

By Elise Princehouse

There were many parts of Mr. Hickman's memoir, *Rocket Boys*, that really made me make connections to my own life.

The first thing was Daisy Mae. Daisy Mae, Sonny's calico cat, was described as "my friend and confidante during the days of the rocket boys." I also have a pet cat and although my cat is black, male, kind of fat, and in many ways, the opposite of Daisy Mae, I can't count the number of times he has come into my room, curled up next to me, and started purring, just like Daisy Mae did with Sonny. Another connection I made to Daisy Mae is that she was a calico, and from the picture of her in the book, she looks a lot like my little brother's cat, Penelope.

I can also relate to Sonny's relationship with his mother. Throughout the book, Sonny's mom is his advocate. She supported him in just about everything he did. I also am very close to my mom. If there is ever something I need help with, she is the one I go to first. Sonny's mom did this same thing for him. A couple of times she helped convince his father that he should be allowed to continue to build and fire off his rockets. It was obvious that Sonny's mom supported his rocket building. He was doing something potentially very dangerous in her house and the only thing she said to him about it was "Don't blow yourself up." I know that I can always count on my mom to support me in whatever I am doing, no matter what it is.

The way Miss Riley inspired Sonny also reminded of something in my life. In elementary school, I hated math. That all changed when I was in sixth grade and had a teacher named Mrs. Boley. Although my being in her class didn't inspire me to do

anything quite as grand as winning a national science fair, her class really reversed my thinking about math. This year, math is my favorite class. Also, her class made me think about possibly becoming a teacher when I grow up, in the hope that I could make the kind of difference in the life of another student that she made in mine. This seems very similar to the way Miss Riley inspired Sonny and the other rocket boys to build their rockets and consider a profession that they had never even considered before.

Sonny's group of friends seems like my own circle of close friends in a lot of ways. The rocket boys always seemed to have a good time. They found ways to have some fun even when they were having trouble finding money or supplies for their rockets. In one section, they are up on a mountain digging up abandoned pipes and still enjoying themselves. They are working all day long in the hot sun and still finding things to laugh about. It is the same thing with my own circle, although we aren't usually digging up iron pipes to sell so we can buy explosive chemicals. I also have a friend who reminds me of Roy Lee in that she is always teasing me about the guy I have a crush on or things like that, just like Roy Lee teased Sonny about Dorothy Plunk.

I absolutely loved this book. Not only was it an interesting story and in my opinion very well-written, but it also didn't seem like a dramatization or like parts had been changed to make it seem more "storybookesque." It was about real people and their real lives. In every chapter there was some section that made me think about something that had happen to me. I really feel like I know the characters. They feel like people I've met in my life, and this is definitely a book I will want to read again and again.