

## **Favorite Children's stories**

12-8-25

Prompt: What children's story lingers in your affection

I had a complicated bedtime routine as a child and, remarkably, my mother and grandfather seemed to willingly comply with it, probably because I was so squirrely that they were willing to do anything to settle me down. First PJ's and teeth. Then I had to organize all of my dolls and stuffed animals on my bed so they would hear the story.

When I was small, I'd pick out a couple of picture books or my large Mother Goose Book. As I got older, the inanimate participants decreased and the stories selections turned into "Chapter Books."

By that age, it was almost always my Grandpa who read to me. He was a wonderful reader. After all, he had been an actor who specialized in accents when he and his friend worked their way through college by performing in small towns around Syracuse. My grandfather did the light-hearted comedic selections and his friend did the more serious readings. Later, after radio came along, he was "Uncle Jack," reading from the funny papers every Sunday morning to the listening kids. That was probably in the 30's.

With that kind of background, he was a wonderful and experienced reader. I wasn't aware of all of this as a kid. I just knew that I loved having him read to me. This continued long after I could have read these books to myself.

So some of my favorites? Three books come to mind, two of which have a grandfather as a pivotal character – Heidi and Little Lord Fauntleroy. The last book was also special because I had a beautiful edition that had been passed down to my mother from her cousins Helen and Betty whose family was very well off financially. The book had several colored plates in addition to being sprinkled with pen and ink drawings.

One of my other books was "Sarah Crew," written by the author of her much more famous work, "The Secret Garden," Frances Hodgson Burnett. Bob had played all of these stories, via Librivox, for his "Story Classics at Noon" radio program. I still enjoy hearing them.