

Massachusetts Letters About Literature 2016

Massachusetts Center for the Book

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Level II Honors Award

Dear Mindy Kaling,

Thank you for unlocking the deepest, darkest secrets of life and sharing them with me. Not only have you changed the way I view the world, but the way I view myself. I greatly appreciate you and everything you do.

I am going to let you in on a little secret, Mindy. I am ordinary. Undeniably, absolutely ordinary. I live in a small town that people do not usually travel far from. Usually a couple comes here, has kids, and lives here for the rest of their lives only for their kids to do the same. I am not against the people who live here, they live happy lives doing ordinary things, good for them. But the thing is, I am not one of them, I always seem to have this uneasy feeling that I do not belong. But my greatest fear is that once I (hopefully) leave this town, if there is a way out (haha, no seriously), I will just be a sad, delusional girl with unrealistic dreams. Sometimes people become so accustomed to life around them, they stay isolated in a small town, with no real big dreams of the future. It is so incredibly common for people in my town to think, "My parents grew up here, they were happy, it's a good place to raise kids, we might as well stay". Not many people think about the future of themselves, or of the person they want to become, or what goals they would like to achieve. So many people are fine with just living an "okay" or "good" life, but here's the thing, I want to live a great life. I want to make a difference, but I have always struggled with how I'm going to make that difference. I am constantly questioning, "What is going to get me to the place I need to be in order to be happy?", and I am often pulled back by the people around me, they believe they do not have an eventful future, why should I?

Your book has changed my perspective on what it means to be ordinary. You have made me recognize that everyone starts out ordinary. Almost everyone has grown up in a small town living an ordinary life with no real feeling of what the "big bad world" is really like, a.k.a the city. Everyone is accustomed to believe that famous people grew up in mansions or had this wonderful life that destined them to be famous. But practically every famous person was once ordinary, just a common person living a common life. However, they were the ones who had big dreams and were willing to work hard to accomplish them. Now I'm not telling you I want to grow up to be ridiculously famous, believe me I don't. I just want to be happy, I want to have the feeling that I am constantly making a difference in people's lives, that I am doing something to benefit other people. You grew up in a small town, studied hard, are not sporty whatsoever, kind of socially awkward, and had big dreams that you desperately wanted to achieve. All those characteristics could be used to describe me, so basically we are the same person (haha), but my goal is not to be the next Mindy Kaling (although no one could ever pull that off, even if they tried), it is just to get somewhere, to do something that will make me happy. It was so refreshing to hear about your past, because it is very similar to my present. You have given me this hope that someday I can actually make it in the real world, that I can do something that will make a difference in people's lives around me. You have reminded me I can do anything if I'm willing to work for it, and it doesn't matter where you come from, it matters where you're going. Except you are not like most famous people, Mindy, because you make an effort to not forget about who you really are. So thank you, for teaching me just how far dreams can take you, and to work hard when I want to achieve my goals, and to never lose sight of myself. Also thanks for wording your entire book in a really cool way so it does not make you sound like a parent or a cliché. Stay amazing.

Sincerely,

Charlotte

Charlotte
Marblehead
Grade 8