

Emily Cochran-Stiff
Professor Pope
English 101
February 9th, 2012

Just another Heart-Wrenching Cliché

I never felt accepted as a child. I know how cliché that sounds, but it's valid. I was awkward, got bullied, and I moved around a lot. Fear not, this isn't a woe-is-me paper. You can put away the Kleenex; it will not move you to tears, nor will it change your life. Growing up for everyone is difficult. No one knows who they are, so everything is rather chaotic, both mentally and emotionally. When one cannot make permanent ties to peers or social groups, one searches for other ways to entertain themselves to ensure sanity and prevent loneliness. One thing that aided me was reading.

Truth be told, I was quite the loner. I was that one girl who would've done anything to get the attention of the popular girls, or even a second glance from a passer-by. Believe me that is not something I'm proud of. I eventually withdrew from my peers all together. I would spend my days wandering town, just observing society. While doing so, I came across a library. I hadn't had too much interest in reading before, but I made the decision to go in and check it out. I walked into the young adults section and I found books about real princesses. It was *The Royal Diary* series, if I'm not mistaken. I enjoyed the fantasy of being in court. The books showcased these women to be loved, independent, and wealthy. I obviously aspired to be like them in any way. Alas, after research I found out that I am not the long lost descendant in the Romanov family line. After accepting the fact that I will never have 15 lapdogs and a court jester, I carried on and read more about historical well-to-dos. I became well known as a book worm. I spent my free time submersed in literature. It almost became an addiction.

I then stopped being overly shy and I started talking and answering questions in History and English class. I would have my hand raised for every question. I am still like that today. That's right, I am *that* kid. It has its benefits though. Kids would tell me how smart I was. It helped boost my little ego. I then started being more outgoing and crawled out of my shell. Sure, they really only wanted me to write their papers, but one should take baby-steps, right? Don't fret, I have found a better group of kids to hang out with, but if it weren't for reading, I probably would still be that mysterious loner.

I can honestly say that I enjoy the isolation that literature brings me. I can be angry at the world and just cuddle with my baby blanket and read a good book. It makes everything seem just

a little bit more endurable. I ended up using reading as an escape. My parents even got so worried that I would always escape from the real world. So they gave me an intervention and then pushed me to be even more social. That is how I became the girl I am today. Reading has also given me a strong sense of independence. I don't rely on TV for entertainment, and I would not stoop so low as to complain to my father when the internet is down. You will also never see me tweet shallow plastic comments about my peers for attention. That is not me. I can be alone with a good book and my own thoughts without feeling so insecure that I have to somehow connect with someone to remind them that I still exist. As some anonymous person said, "book lovers never go to bed alone.", I have my own little world to escape to. Reading has helped me to feel more confident and comfortable with who I am. After 18 years of merely attempting to grasp who or what I am, I can say that I am starting to figure that out. I can also credit some of that to my love of reading.