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Narrative Paper

Escape

My nose sniffled as a brisk fall breeze blew across my face and leaves of orange and red crumbled beneath my feet. The typical Thursday of college students trying to cross the street, with cars waiting their turn at a four way stop sign, made it easy to feel lost in a sea of people. As I made my way to the library, my headphones blared Tom Petty’s “Free Fallin,’” and I ran through different Starbucks drinks in my head, so I would be ready to order once I got there.

Of course, the Paterno library was just as hectic as ever. A gentleman in a bright green jacket held the door for me as I raced through the library to beat the rush of class-changing students to the Starbucks line. I waited for my pumpkin spice chai latte with excitement for it to warm and wake me up. After receiving my order, I searched around the library for a place to sit. As expected, the first room I entered was completely full of college students drinking coffee and typing away on their MacBook Pros. The second room I tried was yet another failure, with three couches occupied by larger boys and one table with both seats filled. “This library is so big; how can I not find a seat?” I thought as I went up a floor. Finally, one empty chair by a small square table next to the window. I sat down beside a row of books. As I looked over at the shelves and shelves of novels, I suddenly felt a sigh of relief; a sigh of, “I’m right where I belong.”

In elementary school, each day of the week entailed a different elective; Monday was gym class, Tuesday was music, Wednesday was art, and Thursday was library. Thursday morning rolled around and my teacher lines us up single file, hand on hip, and finger on lip and walked us down the stairs to the library. As I walked into the brightly lit room with the red and blue racetrack rug on the floor, I intended to go for one of my typical ‘Dork Diaries’ or ‘Diary of a Wimpy Kid’ books; however, this day, I itched for something more. I approached my librarian, Mrs. Folger, and asked her to point me in the direction of more advanced books. Mrs. Folger, in her typical sweater and khaki pants with a bright smile on her face, replied, “I thought you’d never ask.” She led me to the large section of, what the kids in my class referred to as, “loser books.” The books with no pictures, full paragraphs, advanced diction and real-life themes. Nobody in the 5th grade dared to take a “loser book,” because it was boring. Reading was boring.

I looked up at the large, dull colored, shelf of books in front of me and felt uncomfortable. I was used to bright pink, red and yellow books filled with pictures and useless text that did not require much thought to comprehend why the middle school girl liked the older boy. Despite my comfortable norm, I embraced the intimidation of the long page numbers and small font text and grabbed a book titled, “100 cupboards” by N.D. Wilson. The book cover was dull colored with a green background and grey cupboards with the title, *100 Cupboards,* in white, eerie font. “What am I thinking to check out this loser book?” I thought as I walked through the stares of confusion from my 5th grade classmates.

Red faced and embarrassed, I grabbed the book and shoved it in my backpack, vowing not to get it out in front of any of my friends who swore that “Dork Diaries” was the peak of literature.

The last class of the day ended, and I got on the school bus to go home, with the title “100 Cupboards” running through my mind.

As I got off the school bus, I raced in, threw my backpack down and began reading. I was three pages in, and I was hooked. I could not put it down. I became involved in the story and addicted to the plot. I was inside a whole new world; a world of orphan children, secret rooms and 100 mysterious cupboards that led to 100 different worlds. I became so fully involved in each world and the lives of these children that I would forget what my world was. I was living a life that was not my own.

“Maddie,” my friend Nico said as he tapped my shoulder and I snapped back to reality in the Paterno library. I looked at the shelves of books I was daydreaming into and remembered the plethora of lives I’ve lived, the hundreds of different people I’ve met and worlds I had been a part of. In a college of 46,000 people, escape is crucial.