



AT THE LIBRARY

By Julie Winkelstein
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*“Dreams, books, are
each a world; and
books, we know*

*Are a substantial world,
both pure and good.*

*Round these, with
tendrils strong as flesh
and blood,*

*Our pastime and our
happiness will grow.”*

-William Wordsworth,
1770-1850

Last week I found myself standing in the middle of our large downstairs room, surrounded by stacks of dusty books. Some of the stacks were sets of books, like all of my Johanna Spyri books or the *Little Colonel* series. Others were just waiting for my attention, as I struggled to make the decision: Box it or shelve it. As I looked around, I realized how arbitrary this choice was: What was the likelihood I would want to read or refer to any of these in the next few years?

I was forced to make this decision because of space - I'm running out of both shelf space and wall space. So, with my daughters almost gone, it seemed like the children's books would be the safest to put away. But here's what happens: I imagine my cousins' children coming to visit and seeing all these wonderful books lined up at child's eye height and getting excited and saying "Can I borrow this?" or "Could you read this one to

me?" And I try to guess which one that will be: Will it be *Piggy in the Puddle*? Or how about the first Tarzan book, well, how about the first two Tarzan books? Or maybe *Siegfried*, because of the gorgeous illustration on the front, with Siegfried on his splendid horse Greyfell, a name I used to think was one of the most wonderful names I'd ever heard.

I could instead put away all of my language books - I own books on how to learn at least twenty different languages, from Turkish to Danish to Russian to Urdu. Or maybe the four shelves of mysteries or the twenty-five copies of Christmas carol books I've managed to accumulate or the range of home repair books, including one published in 1962.

Of course, I also have piles of library books around, too - and those are the ones I am actually reading. Since I spend most of my days surrounded by books of every kind, it would probably make

more sense to own few books and borrow them instead from the library. In fact, I know several librarians who do just that. But I do both.

I asked a friend recently about her books. Do you have some in boxes and some on shelves? I asked. “Mostly out,” she said, “on shelves, in stacks, everywhere.” Why? I asked. Why do we do this if we know there is no way we could read or reread them all? “I like living in a house full of books,” she told me.

I realized that is true for me, too; having books around me makes me feel secure, like having a full pantry. And if I have the time, I can browse at home. I can pick up a book of poetry or flip through the collected works of Jane Austen or be awed once more by the photographs of Cartier Bresson. For me, books are a kind of wealth, and as I look around, I see how rich I am.

Today’s book review is from Chantal and the book is *Mary, Bloody Mary* by Carolyn Meyer. Chantal says this book is about “Mary Tudor and her struggle to regain the throne when her father, King Henry VII remarries and declares her illegitimate.” One word she would use to describe this book is “intriguing” and she recommends it because “of its amazing detail, even though it’s written in Medieval Times.”