

2026年



4 · 23 World Book Day 創作比賽  
Creative Competition in 2026



# 香港 Hong Kong

高中組 中四 (S4) ▶ 中六 (S6)  
Senior Secondary



Lai Jaden

St. Joseph's Anglo-Chinese School

Topic Finding Joy in Reading: Rhythms of Mindfulness and Rock

As a senior secondary student navigating life in Hong Kong's bustling New Territories, my days are packed with doing assignments from school, practicing drums and listening to music. During times when work is finished, that is when I turn to reading. Reading is what helps me feel calm in all this chaos. It is my anchor amid the raging, turbulent seas. Assignments and projects have really worn me out. However, when I read, it seems like every worry just dissipates as I get immersed in a book. That's why I went to the Hong Kong Public Library to browse the shelves and borrowed 2 printed books: "Joy in Every Moment" by Tzivia Gover and "We Rock! A Fun Family Guide For Exploring Rock History" by Jason Hanley. These weren't just page-turners; they were lifelines, sparking joy in mindfulness and music amid my chaotic daily life. These books were not something I borrowed just to pass the time or forget about schoolwork temporarily. They helped me when I was feeling overwhelmed. By blending mindfulness practices with the electrifying pulse of rock music history, they revealed profound joy in reading—showing me how words can harmonize inner calm with creative passion, reshaping the scattered fragments of growing up into a cohesive, joyful rhythm.

### Embracing mindfulness

"Joy in Every Moment" caught my eye first on the library shelf, its subtitle promising exercises to awaken life's hidden wonders during my intense exam week when stress levels peaked and sleep felt like a luxury. Tzivia Gover, an expert in mindfulness, wrote a book filled with gentle, practical exercises—things like halting the mental frenzy of chaotic school deadlines to take deep and deliberate breaths. She also gives concrete advice, like how happiness is an inside job, and nobody else can make ourselves happy. I learnt that I should take the initiative to choose which thoughts and attitudes to focus on, and to choose healthy reactions to the people and events in our lives. I vividly recall one exhausting evening, after a frustrating drum practice at school, it left my whole body feeling sore. Despite my efforts to loosen my muscles and reduce the soreness, it ultimately ended in vain. Guided by Gover's "body joy scan" technique, I closed my eyes and tuned into my body's quiet signals—the steady thumping of my heartbeat, the cool whisper of air brushing against my skin, the subtle rise and fall of my chest. These sensations, often drowned out by the hurry of my fast-paced student life, resurfaced and dissolved my frustration into a wave of calm focus.

Growing up in Hong Kong is tough as there is always someone trying to be better than you. Every holiday break transforms into a rigidly structured study marathon, leaving little room for hobbies and time with loved ones. Before encountering Gover's book, my drumming style was purely imitation, slamming drums in frantic imitation of drum icons I adored, chasing raw intensity without considering the intention and awareness behind each strike. Her exercises taught me to be more mindful of the little details that can impact the overall performance of drumming, teaching me to inhabit the moment, fully focusing on every beat, every breath between fills and even the tiniest of muscle engagement. One chapter that resonated powerfully was on "Joy All Day Long", which perfectly mirrored my early rudimentary and endurance training on a practice pad. It encouraged me to appreciate the effort and time spent, rather than being fixated on flawless results. No longer did the off-beat rhythms feel like defeats; they instead became steps in a mindful journey towards new heights. This chapter didn't merely quiet my mind; it also transformed my fragmented teenage memories—from doomscrolling aimlessly and practicing without intention into intentional milestones of personal growth, proving reading's power to reconstruct chaos into purpose.

