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Lit Narrative

Colin Dellaperute

Cedarville University, cdellaperute@cedarville.edu

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Colin Dellaperute

Colin Dellaperute is a sophomore communications major from South Jersey. He likes writing for fun in his spare time. Some of his other hobbies include playing soccer, playing guitar, and eating food.

Lit Narrative

Literacy has shaped my life in more ways than I can imagine.

Just kidding,

I only said that so I could get my cliché saying out of the way.

Honestly, literacy has not “shaped my life” in any significant way, but I can probably stretch some stuff from my life’s experience, take some other stuff out of context, put it all together, and punch out around 800-1200 words. Sound good? Ok good, let’s get to work.

I grew up in a family that loves to read. My dad is a pastor, so he reads books with massively obnoxious titles like *The Ancient Church’s Theology on Predestination, Hermeneutics, and Another Really Big Word vol. 17* just for the fun of it. My mom is into those Francine River-love-flower-sappy-type books, I think. My two youngest brothers are at that beginner-to-amateur reading stage where they will either read *Lord of the Rings*-type books or *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*-type books. My other brother, who is a year younger than me, likes to “challenge himself” (show off) and read books that look like they should be illegal for the amount of paper they use. He recently got done with *The Count of Monte Christo*, a book that would probably make me keel over and die. That, my friends, brings me to the main point of this paragraph. I know very well that this paper is a literacy paper and will ultimately end up in the hands of my composition professor, so I would like to warn you that what I am about to write will most likely make you think that I am a horrible person who likes to go around kicking puppies and popping children’s balloons. I really hope that it does not give you that impression.

Here it is—*I am not a big reader.*

Surprise! If you couldn’t already tell from my immature writing style and lack of big word usage.

I don’t enjoy reading very much and it is a true struggle for me to power my way through a book. Trust me, I really wish I enjoyed reading, but it is something I have to force myself to do. I cannot merely sit down, relax, and enjoy a good book like normal people. Instead, I need to get a notebook, some highlighters, and a pen and take notes on the material in order for me to focus and comprehend what I am reading. It is a brutal process, and is the main reason why I would much rather do almost any other type of activity other than read, unfortunately.

I actually kind of wish that I was a good reader. I know for a fact that I could be a great reader if I were to really work at it, but... well... let me put it this way; reading is kind of like being an alcoholic.

Bear with me you Baptists, this metaphor has a point.

There are five stages for each category.

The first stage in this twisted metaphor is the “*gag stage*”. Both the drinker and the reader cannot stand their respective items and gag at the sight or smell of them. Next, we have the “bearable but still kind of nasty” phase. The items of the respective categories are still not appealing to the corresponding audiences, but they know that if they do them for long enough, it will lead them to phase three. Phase three is “occasionally on special occasions.” Both the reader and beer-guzzler are slowly being acclimated to their categorical items, but still have some restraint and therefore only indulge every-so-often. Soon, “every-so-often” becomes not often enough, and their long journey (to either alcoholism or reading) ends. Now, the metaphor obviously has some holes in it. Reading won’t cause your liver to fail or cause you to make stupid choices, *unless you are reading The Twilight Saga*, but the point I am trying to make is that it would take a lot of pain, sorrow, and weeping to change a person who does not like to read into an avid reader.

Now, the overarching statement that I made in the above paragraphs was basically, “I am not a big reader and I don’t enjoy it very much.” I did not say that I hate reading or that I think reading is not valuable.

I do not hate reading; I am just not into it.

Although it is not a pastime that I generally love, I do understand the need for a regular amount of reading. There have been multiple studies done that show how reading can improve brain connectivity and function, and how it most likely improves one’s overall intelligence. It is something that everyone *should* do, whether they enjoy doing it or not.

My parents knew very well the importance of reading and have always encouraged me to read, even when I didn’t like it. I vaguely remember my parents reading different books to me when I was young. One memory that stands out from all of the other book-related-emotional-flashback-stuff is when my mom used to read me this book before bed called *Love You Forever*.

I know, I know, it’s super cheesy. But I was like five years old people!

It has been a while since I’ve picked up that book and read it, *mainly because I didn’t want to be seen in public reading a book called Love You Forever*, but I remember the story line very well. It told the story of a boy and his mom. Through every stage of life—through the tough stage of toddler-hood, through the know-it-all tween stage, through the rebellious teenager stage, through the struggles of adulthood—the mother always said these words to her son: “I’ll love you forever, I’ll like you for always, as long as I’m living, my baby you’ll be.” Every time my mom finished reading me that book,

she would then say those words to me. Since I was only five years old, I didn't really pay much attention to those words; I was focused more on the picture of the toddler on the front cover pulling all of the toilet paper off of the rack. I thought that it was the greatest thing ever. But those words really did not mean much to me then.

A short time ago, I overheard my mom reading that same book to my youngest brother. Afterward, she said those same words to him; "I'll love you forever, I'll like you for always, as long as I'm living, my baby you'll be." As she said those words, my mind was taken back to when she read that same book to me. It kind of gave me this weird feeling that I really don't like to show. Since I am a man, I do the typical "manly" thing and try not to show very much emotion at all, let alone emotion of sadness. But it was at that moment, when I heard those words, I was overcome with this mixture of sadness and regret, or at least I think that was it. I was now almost at this adulthood stage of life, and have made so many mistakes and said so many regretful things towards both of my parents. Those words brought back so many unpleasant memories of me being a jerk to my mother in my teenage years. It reminded me of all of the times when I yelled at my dad for "embarrassing" me in front of my friends at school. It reminded me of all of the talking back, arguing, and bad attitudes that I constantly threw at them.

Yet, they still loved me.

They still did things for me to show their love for me.

They still cooked for me.

They still paid for my schooling.

They still bought me presents at Christmas.

They were always be there if I was struggling with something.

They still loved me in spite of how badly I treated them. That children's book that my mother read to me all those years ago means more to me now than it ever did in my life. It is a reminder that I really don't know how much longer I will have with my parents. I could have fifty more years. I could have a week. Every time I see that book, I am reminded of my parent's love for me and how I need to cherish every second I have left with them.

As I begin to subside this whirlwind (or train-wreck) of a paper, I'm going to be honest with you all and confess that I have no idea how to end it. I don't want to just leave it like this, because the previous sentence in the last paragraph would leave you kind of sad, and I wouldn't want that. I also don't want to go ahead and end with some famous quote either because it would be really typical and predictable of papers like this. I guess what I will do is just keep writing this paragraph and see what my brain comes up with. Or maybe I'll try to come up with a clever ending and some special way to apply this to your life. Or maybe I'll make a funny joke. Or I'll... I don't know, writing is so hard, I really need to improve. I guess I should read more.