

Three Little Words: A memoir that defines non-fiction.

Memoirs are easily my favorite type of non-fiction to peruse, due to their accurate interpretation of the author's life and the emotional journey they capture in the story. *Three Little Words: A Memoir*, written by Ashley Rhodes-Courter, is a brilliant example of how a memoir should be written as it contains insightful true-to-life information. I found it interesting to read this book as my first memoir because I was pleasantly surprised to learn fascinating things. Namely I have concluded that pieces of non-fiction are similar to a hero's journey, in fictional stories like *Harry Potter*, where an ordinary person goes through suspenseful, heroic trials for their reward. By contrast, non-fiction is easier to understand because you can relate it better to real life, since it is completely factual. Finally I have learned that even though non-fiction is about a real person's life, both fiction and non-fiction stories can revolve around a single element that helps the hero find a happy ending. After comparing I now understand that a non-fiction story can be as thorough and rewarding to read when they turn a person's life into a fascinating tale.

Starting off, I enjoyed this memoir because it showed me that the cycle of a hero's journey can also be a part of non-fiction. For example in *Harry Potter: And the Sorcerers Stone*, he starts off as an ordinary person in an unfortunate situation, then slowly he progresses through his journey until he gets his wish to be someone special, i.e. becomes a beginning wizard and



finds his true home at Hogwarts. In *Three Little Words*, Ashley begins life in a horrible trailer, which only gets worse as she is taken from her loving mother, and forced into foster homes which involved cruel mistreatment! However Ashley endures the situation, until it steadily improves, she finally achieves justice for everything she has ever suffered through, and finds a real family. "Something very tight and very deep inside me snapped, I looked across the table directly into the shining eyes of my parents. Gay and Phil-my mother and farther-were crying with me, and I felt something I had never known before: Home" (297). Basically, the story line may be different, but the way it is told is very similar to one of the most popular books in history, (the *Harry Potter* saga) which is why I enjoyed this memoir so much.

Non-fiction is a better choice for readers like me, because I enjoy learning from books as well as reading them. Books like an autobiography are very good resources for learning, as they use real facts, while fiction books cannot help me, because they are based on myth. Choosing a biography or autobiography lets me learn incredible facts that would be impossible to find in fiction. "This book is a memoir of my journey through a troubled childhood-one where I often felt abandoned, neglected, and trapped in a failing foster care system-to my eventual arrival at a secure and loving home. In re-creating events described, I relied on my memory as well as extensive research, which included review of court records, social service files and photographs" (298). This quote explains the effort it took to compile all of the information into a factual story. To sum it up, I enjoy non-fiction just as much as fiction, because of its real facts about a person's life, (which is often famous), such as Barack Obama or Stephen Hawking.



Lastly, one of my favorite things I have learned about non-fiction as compared to fiction is that both can have story lines that can revolve around a single point that can be related to anything. I realized that like the fictional saga *Harry Potter; And the Deathly Hallows*, where he defeats the villain with the power of love, Ashley uses the three little words, "I guess so" as her response when foster parents asked if she would like to be adopted, to finally help her completely escape the past. "I never thought three little words would have such an impact on my life, even though they weren't the words I was supposed to say. Every time I see the videotape, I cringe. It was one of those memorable occasions that families' treasure, but this is one "treasure" I would rather bury" (302), (Ashley quips). Obviously these three words have been pivotal to Ashley's life, whether she would be miserable in foster care or happy with a family. Clearly a story can be complicated, but still be defined by a single element, whether it is love in *Harry Potter* or the words "I guess so" in *Three Little Words*.

In conclusion, non-fiction is similar to fiction in ways like the hero's cycle; they can both have a central theme and that non-fiction can teach even more than fiction does in many key aspects, like history and life lessons. *Three Little Words* is a great example that defines a memoir as unique. Start to finish, this book was a fantastic read and it taught me many emotional things. I wonder exactly how many memoir authors have crafted equally as compelling stories as Ashley Rhodes-Courter? Memoirs accomplish addressing what happens in the real lives of people and I am excited to find more to read.