### History behind the passion

"We Rock" was the second gem I found from the library shelves, exploding with chronological timelines about rock music's wild evolution—from Elvis Presley's revolutionary rock and roll music in the 1950s to the rebellious style of punk pop in the 1970s and beyond. Jason Hanley structures it as an engaging family guide, with in-depth insights about the artists and detailed song structure breakdowns, it even has curated playlists for you to get to know more about the artists' signature sound. This book's "listening guides" dissect song structures verse by verse, revealing how intros in a song build tensions with different techniques, how choruses deliver emotional peaks and bridges that introduce key changes to convey different emotions or messages. During school lunch breaks, I would read through these guides thoroughly to gain a deeper understanding of a song, applying these techniques to my practice sessions. Hanley also explains production techniques too, such as layering tracks to get a fuller sound, which I tested in a software on my computer and yielding great results.

My favourite chapter in the book was about the iconic band Queen. This chapter dove deep into their 1970s arena rock brilliance that turned stadiums into electric theatres. Hanley unravels historical facts and social connections to the band, showing how they emerged amid Britain's glam rock scene from boldly carving their own unique path. The band were not afraid to experiment with their music, they combined musical elements taken from diverse styles like progressive rock, hard rock, disco, gospel and even classical music and opera. This chapter inspired me to experiment with different styles to find my own unique drumming sound that feels authentically mine, proving that Queen's innovative genre-blending lives on through pages.

Through "Joy in Every Moment" and "We Rock!", I discovered reading's profound gift: transforming school pressure, sore drum practice sessions into sustained joy. Gover's "body joy scans" quieted my racing mind during late night study sessions, while Hanley's in-depth music insights, guided me to experiment with different aspects of life to create something unique and authentic to myself. These books combined mindfulness with musical legacy, turning daily chaos into purposeful rhythm.

- Comments
- The writing illustrated the joy discovered through books of different genres.
  - The narrative with memories of growing up feels authentic and deeply connected to the books you chose.



Woo Hiu Lam

St. Stephen's Girls' College

Topic Chapters of My Growth

As a child, many things like rainbows, cute puppies, flowers and candy made me happy. And one unique thing never failed to make me smile from ear to ear—the scent of new books. I still vividly remember the day I first fell in love with reading. It was just an ordinary afternoon, and I had been forced by my parents to read English books to improve my English grades. Yawning, I sleepily pulled a book off the shelf. It was *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. The moment I flipped it open, the scene of untouched pages wafted into the air as if whispering to me about the exciting adventure I was about to begin, inviting me into this brand-new chapter in my life.

*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* is J.K. Rowling's first novel in the Harry Potter series. We follow Harry, who starts his first year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. I was obsessed from the very first paragraph, completely captivated by the 'Muggle' world and Harry's fantastical adventures with Hermione and Ron, and the unfolding of his mysterious backstory. Very quickly the book and I were inseparable; I read it everywhere from the bus on the way to school, to sitting alone during lunchtime, to falling asleep with it lying on my chest.

One of my favourite moments in the book is undoubtedly the chapter with the troll in the bathroom. This is the very moment the friendship between the "Golden Trio" blooms. Ron and Harry are willing to risk their own safety just to ensure Hermione would not get hurt. In return, Hermione tells a lie to Professor McGonagall, in other words breaking a rule—something neither Harry, Ron nor I ever imagined she would do—just to get Harry and Ron out of trouble. They continue to grow closer after this moment, but this is where the real magic—their friendship—begins.

In retrospect, what engaged me so much were the valuable lessons I absorbed while reading. As Hermione says, "Books! And cleverness! There are more important things—friendship and bravery." Indeed, friendship, loyalty and bravery are the three most important themes in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, and their importance stayed with me long after I finished the final page. This quote completely reshaped how I view my real-life friendships. I used to view grades as a competition and classmates as my rivals. However, after reading this book, I began seeing them as comrades in a shared academic journey. We would explain difficult concepts to each other, share our secrets to studying and offer encouragement during moments of self-doubt. After years have passed, I can say with certainty that the friendships built during this time are far more valuable than any academic attainment.

