

Dear Lois Lensky,

Your book *Indian Captive* gave me wings of hope, courage and understanding. I have learned about Native Americans a lot and I've loved to learn their cultures. There were many things that through research I still couldn't really understand. I could understand why they did things certain ways, and how and what they did, but it still needed more of an explanation. When I read your book my thoughts about life changed.

I have never been taken and held captive before, but for some reason I could understand Mary's feelings. The way you feel when you seem to have gotten lost or not know where your family is-- feeling alone, even just for a split second. Your mind starts racing on a track. You get a panicky feeling and you feel like your heart is ready to break through your skin. I've felt this before when I was in a store and I stopped to look at something and I turned back and my family wasn't there. That sudden feeling -- until I turned the other way, and they were right there all along. Always with me, and I return to feeling safe and sound. Then I stayed as close to them as possible.

I have always treasured my family so much. But as soon as you think you've lost them, you treasure them even more. Your book made me understand how your family is the best treasure you have. I've learned that family is built with everyone, not just relatives by blood.

Through your story I have learned that people you meet can become family. Just like Mary discovered at the end of the book that the Native Americans are her family, too. We all may think sometimes that someone you meet can't possibly become family, like Mary did with the Native Americans, but once you get to know them like she did they truly can. A teacher who has taught you many things has showed that they care for you. A doctor who brings you back to health so you can get back to doing all the things you can do is part of you. Your best friend standing at your side cheering you on, and still there through thick or thin can feel like a sister.

The true meaning of family is the people who show love and care for you --who encourage you, who help you. Until now I never really thought of family this way. I have hope for good things to come, courage for what I think is best for myself, and I have understanding of the true meaning of family just like Mary. Your book gave me wings to be lifted, by knowing that I have family all around me, all the time.

Sincerely,

*Abryanna Mills*