

"I am becoming Mona," I think as I bend, and bow with every step or two.

Cracker crumbs are getting to be more noticeable than the colorful pieces of thread adorning my living room carpet. It is where I usually grab a snack and where I always shake out my current quilt project. Sometimes the vacuum misses the challenge to clear the job site. So, I step in where needed. I am turning into a long-ago fellow community committee member..

Mona was older by 20 years or more. But she was agile. She would bend over to pick up invisible (to me) cracker crumbs, threads, or bits of leaves off her floor. I could never see what she gathered. However, she would toss them in the kitchen garbage bag behind the cupboard door underneath the sink.

Whenever she hosted a committee meeting Mona would greet us members at the front door of her stately blue and white Victorian home. Pristine rooms ushered us into the dining room for the reading of the prepared notes on the reason for our visit. Her bending down and gathering bits and pieces of the unknow would not surprise us. It was as though she were bowing to her clean carpet.

Mona did not quilt. She sold antiques during her annual sale on the lawn of her home. I, too, did not quilt during the early days of motherhood. Instead, I gathered my three children to and from the city park, up and down the aisles in the grocery store and in and out of bed every day and night. Usually, I found a babysitter for my children on meeting days. One day I requested permission to "bring them along" for the meeting of the minds on this summer morning. The three-year-old, the four-year-old, and the almost six-year-old would sit and create in coloring books or read picture books. Sometimes they would sit quietly for a few minutes.

Mona gave them each a snack of orange slices and crackers. "Oh, crumb," I had thought. There would be more "bowing" and perhaps muttering from Mona. I did not stay long at the meeting, but before I collected the children, their empty snack bowls, and the artful coloring books along with the stack of reading material they danced with glee pulling me toward the six steps leading nowhere.

"Look mommy," the older child said giggling. "These stairs go nowhere." The ladies in the meeting room, hearing the exclamation, came to investigate. "Oh, those," says our hostess as she bowed to her carpet coming up with bits and pieces. "The stairs were there when we moved in years ago. My two boys loved playing on them and knocking on the wall. Sometimes they would pretend to talk to the people locked behind the wall."

"Something to think about," I remember thinking as I rolled my eyes. Forty-five years later I now wonder about the steps that go nowhere and what is or was behind the wall. They had to go somewhere, sometime ago. There are stairs in my house, as well. I know where they go: up to bedrooms and bathrooms. And I even bend over and bow often picking up bits and pieces as I climb them, moaning all the way.

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