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English 110 Section M3

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Magic Tree House and Me

When I was a kid, I hated reading. I dreaded it almost every day, and it felt like a chore. It was the same routine: have a snack, then grab a book and read. It became a family tradition over time where we all sat together to each read our own book. Time would move so slowly where a minute felt like a whole week. My eyes would wander all over the room. I could have probably told you where everything was with my eyes closed. I never understood why focusing on the words in front of me was so hard. Maybe it was the old, brown pages or the words tightly packed on a page. Every time I was having trouble giving the book my undivided attention, my mother would come up to me and say, “Turn the words into pictures”. This seemed easy enough at first. It was almost like I was turning the book into a movie in my head. But to me, my brain kept hitting pause and rewind over and over again as I reread the same line. The stories just seemed so boring, and I never felt a connection with the characters.

That was until the Magic Tree House series. I always attended the Scholastic Book Fair in elementary school, but not for the same reason as everyone else. Every year, I bought the colorful pencil erasers, until the fourth grade. All the books seemed like dull paper bags, but not the Magic Tree House stand. My eyes lit up as I laid them on the cover. Time froze and a spotlight shined so beautifully over the stand that the delicate voice of an angel appeared. I ran toward the stand, almost knocking a few people over. The graphics on the cover already captivated me, and I did not even open the book yet. It depicted the main characters and their dog on the bow of a ship, looking over with a look of shock on their faces. I knew that I wanted to be a part of their story.

I did not have the cash on me for the book, and I knew the Scholastic Book Fair lasted a couple days, so I still had time to beg my mom. As soon as I got home from school, I pleaded for $6. She was astonished when she found out it was for a book, however she did not hesitate to hand over the cash. She always tried to tell me how important reading was, but I was just a kid so that thought obviously flew over my head. All I knew was that I wanted that book. The next day I walked into the Scholastic Book Fair, and there it was. The only book I have ever truly wanted to dive head first into. I remember the title so clearly: Tonight on the Titanic.

That day and every day after that, my reading spot on the couch called my name. That chore of reading became something I looked forward to. I even took my new hobby of reading outside of my home. I took this book with me on car rides and on the train. At times I would be so engulfed by the book that I would accidently bump into people while reading. I read and reread this book so many times that the cover became all bent and a little ripped. My mom realized that I was ready for more. For Christmas later that year, she gifted me with the entire book series. So many more adventures to explore.

The main characters, Jake and Annie, discover a magical tree house filled with books. In every story, they tap on a book, and it takes them on mysterious missions around the world. The entire series felt like a never-ending movie in my head that I did not want to finish imagining. The book included pictures every few pages which transported me into the book as one of the main characters. They also happened to be around my age, so I felt included. What always fascinated me about these books is that they are historical fiction, so the events in the story actually took place at some point in history, with a little bit of storytelling. It was like learning two subjects at once; Learning to read and getting a history lesson. But I never really saw it as fabricated. It raised the thought that this story could maybe be the story of a child my age during this time period; it is a possibility.

In addition to a childhood hobby, this book series taught me some valuable lessons. Throughout the series, at the climax of each book, the story always takes a turn for the worse, and there is a tense moment that the main characters might not make it back to the Magic Tree House. Despite this fact, the dynamic duo, Jack and Annie, would always find their way back home. In life, we will face many obstacles and complications, but we will always persevere in the end.

The Magic Tree House book series pushed me to enjoy reading because it was not just a regular book to me. This book sparked my sense of adventure, and even kickstarted my detective skills. Every single page was a mystery that I wanted to keep solving. I went from hating to read, to flying through a book a day. Reading this book series has not only opened my mind up educationally, but it aided my sense of wonder. All of these places that Jack and Annie were going to, I wanted to go to. Not only around the world, but also through time. I owe my love for reading to the Magic Tree House series. It provided me with a sense of belonging, and it improved my imagination by making the book into images in my head. Reading books adds to your bank of knowledge, and I want it to overflow for the rest of my life. The more knowledge you have, the more weapons you have in your arsenal to take on any obstacle that comes your way.

Reflection

When I was reading through the assignment, I genuinely didn’t know what to write about since I’m not a huge fan of reading or writing. Two options came to mind: my 10th grade English that made me want to almost drop out, or the Magic Book House series. I decided to focus on the book because I wanted to reminisce about good times instead of writing in anger about a person. The genre of this assignment is literacy narrative. A literacy narrative is a story about how we came to read or write. Individuals never achieve literacy by themselves, and how we obtain, and display literacy is dependent upon society, individual backgrounds, motivations (where and how we grew up and what we want out of life and literacy). This assignment prompted us to reflect on how we obtained our literacy, whether it was through a person, book, or certain situation. My assignment follows the conventions of literacy narrative because it shows how the Magic Tree House series pushed me to pick up reading as a hobby. The media of this assignment is digital. Both the draft and the final piece had to be submitted on Blackboard. My stance on this assignment is that every child can learn to love to read, they just need to find the right book. In my case, that book that sparked my interest was Tonight on the Titanic, a book from the Magic Tree House series. My initial audience are a few of my classmates in a peer review session, then my professor. I do not think I will be submitting this narrative anywhere, but who knows? In that case, my audience will broaden. My purpose in writing this piece was to inform my audience on how I picked up my habit of reading, but also to reflect on some really great memories associated with that book. The exigence of this assignment is the stack of Magic Tree House books that I still have on some shelves in my room. I plan on donating them to a local library, in hopes that someone else can enjoy the series as much as I did. Sadly, I do not have the entire series anymore, because some of the books got misplaced when we moved a couple years ago. This assignment meets course learning outcomes one, two, four, and five. CLO 1 is “explore and analyze, in writing and reading, a variety of genres and rhetorical”, and it meets it because I explored of genre of literacy narratives by reading a few samples and then creating my own, and I followed the NFG’s idea of rhetorical situation to guide my story. CLO 2 is “develop strategies for reading, drafting, collaborating, revising, and editing”, and it meets it because I read the NFG text to learn about literacy narratives, I created a draft for my story and revised it to create a final piece, and collaborated with my peers to review each other’s work to provide comments. CLO 4 is “engage in the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes”, and it meets it because again, my peers and I worked together to improve each other’s work. CLO 5 is “understand and use print and digital technologies to address a range of audiences”, and it meets it because I used Blackboard as a way to share my work with my audience.

Sarah,

Thanks for sharing this story with me. Very nicely composed and considered. Honest and authentic. Check the marginal comments. 90