

Checking out the Queen and Paying the Price

By Carmela Cunningham

When I was in the fifth grade, I checked out a library book called “Queen Elizabeth and the Spanish Armada.” I loved that book. It started out with Henry VIII, went through all his wives, into Elizabeth’s reign, and finally the big fight with Spain.



I may have loved it too much. When it was due back two weeks later, I renewed it. Two weeks after that, I couldn’t check it out anymore. But, I didn’t want to bring the book back, so I kept it. After I’d racked up \$2 in fines—at 2 cents a day—my mother took me by the hand and made me bring the book back. The next day, I checked it out again.

Kids at school made fun of me because I carried the book with me all the time.

By the time a few months rolled around, I’d read the book several times, but I still didn’t want to give it back. This time when my mom brought the book and me back to the library, she forbade me to check it out again. Two days later, I had the book again. The day after that my mom found out. I think that’s when I stopped liking libraries. I didn’t want to just borrow books, I wanted to keep them for myself. After I’d read them once, I wanted to keep them around, so I could go thumb through the good parts anytime I wanted.

It’s several thousand books and many years later, and I’ve started going to libraries again. And now when I go, I bring bags of my own books to leave at the library donation box. It’s not a bad trade.

And, there’s some good news. The Long Beach Library has a nice, little book called, “Queen Elizabeth and the Spanish Armada.”

The bad news is, I just checked it out.

You can contact Carmela at carmela@readerpublishing.com or be her friend on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=747454750#!/profile.php?id=100002280724662>