

LETTERS ABOUT LITERATURE

MASSACHUSETTS LEVEL II TOP HONORS 2009

Dear Anne Frank,

Your story has inspired millions. Your diary brings tears to the eyes of many. You're a figure of hope and courage across the nation. For a very long time, I thought that was a load of garbage. The more I heard people talking about how beautiful and life-changing your book was, the less I cared. I thought it was all propaganda. Of course, that changed when I actually read *Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl*.

When I started the book, I didn't understand you at all. You were stuck-up and rather twitty, and it seemed impossible that you could write something profound. Then, suddenly, everything changed. The story was so horrible; I refused to admit it was real. Once, after reading uninterrupted for a while, I started sobbing and had to go be comforted by my mom. But that only made things worse. There I was, being as loud as I needed and knowing that, if I just stopped reading, the nightmare would end. You couldn't do that. You went through puberty in an attic, full of dreams and wishes that would never come true. And as I neared the end of your diary, I was petrified. This story couldn't end. It just couldn't. Because the ending wouldn't just be the end of the story, Anne. It would be the end of your life. And yet, the ending came.

I reread your story just before school this year. In some ways, it was easier to read. I knew what was going to happen, so I was prepared for the scenes that had made me feel so terrible before. But rereading the book was difficult, too. It was really hard realizing that I'd grown older and wiser, and you hadn't. It was difficult to accept that you were going to be thirteen forever, never changing, never moving, just a teenage girl, long gone, captured in the pages of a book. That was all you'd ever be. So even if this second read-through didn't produce tears, I still had to go be comforted by my mother because of the numerous emotions this story brings out. I rethink my life every time I read it. And I know that, no matter how old I get and no matter how wise I become, you, the eternal child, will always have something to teach me.

I'll never be able to understand the thoughts and emotions that went through you. I'll never be able to say that I've had a similar experience or that your story isn't worth reading, but I am able to say that I'm a better person because of you, Anne Frank. Now I can see how devastating World War II was, and I can see the trials that people, my family included, were forced to undergo. Never again will I find myself able to shrug off the suffering of millions, and never again will I call your tale overrated. And you know what? On the bookshelf in my room, there is a book. It is called *Anne Frank Remembered*. No, I didn't write it. But I can read it – it and all the others of its kind that come my way. And I'll encourage other people to read them too because I know that, like *Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl*, they'll inspire people to become better versions of themselves. Anne, I know that you'll continue to touch lives, just as you've touched mine. And I only wish you could see what a large role your book has played in my life.

Rest well in eternal night.

Sincerely,

Sara

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