

The Prairie Light Review

Volume 44
Number 2 *Spring 2022*

Article 70

Spring 5-1-2022

How Reading Evolved for Me

Hala Al Torkmani
College of DuPage

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.cod.edu/plr>

Recommended Citation

Torkmani, Hala Al (2022) "How Reading Evolved for Me," *The Prairie Light Review*. Vol. 44: No. 2, Article 70.

Available at: <https://dc.cod.edu/plr/vol44/iss2/70>

This Selection is brought to you for free and open access by the College Publications at DigitalCommons@COD. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Prairie Light Review by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@COD. For more information, please contact orenick@cod.edu.

How Reading Evolved for Me

Hala Al Torkmani

For the longest time of my life, I remember always hating reading and anything that was associated with books. I used to dread the idea of having to sit in one spot for minutes and just read words. I never understood the feeling of going to a different realm in your mind while reading a certain book. During the summer of 2019, I was introduced to *We Were Liars* by E. Lockhart for my summer reading. My opinion on books had changed drastically. This book made me feel something I had never felt before; it made me imagine like I was inside a movie in my head.

I have taken plenty of different English and Literature classes. To start off, I would like to give you some background about my life with English. I was born and raised in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, where the home language is Arabic. Now, of course, there is some of the English language there too, but it's just the basics. Since the country isn't very fluent in English, my parents decided to enroll me in an American International School called King Abdelaziz International School, short for AIS. From the age of 3 to the age of 12, I grew up learning all subjects in English, which really helped me become the person I am today when we moved to the United States. The main difference I noticed between the AIS school system and the U.S. school systems, is that AIS cared more about their students memorizing, rather than understanding the material. Whereas all the schools I've attended in the U.S. have shown me that they care more about their students actually gaining something from the information they learn in their classes.

I think the reason I hated reading so much as a kid was because of the way my teachers approached the materials in AIS. When I moved here, I was taught that we need to experience reading as a beautiful thing instead of it being a "chore." I started enjoying reading because I felt like I wanted to read, and not that I had to. Especially after finishing *We Were Liars*, I felt like I needed to give books another chance and I'm so happy I did, because I fell in love with them. Recently, my favorite genre of books has been fiction. One of my closest friends, Naya, introduced me to a book series called *A Court of Thorns and Roses* by Sarah J. Maas, and it is possibly one of the greatest things I've ever read. The attention to details and the amount of fantasy it has is so fascinating. Personally, the most challenging part for me when I read is my lack of concentration. Although I love reading now, I still have some trouble concentrating sometimes. I read the words, but I don't understand what's going on. My mind starts to wander while I'm reading the pages, and when I realize that, I have to go back and read again from the beginning to understand what's happening.

I try to not read books online just because I'd rather have a physical copy in my hands to feel more engaged in the book. However, when it comes to reading

magazines, short stories, and news, I mostly use my phone to get on social media platforms and find what I could read from there. Recently on TikTok, I've found this website called Wattpad, where it allows people to write whatever they want and publish it. I've been looking into that because I like writing and I actually started writing something of my own too. I think it's very interesting seeing what people all over the world could think thrown on a sheet of paper, or should I say "screen?"

Overall, I'm so glad I had the opportunity to move to the U.S. because without that, I'd probably still hate the idea of sitting down and reading now. My opinion on reading has changed so much to the point that I'm planning on getting my undergrad in English before it's time for me to go to law school. Every night, I look forward to sitting in the reading corner I've created in my bedroom, right before bed, to read. I've noticed it's a way of helping me meditate and relieve stress, especially now since courses have started back up again.



In The Garden, Madelene Przybysz