

Burning My Page

One out of every three teenagers have not read a book for fun in over a year, I've read 56. That's just me. This is for the person who helped me see the wonder that comes from reading. My love for reading has definitely grown over the years, but there is one series and one person who sparked the flame that has ignited my entire heart.

If you've ever curled up under a blanket next to a sibling while you listened to your parents read, then you'll understand the magic of the dim lights illuminating the pages as they are flipped, and the voice of the story as it animates the person telling it; like it is not really the person speaking, but the story itself. You could understand the smell of the old books as you scavenge the pages, and the comfort that comes with it. This was me 9 years ago, in New York at the Finger Lakes with my family as I listened to my dad read Harry Potter to my sister and I aloud.

"Mr. and Mrs. Dursley, of number four, Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much." My dad read in a matter of fact voice to show how uptight the Dursleys were. This moment reminds me of the sound that a match makes when you strike it. It may be quiet but it seems as though the match feels like it could swallow the entire world with fire upon gaining its tiny flame. "They were the last people you'd expect to be involved in anything strange or mysterious,

because they just didn't hold with such nonsense," he continued. Common sense knows that the match can't burn the world, but you can't stop it from dreaming.

My sister took much longer to become interested in reading the series, and she's lost interest again now, but something about this otherworldly and fantastical story had me hooked from the beginning. Maybe it was because reading this was my chance to connect with my dad. Maybe it was the story itself or the way it was told through eyes that can see similarly to my own. Eyes that can look into another world and reach out and touch it. Eyes that don't just see words, they see worlds. I think the most likely reason was because at just 5 years old I was already filled with the loose pages of books, and I was just waiting for the right person to light the match, and sparked that passion.

There's a certain joy that comes with finishing a book. A certain sadness too. It can only be understood by someone who genuinely enjoys reading. But, for those who cannot understand such things, the feeling is almost like death. While you're happy that person has moved on and can feel completion in their life, you miss them. And no matter how many times you reread that book or think of that person, you can't ever think of them the same as you did. While it seems as if your flame will extinguish into ashes, coals can be found in those ashes, and I've found that the most beautiful fires can be started from the coals of the original fire it took the place of. Though the loss of

the last flame that was there is difficult, the new fire shares a similar beauty as before if you look hard enough, though you may still miss the first fire.

Whenever my dad and I would finish a book we would watch the movie. The movies were never as good, nor will they ever be, since they could never be exactly like the book. But there comes a feeling of excitement in watching the world come to life. You can try to stack the words in your head and build the world out of them, but nobody's view of the same book is the same. There is nothing more accurate than an author's dream come to life, even if it is never as good as the book was. It seems as though the fire that is burning the pages begins to dance and shift from the words that were there and into something that only a true reader could see.

A few years ago, once we had finished the entire series we went to Universal, which was possibly the most amazing thing I have ever seen though. Diagon Alley was likely my favorite place of all, since everything there was so accurate to both the books and the movie. Words on a page are so much different from the castles and the characters they create. They share a beauty that only words can describe, but pictures I've been told by just about everyone, can explain a thousand words. Perhaps the same thing is true about places, though I feel that they could still never compare.

This inferno spreads through me and fills me with an everlasting warmth. So thanks, Dad, for lighting the match that began burning my page.