

Re-reading Old Favorites

I just finished re-reading Daphne DuMaurier's *Rebecca*. I think this was the third time I've read it. I picked it up again because three different books I've read recently either reminded me of or directly referenced *Rebecca*, and it had been a while since I last read it. It was as good as I remembered.

For me, re-reading an old favorite book is a guilty pleasure. After all, I spend my days surrounded by books, both old and new, that I've never read before. It seems wasteful to spend what precious time I have to read with my nose buried in a book I've already read.

Is re-reading really a less valid form of reading? Children beg to hear their favorites over and over again. When we're young, our favorite books are like old friends. We find comfort and joy in the gentle repetition of the familiar text. When does that change?

I do know people who will periodically make time to re-read their favorites. When they talk about what they're reading, it is usually with an air of apology, as if they need an excuse for not reading something new. For the most part, our adult reading lives seem to be driven by a need to move forward. Once we've read a book, it's time to move on. Re-reading is literary lollygagging.

Since I've discovered audiobooks, I have found that I really enjoy listening to my old favorites. It's a great way to pass time in the car, and I get to squeeze a half hour or so of extra reading time into my day. It feels like a loophole... I am gaining extra reading time, so it is OK to spend it on a book I've already read.

I've listened to the entire *Harry Potter* series more times than I care to admit. Suffice it to say that when I pop in a book with a British narrator, the seven-year-old automatically assumes it's *Harry Potter*.

I've also listened to Christopher Moore's *Lamb* and *A Dirty Job* more than once. I love those books! Moore's unique, irreverent humor never fails to make me laugh out loud, no matter how many times I've read the book! Recently I've been re-discovering some of my favorite books by Stephen King.

When I initially brought *Rebecca* home from the library, I told myself that I'd just read a few pages here and there, between chapters of whatever new book is currently on my nightstand. I found that the story was just as compelling now as it had been when I was a teenager. I realized pretty quickly that I was going to have to give my old friend my full attention. It was worth every minute!

So what about you? Are you a re-reader? If you are, what favorites do you enjoy revisiting? Do you think re-reading is a waste of time? Why? Find Alamance County Public Libraries on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/AlamanceLibraries>), and leave a comment on our wall. We'd love to hear your thoughts!

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