Harry's magical journey began with *The Philosopher's Stone* and although I did not realize it at the time, it was also the beginning of my own reading journey. As I finished the final sentence, I felt a sense of urgency overwhelm me and I forced my parents to buy the second novel. That was when I truly fell in love with reading and the sheer joy it brought me.

By the time I reached sixth grade, I was facing problems in my life that were way more complex than improving my English grade. I was navigating the painful terrain of bullying and my bookshelf mirrored my experience. I found myself drawn less to fantasy and more to realistic fiction about human experiences and social issues. During this painful time, one particular book that became a crucial companion was *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio. It's about a young boy named August Pullman, who was born with significant facial differences. When he enters mainstream school, he is bullied and laughed at by his classmates. While *Harry Potter* felt like an escape for my younger self, August Pullman feels like a mirror held up to myself. I was not dreaming about becoming a wizard; I was reading about someone who experienced what I was experiencing—walking down the hallway and hearing the same whispers and muffled laughs. What surprised me was that it felt like a manual guiding me step by step through this challenge because it not only told me that I could endure it but most importantly, how to get through it.

*Wonder* provided me with a different type of satisfaction I had never felt before. With the unfolding of August's story, I was learning something about myself as well. The satisfaction was no longer about being able to flee from reality, it was about understanding my reality. August taught me about kindness, acceptance and real friendship so I could reinterpret my own experiences through new lenses. An important quote that has stuck with me to this day is "Being different isn't bad. It means you have the courage to be yourself." It made me realise that sobbing in my room, trying to change myself to fit others' standard of "perfect" is not only painful, but simply wrong. Instead, true strength lies in accepting myself, and being who I really am. This was what truly made me the best version of myself. Reading became a new act of discovery, not of a magical world but of myself.

Taking a trip down memory lane, I realised how *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and *Wonder* marked clear milestones in my growth. The first one introduced me to the joy of reading. The second one taught me how to use reading as a tool for understanding myself. Now, I have read many more books and I still love the scent of newly printed ones. Yet, these two books still mean the most to me and opening them now (even without the "new book scent") never fails to make me smile. Reading for me is the feeling of greeting an old companion while opening a previously read book, and the thrill of meeting a new companion while opening a new one.

- Comments
- The introduction sets a strong context for your personal growth, and the conclusion effectively wraps up your thoughts on the joy of reading.
  - The writing highlights the joy the writer has discovered through reading and reflects on how these readings have influenced his understanding of life.



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香港悅讀周  
HONG KONG  
READING WEEK

今年香港公共圖書館再度與東莞圖書館、廣東省立中山圖書館及澳門公共圖書館合作，各自以同一主題舉辦比賽。所有得獎作品均會在指定圖書館展出，以促進大灣區讀者交流，共享閱讀創作的樂趣。展覽詳情可參閱香港公共圖書館網頁。  
This year, the Hong Kong Public Libraries continues to collaborate with the Shenzhen Library, the Sun Yat-sen Library of Guangdong Province and the Macao Public Library in organising competitions under the same theme separately. All winning entries will be displayed in selected public libraries to foster exchanges among readers of the Greater Bay Area for sharing the fun of reading and creation. Please visit the Hong Kong Public Libraries website for details of the exhibition.



https://www.hkpl.gov.hk/wbd

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# 香港 Hong Kong

## 高中組 中四 (S4) ▶ 中六 (S6) Senior Secondary



Yee Wing Yan

Carmel Secondary School

Topic Finding Joy - How Joy in Books Changes over Time

Joy can be found in any aspect of life, whether it be eating, sleeping, working, even reading. Giving it a deeper thought, I realised books have always been a source of joy for me.

Way back to when I was a kindergartener, I'd found joy in picture books. It was the moment when my class teachers noticed me hanging around the reading corner during breaks and gave me *The Not So Abominable Snowman* as a gift of encouragement. Boy, did that very picture book, which I still keep to this day, let my curious little boat set sail into the vast ocean of picture books. Soon, my home was filled with different picture books: *The Day The Crayons Quit*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, *Clifford the Big Red Dog*, even a near complete collection of *Mr Men and Little Miss*.

