

# Reading and Me

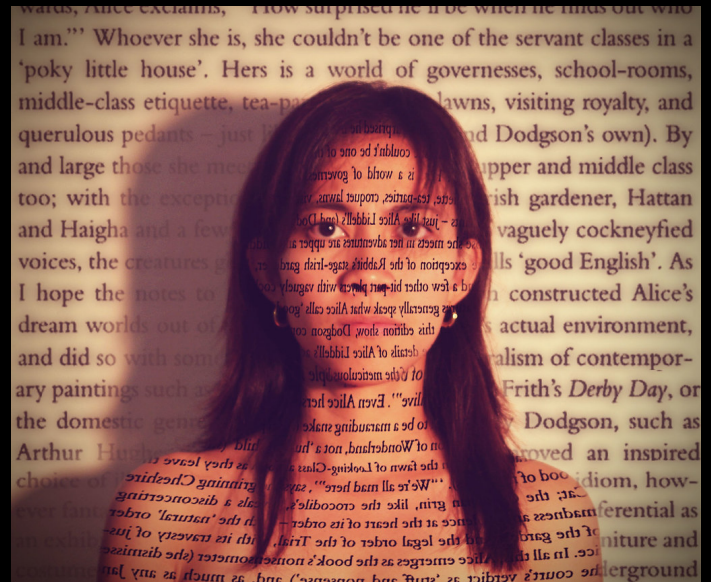
By Megan Walters

## *The irony of a dyslexic English Literature Student*

Yes, you have read the title correctly, irony is what I live for. Reading, within itself, is very personal. The way someone reads a novel is in no way the same as someone else. Even reading it a second time changes the interpretation to an individual. That is why reading should be considered magic; the message of a book changes with every re-read. Then when you think of how books are adapted from paper to screen, be it for a TV show such as *The Vampire Diaries*, or for movies like *Harry Potter*, the experience can still be very personal. This is what makes reading such a magical experience. But this doesn't mean it is accessible to everyone.

From personal experience, I can say reading can definitely feel like a chore. If you were to ask me what one of my favourite pastimes was, I would say to read. Annoyingly, that would also be the answer to 'what task do I find most difficult?' some days. Yet I still open every book with the same anticipation of wondering what new thing I will feel. Will it be a comfort filled with the warmth of a happy ending? Will it be the fear from a thriller? Or even annoyance at the book and the author? Each occurrence is as likely as the next. However, if I must pinpoint one reason as to why the activity I enjoy so much feels like such a chore, I would blame my dyslexia.

According to the NHS, 1 in 10 people in the UK are dyslexic, so we shouldn't be so shocked to learn of some famous authors being dyslexic, yet we are. Some of the authors we would be stunned to find are theorised to be dyslexic are F. Scott Fitzgerald and Edgar Allen Poe. Both having made big names for themselves in the world of literature. The idea that they were possibly dyslexic came from reports of how they were in school.



Dyslexia is a funny thing, and I can say this from experience. It makes letters jump, lines jive and paragraphs grow making the task of reading so much more difficult. I can and will re-read the same line and words over and over without even realising. This can be a novelty, something to have a little laugh at, but most of the time it is a massive frustration. However, my biggest grievance is when someone doubts the ability to love reading because of dyslexia. Is it more difficult to enjoy? Yes. There is no argument there, but does the end product of reading change for the individual? No, it just becomes more. It becomes more because not only have you delved into this new world and enjoyed another person's work, but you have also achieved something.

The perfect way to end this article would be to give tips to the fellow dyslexic reader. So, I will try and do so without sounding as patronising as my GCSE and A-level English teachers were at times.

The time frame in which you finish your book does not matter. It is the enjoyment you experience that counts. Do not be embarrassed of using a coloured overlay as well as using the correct one for you (I am far too guilty of this). Finally, let the ambition to prove others wrong fuel your reading! By enjoying a good book regardless of what others know and understand, you can change these misguided conceptions about dyslexia.