

Penelope Teague
12th Grade
Classical Homeschool/Dual Credit at TCC
Oklahoma

What Drives Me

As an actress, musician, and writer, I am driven by stories. In my first show at eight years old, *Beauty and the Beast Jr.*, I played a knife. I was pretty much the star of the show, and it only got better from there! For the last eight years I have been a part of a non-profit organization called Courtyard Theater, which produces musicals, stage plays, and live-music shows with little kids and highschoolers. All the proceeds of Courtyard shows go to One To The Other Ministries (OTTOM), and Gold for Kids, a local cancer research charity. As I have acted, sung, played my banjo, and danced on stage, I have known that every minute of my hard work is going towards something greater.

Another great drive in my life has been writing for kids. My life and my writing have been largely influenced by authors like Kate DiCamillo, C.S. Lewis, Lemony Snicket, and J.K. Rowling. One of the best ways to influence the next generation with ideals of honor, truth, and courage is to do what they do: write children's novels. As a girl who read in abundance through her youth, I take to writing naturally, and plan to publish a children's novel series after I graduate college. In college, I plan to do study abroad and to study philosophy, history, and child psychology in order to elevate my writing to an influential quality. I am driven by the will to make a difference in the world. I want to give kids literary heroes upon whom they might reflect in times of need. I know I am only curious because Despereaux made me so. I am only kind because Lucy Pevensie taught me how to be. I know not to trust people with unibrows because Violet Baudelaire said not to. The point is: literature and the writing of literature is an impactful form of storytelling that drives me endlessly.

The stories I perform and write drive others to make their own stories better. I am driven by the stories of the people helped and healed by OTTOM and Gold for Kids, and even the stories of the people in the audience who have been impacted by my performances. There is no better feeling in the world than knowing I have made a difference in someone's life, or even in their day through the stories I tell. I believe that attending Abilene Christian University will be the catalyst that sets my goals into motion. The opportunities that have become available to me through ACU Honors College are thrilling, and, paired with my ambition, drive, and work-ethic, those opportunities will help me achieve my dreams. In my Vocal Performance audition, I knew that I was singing the introduction to what will be my greatest story yet, and the What Drives You scholarship will help me write it.