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The feeling of anticipation sitting on that rough leather seat of bus thirty-nine on my way home from school, the excitement of walking down my driveway to the front door where my grandmother stood to wave away the school bus each, and every afternoon is still a fond memory in the back of my mind. The thought of coming home to my grandma's warm smile and willingness to listen to every insignificant detail of my school day made the long bus rides home over in the blink of an eye. Though it was the same routine every day, coming home to a clean house with a vacant table for my brother and I to do our homework never caused boredom. A plate of cheese and crackers with milk to silence those after school rumbles in our tummies was on the counter waiting for us to dive in while we sat and worked at our math problems. Dinner was always fully prepared just the way we liked; once our equations were solved and our t's were done being crossed. The most memorable parts of my school nights with my grandmother were after the table was cleared, when my brother had retreated upstairs to his room to play his play-station and the rest of the house grew silent. The ragged green sofa in the living room is where we could be found, a book held firmly in my grandmothers' gentle hand and the other one wrapped around me.

It is safe to say that this is where I gained my knowledge and love for reading. I was around the age of ten when I was a student at Dighton Middle School and in fifth grade the year of my parent's divorce, when reading became my escape from everything. Sitting on that sofa with my grandmother listening to her rattle off the words of Danielle Steele's latest novel was my comfort. I may not have comprehended everything that she reiterated to me aloud, but it took my mind away from the stresses of my young childhood days. It became a tradition to sit on my grandmother's lap and listen to her read me pages from her favorite novels. The Long Road Home, is one of the only novels I remember her reading. About a girl who was abused by her mother after her father left the picture. I so vaguely remember the details of the many Danielle Steele novels she read me but when I step downstairs in my grandmother's basement and see her shelves and shelves filled with them, I can still envision the nights on the ragged green sofa. She was the only adult figure at night growing up due to both parents working night shifts, so it was her we confided in to teach us before the dark hours of the night approached. We did attend school to learn how to read and write but the

way she spoke the words that were sprawled across the pages made more sense than any classroom setting. Even when my grandmother wasn't physically there I felt as though I still followed in her footsteps, that whenever there was an argument between my parents I could just walk over to the couch in the corner of the living room with my latest favorite book and forget the world. Reading became my escape to when things in the house were being thrown or words that a thirteen year old should not even hear were being exchanged at an outrageous volume. It was a way to drown out the downward spiral my parent's relationship was taking.

The tradition of sitting on my grandma's lap may have grown old with time but my love for reading from then on never faded. I found serenity in reading. It was a getaway from life to sit and read the pages of a fantasy world or even the scenes of a disaster sprawled across the pages. My grandmother's love for reading rubbed off on me at an early age and still sticks with me now. Summer reading was never a task it was just something to get my mind off of the things heading south in life. Though her rough past of monthly chemo treatments and frequent hospital trips had been a rocky road she still stays up late just as she had through those rough years till the wee hours of the morning just to finish the last hundred pages of her book. She would tell me her day was not complete if her book wasn't. The visits to the hospital to see her after her numerous surgeries were always filled with her reminding us to bring her a book so when her hospital room grew silent she could sit and read. Even though the shelves of my teen dramas are drastically lacking compared to her basement book shelves full of romance novels, I know it is something that we share in common. It is something to keep us connected no matter how old we get. The genres of my reading will change with age, but sharing a sofa with her and reading our favorite books will never grow old. As I aged I became fond of the numerous books Sarah Dessen has written, all teenage novels but they captured my interest. The way there was always a main character in her books that was enduring some kind of hardship but always overcame it was what caught my attention. It had shown me that no matter how rough I had thought my life was at any point in time there was always someone fighting an even harder battle, but that anything could be overcome with time. The outcome of those many nights I sat on the sofa in my grandmother's arms, breathing ever so lightly so I could hear her softly recite one of the many Danielle Steele books she loves, brought me my knowledge and love for reading and a new perspective on life.