

# Massachusetts Letters About Literature Honors, | 2011 Level I

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Dear Trenton Lee Stewart.

Your book, *The Mysterious Benedict Society*, changed my life in a significant way. When I read this book, I was feeling extremely down on myself. I was in a class with none of my close friends and I felt shyer than ever before. I had always been shy, but never like how I felt at this moment. I needed encouragement to overcome my shyness. Your book, *The Mysterious Benedict Society*, made me feel more confident about myself.

I made strong connections with the main character, Reynie, a boy who always felt left out and wanted to have an adventure and to build confidence, just like me. Reynie always looked at things from a *different* perspective. He never had any friends and he was shy. I struggled with the problem of shyness too; but this book showed me that being shy isn't always a bad thing. After reading *The Mysterious Benedict Society*. I knew that I could never look at shyness the same way. When I read the book, I never expected shy Reynie to be a hero, but he was. I never expected to be a hero either, but I realized that I was heroic. I call myself a hero because of what I do in my ordinary life: I help people out, I do my work, I read for more knowledge, and I don't treat people badly. Before reading Reynie's story, I felt like I was a boring book with no hero and no ending; a shy and boring book that went on forever. I felt like a book that was left on the shelf and never read. I felt like I was catching dust on the shelf. That is what I truly felt like. After comparing myself to Reynie, I felt more like a best-selling novel.

When I finished reading *The Mysterious Benedict Society*, something changed inside of me. I felt happier and more confident. In no time I started making new friends that I still hang out with today. I sat at a table in a lunch room that only had one person at it. I initiated a conversation with that boy. I truly wanted to be his friend. The more we talked, the more we found out about each other. I learned that he had the same problems that I did. We immediately connected and became friends. I would never have initiated a friendship if not for your book. I could compare my new friend and I to Reynie and Sticky; instant friends.

This one book showed me that you don't have to be the most outgoing or most popular person to be a hero. I have confidence today and I learned some of that confidence from reading *The Mysterious Benedict Society*. My life would not be the same without your book. If I never grabbed your book off the top shelf, my life would not be the same. Thank you for producing not just an amazing book, but also a book that will always stay in my heart forever.

Thank You,

Joseph

**Joseph DiStasio, Grade 6  
Holten Richmond Middle School, Danvers**