

Julie's Story Time

Julie sat at the edge of the bed with her medium-length brown hair curled around her pretty face reading me a story from a Burgess Book about animals near Farmer Browns Farm. I envied her ability to read because I hadn't started school. Once she started the series, I was hooked. The stories of Paddy the Beaver helped me understand that beavers worked hard at night to cut three for the beaver dam, which would be their winter homes. I liked to hear about Paddy's friends Jerry Muskrat, Happy Jack Squirrel and Striped Chipmunk. I imagined them knowing one another, yet keeping their true animal characteristics. I could relate to a character like Farmer Brown's boy and Bowser the Hound, although I didn't like the boy because he had a gun and I feared for the animals in the story.

Even the wind was called Brother North Wind and, of course, there was Jack Frost. In the story Julie read today, the animals were getting ready for winter by building houses and storing food. Paddy the Beaver was building a dam across Laughing Brook so he could create the pond he had planned.

Our family had just come out of a cold winter in the little house when had to stoke the big stove in the living room to keep the house warm and ensure the water in the kitchen stove reservoir would not freeze. Much like the animals, we had to survive the winter in some comfort. Mom canned food from the garden and we preserved our beef and pork.

But today the sun was shining through the tiny bedroom window. It was June, and the leaves on the little grove of trees were now a light shade of green. I wanted to go outside but I was sick. I heard the birds singing, calling for me.

Mom taught school, so Dad looked after me during the day and when Julie came home she read to me. She was in grade three and loved reading, her blue eyes sparkled as she turned the page to discover the next adventure. I was a good listener, especially when I was under the weather.

These books put our life in the grove of trees onto paper. They added drama to make our lives even more interesting.