It was a joy of fun. I still remember the page in *The Not So Abominable Snowman* when Bert the snowman helped little Tom rescue his father from the deep crevasse, and there were lots of random details in the surroundings: a treasure chest, a tiny soccer ball and a UFO! This prompted little me to flip through again the pages before, trying to observe any details that I'd previously overlooked. Those brightly coloured, lively pictures in picture books also never failed to pique my interest. And especially when you were a toddler who had just learnt how to read, you were new to the concept of stories, thus, turning over every page felt like opening a treasure chest, entering into the uncharted waters, expanding territories on the map, all of these contributing to the joy of discovery and curiosity. Never had I ever expected the *Hungry Caterpillar* to actually grow into a butterfly by the end of the book!

Primary School was when my joy came from fantasy books. Being 6-12 was the time when you dared to believe in imaginations, your fantasies: what if I were the long-lost child of a billionaire? What if I were a princess? What if I could have a pet dragon? And naturally, you'd want an adventure to spice up your life, that, maybe, your imaginations became reality. That's when I started to read *Dragon Masters: Rise of the Earth Dragon*.

It was a joy of excitement and imagination. In *Dragon Masters: Rise of the Earth Dragon* and its sequels, there was a variety of dragons introduced, with each possessing a unique magic ability, like *Worm the Earth Dragon* has the ability of telekinesis, *Fallyn the Spring Dragon* can grow plants and *Nova the Star Dragon* can shoot star beams from her eyes. With a diversity of dragons appearing in *Dragon Masters*, it was a feast of curious maybes, a celebration of wild imaginations, and a party of daydreams dancing in technicolour. These books encouraged me to believe in the impossible, and imagine the craziest stories.

Some afternoons I would close the book and keep the fantasies running in my head. On the walk home, the rustling leaves became wings, and the clouds were the scales. I even gave my own imaginary dragon a name and decided what its magic would be, because the series made creativity feel less like 'making things up' and more like discovering something that had been waiting for me all along. As a result, I became a little girl who'd transform blank A4 paper sheets into mini self-written books and had a dozen sketch books filled with original characters and plot lines.

When you become a teenager, you realise the world is not that simple, and the qualities you held onto dearly ended up being castles made of sand, pillars of faith crumbled down and you lost who you were. People misunderstood you, and being as easily swayed as you are, you start to believe their opinions about you were the truth. You also didn't seek help from others, believing your matters were far too trivial to deserve attention. Yet, you find your way back to childhood classics, *Oliver Twist* and *The Secret Garden*, which, unbeknownst to you, were coming-of-age books in disguise.

My joy was the joy of being seen. It was like I've finally found something relatable, telling me that I'm not alone. It's true that I didn't experience the same upbringing as *Mary Lennox* or *Oliver Twist*, but the feeling of abandonment, isolation and being misunderstood found me guilty on all three counts. *Mary* was labelled as 'spoiled' and 'unpleasant' by caretakers correlates to me being perceived as 'bossy' and 'self-centred' by bullies and being ostracised by peers. *Oliver* originally had a constant readiness for punishment and was fearful to avoid getting hit correlates to how I always tried to please others and was being overly submissive such that I wouldn't get isolated again.

Yet, *Mary's* journey from being angry and unpleasant to being empathetic and kind that she was lovingly accepted told me that I do not have to let my past define me, and gave me courage to face and heal from my pain. *Oliver's* retention of his kind nature as he refused to become like his aggressors after mistreatments and finally receiving his happily-ever-after at the end of his story reminded me that at the end of the day, it is me who chooses what I am, and that perseverance is fruitful. All of these were so comforting, and it was a joy of empowerment.

