Acceptance Letter

As a young child, I never really enjoyed reading. We had many books in the house, but I have no memory of my mom or dad ever reading one to me. It wasn’t until around the age of eight that everything changed; I picked up *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*.

One particularly sweltering summer day, I was stuck in my ordinary suburban home; trying to escape the excruciating California heat the best I could. As I wandered around my house, searching for something to keep me occupied, I noticed my sister sprawled out on the couch, reading a novel with the title *Harry Potter and The Prisoner of Azkaban*.

“What’s that you’re reading?” I inquired sheepishly.

My sister, being the delight she was, glared over the top of the pages, scoffed, and went back to her reading as if no one had spoken to her.

I decided I wasn’t going to get any information out of her, but I was too intrigued by the art on the cover of the book to give up on my pursuit, so I decided to enlist the help of my mother. I slowly crawled up the stairs, thinking over my words carefully. My mother was usually very busy, and didn’t have the patience for questions, or tattling, or any other such nonsense.

I reached the landing and reluctantly crept into her room, hoping I caught her in a good mood. I was relieved to see that my mother was in the bathroom, using a styling wand to produce loose curls in her straw yellow hair. Even though I was far too young to understand the crippling effects of mental illness, it was well known in our house not to bother her if she was in bed in the middle of the day.
Stuttering slightly, I stammered, “w-what’s that book that Cami is reading? It’s got a picture of kids riding on a bird horse thing on it.”

At first, she looked annoyed, then paused as though deep in thought.

“Oh, she must be reading Harry Potter” she responded.

I waited for her to continue, but when she didn’t, I pressed on, “Can I read it too?”

“Check the bookshelf,” she said while shooing me away.

I quickly sprinted down the stairs, nearly tripping over my feet, ran to the kitchen, sliding across the floor in my socked feet to the computer desk and shelves. I scanned the contents of the bookshelf until I found *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*: Book one. It had a picture of a boy with shaggy black hair, round glasses, and he was riding on a broomstick. I snatched it up from the shelf and scurried away to my bedroom with my prize.

I soon became so enthralled with the story of the boy who lived, that I only reluctantly emerged from my bedroom for meals and bathroom breaks. I stayed up late into the night until the weight of my eyelids finally forced me to surrender to a deep sleep with dreams of a little boy living under a staircase. Only to awaken and spend the next weeks doing nothing but exploring dark corridors in an old magic castle, flying across the quidditch field on my enchanted broomstick, and dodging chalk pieces being pelted down by the castle’s resident poltergeist, Peeves. I went on adventures into the forbidden forest and was equally astonished and aghast of all the creatures that inhabited it.

The more I read, the more connected I grew to the characters; they were like family. Reading turned into an escape, an escape to a better world. Even when I didn’t feel loved,
accepted, and my emotional well-being seemed all but forgotten, I could always lose myself in books; wishing it could become reality. I’ve lost count of how many times I’ve sat waiting and wishing for my Hogwarts acceptance letter.

As years went by, I continued to read *Harry Potter* several times over again; absorbing every word like a sponge. I’ve read those books at least ten times each throughout my life. Every time I go to read a new book, I must fight the urge of reading them again. Maybe it’s an obsession, or maybe it reminds me of that little girl that I once was, so enchanted by a magical world that I so longingly wished to escape into.

Finding my love for reading not only improved my emotional well-being, but it also helped me academically. “Research suggests that reading literary fiction is an effective way to enhance the brain’s ability to keep an open mind while processing information, a necessary skill for effective decision-making” (Seifert). If I had never developed a love for reading, I could not possibly be the writer, academic student, and overall person I am today. I have learned almost everything I know about writing from reading books.

I’ve always regarded myself as being particularly perceptive; I can pick out certain nuances and implications of things, including while reading. “As you read in this way, you think about how the choices the author made and the techniques that he/she used are influencing your own responses as a reader” (Bunn 72). In *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* for example, Rowling uses foretelling when Ron is looking at Hermione's class schedule and notices she has classes listed that are at the same time. For some, it may just seem like Hermione made a mistake, but anyone that knows her character knows that she would never make such a trivial mistake. Having the ability to pick this out is a technique known as “reading like a writer.” It’s later that you find out Hermione does have classes at the same time, and has been using a time
turner, a device that allows her to go back in time to attend all her classes. This device becomes an integral component of the story later on. When you learn to read like a writer, you are more adept at picking out foretelling to better understand why the writer may be including clues that can seem trivial to an untrained eye.

Most people know how essential that reading is, especially while we are young. In a University of London study led by Alice Sullivan, a Professor of Sociology, they looked at the correlation between reading regularly from an early age and having a wide vocabulary. They concluded that “Children’s own reading behaviour was strongly linked to test scores in mathematics and vocabulary. . .” (Sullivan). As I developed a love of reading, it provided me with the ability to absorb and learn a wide range of words and has enabled me the ability to better articulate myself.

Once I finally started my college career, I settled on a major of Microbiology. Even though I had limited prior knowledge of the subject, I felt confident in my ability to learn, in part due to my love of reading and exceptional vocabulary. “Science is a discipline that relies heavily on students' ability to understand new terms and concepts. A strong focus on vocabulary helps students understand and communicate using appropriate terminology. . .” (Cohen). I only hope that my enjoyment of reading, broad vocabulary, and curiosity will aid me in my pursuit of scientific knowledge. Like the sorting hat said when placed on Harry’s head, I have a thirst to prove myself.

I owe my future academic success, methods of learning, fine-tuned vocabulary, and my happiness to the first time I opened a Harry Potter book. I would not be the same person I am today had I not read those books. Even though I'm not a little kid anymore, I’m still waiting for my acceptance letter to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.
Works Cited


