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My name is Annie, I am a bookaholic and an aspiring librarian!

I don't doubt for a second there are going to be many glorious and skillfully written stories, how the prospective students have been dreaming of becoming librarians since childhood. Alas, although I can invent such a story, it would not hold a grain of truth. I didn't wake up at night when I was five, thinking how one day when I grow up I will be nothing short of "the best librarian in the entire universe". No, I didn't study for twelve and then six more years with the only goal to prepare for the career of a librarian either.

Granted, at this point the thought of throwing my paper in the pile might look very tempting, so all I am asking now is to allow me to provide the answer to the question that undoubtedly comes to mind:

" Why on Earth do you want to be a librarian then?"

Let's start at the beginning, and the beginning of every library are the books inside. Ah, the books! I grew up around books, lots of them. Our home, being the small apartment that it was, had a huge bookshelf covering the entire wall of one of the two rooms we were living in. That was understandable of course, since the bookstore my grandmother worked in made ends meet entirely on my parent's love for books. All we could spare (and sometimes more than we could spare) from my father's salary was spent on books. I loved books! I loved the way they looked with their kaleidoscope of colorful covers, the way they felt- some smooth, some rather rough. Some books smelled of leather, others of pressed paper and raw ink, and I have even been told that I had colored and tasted them occasionally too. Nothing gave me more pleasure than to walk through the bookstore and look at them before I could read! To me, the books looked better than candy and being around them made me feel like a kid in a candy store. Then everything changed when I learned to read and slowly, but surely, the world of books drew me in deeper and deeper.

It was many years before I learned what a library was, not because there were none in my hometown but mostly because my parents preferred reading at home. My father had his own system and made my mother organize all our books in a homemade catalog and we had them in a particular order by author and interest. It couldn't compare to the libraries organized with sophisticated indexes and databases, but I remember our friends and neighbors came to borrow books from us, so one can say I have experience being a librarian since very young age.

I was in college when I started going to the library on a regular basis. I longed for new books since I had read all of the ones we had at home (yes, even the ones I was not supposed to), but life had gotten very expensive and buying books was a luxury we could no longer afford. I remember the first time I visited the college library, I couldn't believe my eyes! All these books, shelves and shelves of books from wall to wall, on the ground, on the top, in the middle and in between and all of them...free! I no longer felt like the girl in the candy store, it was much worse! I started spending as much time as I could in this dingy gloomy hole of a room on the top floor of my college, called library and I soon began to realize that I would never be able to read all these books. There were too many and I had so little time and so many things to do. Things got even more difficult when I finally discovered the city library and its endless archives. I had to get a grip on reality and come to terms with the fact that there were so many books in this world that I would never read. It took me a while, and as all recovering bookaholics I slipped up a lot in the beginning.

Now these libraries that I used in Bulgaria, didn't inspire in me the desire to become a librarian, not at all! In fact, the librarians that I knew from that time were the last thing that would come to my mind as to what I might want as a profession. They were usually very grumpy and always busy for questions. They had the repelling aura of the guardians of a countless treasure and made their feelings very clear- don't you mess with their books and don't you even dare to think you can ever be late or there would be consequences. All of that was accompanied by waiving the proverbial long and skinny index finger in front of your nose and a pair of small piercing eyes staring at your soul behind halfmoon glasses, what was there not to like?! The line between respect and intimidation was very thin in such cases and you can easily imagine why it was always quiet in these libraries. No, it wasn't because people were thoughtful and respected the silence, but because there usually were very few people at all in them.

It is interesting how life can turn things around and show you a different perspective. The libraries I found in the United States six years ago, were quite different from what I was used to. For one, kids are not only allowed in them, but are actually welcome. Imagine my surprise when I discovered that there is also a dedicated kids corner with toys and games as well ("In the library?! The horror!" one of the guardians would screech here). Everything in these libraries welcomes you and of course there are a lot more people who use them and a lot more librarians ready to assist you too. I have often received their help and guidance when I was opening the doors behind the translator's interpretation by reading my favorite classic literature in the original language it was written in. Three years ago my son was receiving special services in his new school due to learning disabilities. While I was waiting for his first session to be over, being an avid reader, the first thing I looked up in the school was the library. At first, I asked if I could just sit there and read my book, then one thing led to another and soon I was volunteering there on a regular basis. How they have tricked me, how they have lured me with their book-loving atmosphere, knowing very well that it will lead to a permanent addiction! But there is one person

I blame in particular, which with her cunning qualities could have done very well selling ice at the North pole if she wasn't a librarian. Her name is Suzy and when I "grow up" I want to be like her! Being the educated and likable person she is, we got along from the very first time (or maybe she just liked my compulsive tendencies for organizing things, I'll never know for sure). She made me realize what librarianship really meant and how a librarian could be something entirely different than the image I had in my mind.

I have held many different jobs and although I enjoyed most of them, but until now I have never had an epiphany when I suddenly realized " This is it, I can picture myself doing this for the rest of my life!" . I am a passionate person and being "in love" with my job is something very important to me. I believe that when a person loves her job, that changes the way she does that job for the better and everyone benefits from this. It makes the difference between just a person working in a library and a Librarian with a capital L!

I love my children more than anything and being with them, teaching them things and learning from them in return is the most important thing to me. Finding a job, that is as important and fulfilling for the time when I am away from my kids, was not an easy task, but I am sure I have found my calling. The reason I am sure is that working at the library feeds my mind and soul the way no other job did before. It gives me the chance to do what I like the most - help others, learn and teach interesting things every day, feel the excitement of a challenge, promote the love of reading and books in general, research and organize. I would like to be a librarian, because the work at the library makes me happy and complete, and to be paid for what brings me joy would only be a bonus. I have the skills, I have the desire, I have the multicultural background through travel and language learning, now I just need the knowledge that the MLIS program can provide. So back to the question, why I want to become a librarian. The answer is very simple - I want to become the librarian I would have loved to have met when I was young