I realise that joy is not limited to the state of being happy just because you find it fun, sometimes it is a quiet warmth that settles in my heart when I feel safe, understood, or simply absorbed in imaginations that makes time disappear. Books have given me that kind of joy again and again, but never in the same way twice. As I grew, the stories I reached for changed—yet each stage of reading gave a different kind of joy in me: the joy of fun, the joy of excitement and imagination, and the joy of being seen. What kind of joy can you find in books?

- Comments
- The writer provides a personal definition of joy, effectively synthesising ideas from different reading materials.
  - The writing clearly expresses the joy of reading through the writer's own perspective, presenting an insightful and coherent reflection.

Yeung Yi Ching

St. Stephen's Girls' College

Topic When I Grow Up - The Little Joys I've Found in Reading

The joy of reading for me lies in appreciating the essence of a story and the emotions it kindles. I have loved reading since I was a child because it made me feel relaxed and happy. I frequently asked my domestic helper to bring me to the library where I would wander past shelves of books, running my fingers along their spines until I found a visually appealing cover. I cared not for the content, yet it was this unconventional approach that exposed me to such a wealth of genres as a child.

I first read Roald Dahl's *Matilda* at a very impressionable age. I remember it vividly because it was the first time a book gave me pause. Its most poignant moments shook the naive me to my core and made me appreciate a privilege I had taken for granted: the freedom to read any book I wanted, actively supported by my parents, which was a reality far from guaranteed. The sheer cruelty of *Matilda's* father when he destroyed the library book right before her eyes made my heart twist with empathy. At that moment, the fragility of the book I held in my hands dawned onto me, and I began to carefully unravel the story within its pages. Until I read about *Matilda* secretly reading in her bedroom sanctuary, I had simply enjoyed the relaxation of the activity. But there, curled up comfortably on my own bed, *Matilda's* story unlocked a new understanding in everything I read. That witty, retrospective book revealed a deeper purpose I never knew reading held. This epiphany opened a new door. Returning to other books, I began to see them not just as stories but as vast worlds waiting to be explored. I learned to look beyond the written words to understand the author's deeper commentary on life, all hidden within the paper facade.

As I grew older and transitioned to a Kindle, my reading habits evolved just as my life did. I often felt completely overwhelmed, realizing the simple world of childhood was washing away with time. Thrust into an unfamiliar adolescence, I felt like a stranger in my own life. Lost, I turned to books to rediscover my identity and find my place in the ever-changing world. I started to develop my own opinions, and that naturally manifested in my choice of books. I became more selective and critical about which books to read but what remained unchanged was my love of reading. They say you 'grow out of' reading eventually, but I say that those who do have never really discovered the joy in it. I believe that once the joy in reading is discovered, it's like unlocking a door that can never truly be closed. It is a permanent, one-way passage to a richer world. This joy hasn't just enriched my life; it has fundamentally informed my choices and shaped the person I have become.

Now, as a teenager, I need breaks from reality more than ever before. Reading has become my sanctuary, as it was for *Matilda*. The happiest I am is while reading on my Kindle, curled up in bed, detached from reality and immersed in a fantastical world! Illuminated by my bedside lamp and my imagination, my mind runs free and unfettered by the constraints of school life. I leap into this world breathing life into the words on the page.

To give you an example of what I mean, the best I can think of is *Warrior Cats*, a fantasy series by Erin Hunter about clans of wild cats living in forests, focusing on adventure, peer politics and destiny. The characters are so relatable that they continue to inspire me long after I close the final page. I was particularly inspired by one of my favourite characters, *Jayfeather*: he was born blind, but he learnt to navigate the world on his own terms, and eventually became a well-respected medicine cat who treated others with as much care as he was given. I see bits of myself in many different characters, and it always perks me up to see how far they could go within the confines of cat society.

