
BLANK PAGES

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But which one is the best one?

A simple question I guess

We stared.

Wooden towers of realms

and troubles

and battles

and passion

and spirit

staring at us from a multitude of dead saplings.

She is begging for a swift reply or an effortless suggestion.

How do I answer her question?

How do I tell her the pleasure of finding a character

and falling in love with them?

The suspense from turning each page

and diving deeper into a world paradoxical to your own?

Every proposal, every story I gingerly pull off this rack of universes is too much for her.

That one is so big, Miss. It would take me forever.

How do I help her understand that if you welcome the problems and the beauty in the words within those decorative covers, then it doesn't matter how many pages?

How many chapters

How many creatures

or tensions

or villains

or heroes

or monarchs

or long monologues that you don't quite understand, but you want to.

You drink in every metaphor.

Every simile.

Every description.

Every personification.

Every run-on sentence.

Every cut off sentence.

Trying to teach someone to appreciate beauty is a task no one, in my hundreds of hours of education, ever told me I would have to do.

No one told me when I decided from that long list of futures that those in which I was supposed to enrich their minds wouldn't be like my own.

That they wouldn't beg for extra time to sit in a chair by the window, curled up and leaping again into a world unknown.

They wouldn't stay up into the early hours of the morning lost in an endless jungle of another person's imagination.

I wasn't told how to inspire them to have that gut-wrenching motivation to seek a journey through the pages of a book.

But Miss,

Her eyes are blank pages.

I just want to complete the project.

Author Biography

Born in Valley Center, Kansas, Alexis Bean graduated from Wichita State University in spring 2020 with a Bachelor of Arts in Education, Secondary English Language Arts 6-12. She completed her teaching internship in spring 2020 at Wichita Heights High School in USD 259. Alexis is a proud Air Force wife and a mother to a beautiful two-year-old boy. She has two rescue dogs and lives in Birmingham, AL, with her husband. She presented at the 2019 Kansas Association of Teachers of English (KATE) Conference on young adult literature and lesson implementation in the classroom. In fall 2020, Alexis will assume the head teaching position for eighth grade English language arts at L.M. Smith Middle School in Birmingham, AL. She can be reached at atbean@shockers.wichita.edu.