

# LETTERS ABOUT LITERATURE

MASSACHUSETTS LEVEL I HONORS 2009

Dear Ms. Lowry,

I always believed that World War II was a war between groups of different countries fighting over a problem. Reading *Number the Stars* changed the way I forever viewed this war, history, my heritage, and the world we inhabit. I found myself spellbound while turning each page as Ellen and Annemarie, girls about my age, found themselves in a frightening situation that I could have never imagined happening. The chronicle had unique meaning to me as my great-grandparents escaped pogroms in Russia and traveled to the safety of the United States with their children. They were forced to leave behind their close friends and beloved family members, never to see them again. Unfortunately, many of their friends and family who stayed in Russia were killed simply because of their religion. Your character, Ellen, similar to my great-grandparents, had to leave behind her adored friend Annemarie because of the Nazis who also hated the Jews. When Ellen had to flee her home because the Nazis wanted to kill all of the Jews, I started thinking about how lucky I am to be living in the United States in 2008 and not in a place where I would be forced to escape because I was frightened. I am one-half Jewish and proud of this part of my heritage. In all of my eleven years, no one has ever been mean to me or treated me disrespectfully due to my religious beliefs. The lesson Annemarie and Ellen taught me is that I am privileged to reside in a place in the world where I, as well as all citizens, am free to believe what I want and where all people are free to worship in the manner they choose. *Number the Stars* provided me with appreciation for the enjoyment of my friends and family, and it left me grateful that I am not judged by my religious beliefs.

Sincerely yours,

*Samantha*

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