I first picked up a *Warrior Cats* book while still in primary school. I chose it because it was about cats and who doesn't like cats? I didn't know it then, but the series would go on to become one of my all-time favourites, providing me solace in the way it welcomes me into the Clan Territory whenever I open the cover. Whenever I get burnt out from reading, I return to this series, knowing the familiarity will reignite my passion and allow me to explore new books at my own pace. One of my favourite scenes, where the cats finally find a new place to call home after a long, arduous journey, and the sun rises before their eyes, never fails to bring me comfort and reassurance that I too, can lead a fulfilling life, as long as I try my best to overcome my adversities. I re-read the series frequently because it feels like going home. I remember my primary school teacher explaining "it isn't just a story about cats, it's a mirror for human relationships." Whilst too deep for me at the time, I now perfectly understand what she meant.

The magic of reading for me is that I can return to the same book and find a new story each time. With every re-read of *Warrior Cats*, I seem to find a deeper layer and, in turn, a deeper understanding of myself. If a story about cats can teach me about human relationships, then what can't a book reveal? It may sound like a reach, but my greatest joy in reading is revisiting the stories of my youth and finally understanding them with the wisdom of experience.

I am also currently reading more renowned literary works and timeless classics that have a great impression on me as I continue to grow into the person I wish to become. Without having found the joy in reading, I would not be who I am today. Reading has sharpened my perception and, more importantly, deepened my gratitude for my own life and the people in it. Carrying this joy, and *Matilda's* enduring question, "I'm wondering what to read next" in my heart, I greet each new day in search of stories to inspire and cherish.

- Comments
- The writing shows a progression from discovering joy in reading at young age to realising deeper meanings of joy in life as a teenager.
  - The transition between the stages is natural, demonstrating a smooth development.



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## 香港悅讀周 HONG KONG READING WEEK

今年香港公共圖書館再度與東莞圖書館、廣東省立中山圖書館及澳門公共圖書館合作，各自以同一主題舉辦比賽。所有得獎作品均會在指定圖書館展出，以促進大灣區讀者交流，共享閱讀創作的樂趣。展覽詳情可參閱香港公共圖書館網頁。  
This year, the Hong Kong Public Libraries continues to collaborate with the Shenzhen Library, the Sun Yat-sen Library of Guangdong Province and the Macao Public Library in organising competitions under the same theme separately. All winning entries will be displayed in selected public libraries to foster exchanges among readers of the Greater Bay Area for sharing the fun of reading and creation. Please visit the Hong Kong Public Libraries website for details of the exhibition.



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高中組 中四 (S4) ▶ 中六 (S6)  
Senior Secondary

Zhang Kitty

Hon Wah College

Topic Finding Joy in Literary Gardens

Joy, in my early years, was a simple, effortless thing. My childhood in Singapore was defined by a gentle, carefree rhythm. My joys were simple and assured: the chilled sweetness of a watermelon juice and the orderly feel of my school uniform, which was always washed and pressed by someone else's hands. And the unwavering presence of our live-in maid. She was the architect of my comfort, a figure who did everything from cooking for me to tying my hair into perfect, tight braids. I was a little empress in a spotless kingdom, blissfully unaware of effort or hardship. Academic pressure was a foreign concept; life was a gently curated garden where I never had to lift a finger. But as I grew, this simple joy was shattered. The move my family made back to mainland China was not just a change of address; it was a cultural and personal earthquake. It was in the tremendous aftershocks of this move that I discovered a different, more enduring kind of joy, one cultivated in the quiet pages of books. This joy was offered to me by two magnificent works: Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* and *A Little Princess*, which I found, one after the other, as refuge in my local public library.

The library itself became my first secret garden. In a city where life was now defined by competition, it was a walled-off sanctuary. It was there I first met Mary Lennox, the 'disagreeable-looking' girl from *The Secret Garden*. And in her, I saw a shocking, uncomfortable reflection of myself. I was Mary Lennox. I had been uprooted from my familiar, pampered world and dropped into the harsh, demanding 'Manor' of China's education system. Overnight, I went from a child with no care in the world to a student who had to fight for her academic life in a sea of relentless peers. I was a complete brat about it. I was sour, resentful, and lonely, mourning the loss of my childhood ease just as Mary mourned her India.

