almost don't want to read too much about the new world on the internet for fear that it would be spoilers about things I haven't discovered yet.

As much as I'm enjoying the Harry Potter series, I'm not usually one to stick to one type of book. If I need a break from Hogwarts before I get through all 7 stories, I might try

[The Zookeeper's Wife](#), a story about a zoo in Poland in the 1930's and how it's destroyed during the holocaust – as long as it's not too depressing of a read.