

LETTERS ABOUT LITERATURE

MASSACHUSETTS LEVEL I HONORABLE MENTION 2009

Dear Wendelin Van Draanen,

I'm a "normal" kid. I'm trying to survive school like everyone else in my grade. I'm an A and B student, so I'm doing well. I care a lot about my grades like most kids. I didn't really think about what other people were thinking. *Flipped* changed all that.

The book surprised me because it was two completely different perspectives about one event. I went to school the next day thinking how we all have our own perspectives. Two of my classmates, Nick and Jeff, were fighting. Jeff said Nick knocked over his stuff on purpose, but Nick said he didn't mean to. I was able to speak up and remind them to think about each other's perspectives. They agreed Nick did it by accident but should be more careful. Nick ended up being my friend.

I now realize that I'm not "normal." There is no "normal" kid! Maybe people like school. Maybe kids don't care if they get an F or an A. I already knew that people are different, but this book showed me how different we really are.

When I read how Julianna's uncle had his umbilical cord wrapped around his neck and how it happened to Bryce, I asked my mom if my birth went smoothly. She said something devastating. She told me, "you almost died at birth because you were so sick. I was sick, too, and I almost died when you were born. The doctor that took care of you saved our lives." I still have that doctor today. It made me feel more grateful that I'm alive, more grateful to the doctor who saved me, and more grateful about almost everything.

I went to school the next day thinking about a girl in my class named Hannah who has a disability. People made fun of her all the time, which I thought was rude. That day someone tacked her chair. Now that I'm in the next grade up, a kid named Timothy from my last grade told me he tacked her chair. He told me with pride, actual pride, that he tacked her chair. He was never caught and that makes me furious. I wish I could do something about it, but I would have to tell someone who cared or even could do anything about it. I would have to go back to fifth grade to do so, but that is impossible.

Your book changed my life. It gave me new friends like Nick and told me who to look out for like Timothy. It made me realize new things. It made everyone not "normal." It made me me.

Sincerely,

Cade

Cade Devlin
Briscoe Middle School
Grade 6