The joy of reading her story, then, was not one of comfort, but of profound, self-recognition. As Mary, driven forward by a stubborn spark of curiosity, unearthed the key to the hidden garden, I felt I was being handed a key of my own. The true magic of the book was not that the garden was enchanted, but that it was not. The magic was in the work—the weeding, the planting, the patient waiting for green shoots to break through the cold earth. The writer's lavish descriptions taught me that joy could be an active verb. It was not something that happened to you, but something you did. You worked for it, you nurtured it. Mary's transformation was not delivered by a servant, but by the dirt under her own fingernails. This was a revelation. My own unhappiness was not a prison to be endured, but an overgrown garden. The key was not a physical object, but the willingness to finally do the work myself—to study, to adapt, to grow.

If *The Secret Garden* gave me the key and the blueprint for work, then *A Little Princess*, which I borrowed the following month, taught me how to tap into an inner magic when the outer world felt too harsh. Sara Crewe's fall from riches to rags in a cold London attic was a more brutal and direct reflection to my own perceived 'fall' from grace. Her 'secret garden' was not a physical plot of land, but the boundless, unassailable landscape of her own mind. From her, I learned that dignity and joy could be acts of fierce, internal resistance. Her famous line, "I am a princess. All girls are..." was not mere delusion; it was a statement of what she truly believed. When she pretended her thin bread was a feast, she was not denying her reality, but actively reframing it through imagination.

Sara's story spoke directly to the part of me that missed being cared for. She became her own source of comfort. The joy in reading her story was the joy of understanding that the most important treasures—resilience, imagination, self-worth—are those that cannot be taken from you, even when your personal 'maid' is gone and you are left to fend for yourself. She taught me that reading itself was a form of this 'magic'. Within the pages of a book, I could rebuild my own 'attic', a mental fortress where I was still whole and capable, no matter how stressful the school day had been.

Together, these two books formed a complete philosophy for navigating my new life. From *The Secret Garden*, I learned that I had to get my hands dirty, to engage with my challenging new world and slowly, patiently, shape my own place within it. From *A Little Princess*, I learned to build an inner sanctuary, to hold onto my sense of self even when I felt I was at the bottom of the class. Mary needed to get outside, into the fresh air; Sara needed to go inside, into the depths of her own spirit. I needed both.

Growing up is a series of lockouts. I was locked out of my childhood paradise, and for a time, I felt locked out of success and belonging in my new home. The joy I found in these books was the assurance that there is always a hidden door, and that you always possess the key. The garden and the attic—the two secret spaces the writer gifted to me—are now permanent rooms in my mind. They remind me that the spoiled 'little empress' had to wither away for a stronger, more self-reliant girl to grow in her place. This pair of literary gifts has illuminated my path from a pampered childhood to a resilient adulthood, a joy I continue to find with every book I open.

- Comments
- The writing shows the simple joy found in reading the first book, then deepens to reveal the joy of self-realisation in the second one.
  - The writer illustrates these experiences clearly through personal reflections.



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HONG KONG  
READING WEEK

今年香港公共圖書館再度與深圳圖書館、廣東省立中山圖書館及澳門公共圖書館合作，各自以同一主題舉辦比賽。所有得獎作品均會在指定圖書館展出，以促進大灣區讀者交流，共享閱讀與創作的樂趣。展覽詳情可參閱香港公共圖書館網頁。

This year, the Hong Kong Public Libraries continues to collaborate with the Shenzhen Library, the Sun Yat-sen Library of Guangdong Province and the Macao Public Library in organising competitions under the same theme separately. All winning entries will be displayed in selected public libraries to foster exchanges among readers of the Greater Bay Area for sharing the fun of reading and creation. Please visit the Hong Kong Public Libraries website for details of the exhibition.



<https://www.hkpl.gov.hk/wbd>