

Massachusetts Letters About Literature 2016
Massachusetts Center for the Book
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Level I Honors Award

Dear N.H. Senzai,

I had never thought about the world that way I do now. Before, I thought that all people had fun coming to America, that it was like a vacation. Happily grinning like a child on Christmas day, they would walk into a new life, new house and enjoy a new place. But Fadi and his family did not have that kind of experience. None of them wanted to leave Afghanistan, and when they came to America it was no vacation. *Shooting Kabul* helped me open my eyes and realize what was going on around me.

If an immigrant from Asia or the Middle East came to our school at the beginning of fifth grade, unfortunately, I would not have tried to get to know them. I wouldn't care if they were fleeing from a war. Because I read your book, I realized all the hardships anyone could face coming to America. It has changed my perspective immensely. I was wrong before to think it was like a vacation. Now, if an immigrant came to my school, I would definitely want to become friends with them. I would want to know everything about where they came from. Even though I never experienced what immigrants have, your book has given me a better understanding of what they have gone through.

Now I know that many people come to America for a better life than they lead before. They want to turn a new leaf, and to use their knowledge for something better like Fadi's father. Or they want to come for better rights, like women's rights, affordable education, and fairness for everyone no matter their beliefs. Currently, there are many Middle Eastern refugees trying to flee their country and escape to other countries. They are fleeing because of all the war going on and the bad influences in the government. They want a better life, a safer environment to live in, and to be in the hands of good leaders.

Reading your book enlightened me to the world around me and everything going on. Now when I watch the news I understand what and who it is about. I know that distressing events are occurring, and that everyone is different and has different backgrounds. Your book changed my way of thinking towards how and why someone comes to the US. I now have a much better understanding of the world around me, so thank you.

Sincerely,

Gigi

Gigi
Wellesley
Grade 6