

Grasping My Fragile Heart

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All through my elementary and middle school years, I hated reading. It was always forced as part of an assignment or was required for a grade. I found myself just reading for the points, rather than for the enjoyment. I would flip through the pages and not thoroughly read it. As I grew up I found reading not only an escape from life, but an escape from myself as well. It was the only way I was able to live in a world that wasn't mine; almost a sort of relief from all of the bad. The only problem I faced was wanting to be fictional like all of my favorite characters. I started to crave the sound of cracking the spine of a new book, for I knew it would be the start of a new adventure.

When I read, my goal is to feel the emotions the writer is conveying. The most impactful, heart-wrenching book that changed me as a person was *The Book Thief*. I went through every word almost as if I was holding my breath. The author had a way of constantly leaving me on the edge of my seat. I quickly realized the scratching of my highlighter on the paper became my favorite sound, knowing that there were so many quotes in the book that I can relate to and knowing the author so easily grasped my fragile heart. I finished the book in class, which was a horrible mistake. I should have known to finish the book in a safe place. After all, it is narrated by death. The faint sounds of students talking faded as I tasted my salty tears. My heart was shattered for a world that wasn't my own, while people in my world were oblivious to the catastrophe

happening in the words between my hands.

Who are the people responsible for shattering my heart, you ask? Authors. Authors have a beautiful ability of touching so many hearts. People turn to books to find inner peace, to escape without going anywhere, to find the words for their thoughts, and to find some comfort when lonely. People say the best books are those that when you turn the last page, you feel as though you lost a close friend. Books give you the ability to live as many lives as you choose to and that is an opportunity many take for granted.

As for writing, I write to explore the things that I am afraid of. The things that make me joyful, gloomy or enraged. I don't write for someone else to read; in fact I would hate for anyone to find the things I write about. I find my writing is similar to those in *The Book Thief*. You get to dive deep into the feelings of the writer. *The Book Thief* taught me that words and writing are the best true gift you can receive. Sometimes it's better when paper is the only thing listening to you because it will never laugh at you or judge you. It's always such a relief to share my thoughts with paper. The feeling of writing my thoughts down on paper, physically, is a different kind of therapy. Seeing all of my thoughts and worries somewhere else, other than trapped inside my mind, brings a sense of comfort. It makes me feel like I'm not alone and that paper is my friend. I imagine this is how authors feel when writing.

The only writing that is more forced to me is school writing, due to all of the rules. I usually cannot express myself in a school paper because it's more formal. The only way a teacher will get my true thoughts on a subject is if the rules and expectations are not forced on us. But then again, that is how we are graded right?

All and all, writing and reading are both an extraordinary experience for me. As stated by John Green in the novel *The Fault In Our Stars*, “That's the thing about pain, it demands to be felt.” You can't let your pain bottle up inside of you. That is what books and writing are for. I write because I'm hurt, and I read to escape the cruel hurtful world. The thing about books is you get to lean away from the “social norms” of judging people by their looks. With books, you fall in love with the character’s thoughts and actions, not looks. And I think that is very powerful. You must always be wise about the books you read because words truly do have the ability to change us.

Author Bio

Addie Floyd is finishing up her first year here at WOU. She is double majoring in Interpreting Studies Theory (w/ a concentration in ASL) and Psychology. After school, she aspires to be a therapist for the deaf and hard of hearing. In addition to schooling, she also works as a designer for the Western Howl Newspaper here on campus.