

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

Dear J.K. Rowling,

Are the thoughts you think original? Are they put there by you, and you alone? Do you imagine what could be, or what is? For all of your characters (and me as well) the Harry Potter series is a touching and deeply woven coming of age story. At the end of the series, Harry understood himself, Ron found himself content with being a part of his family, Hermione was as loyal as she was smart, Neville believed in himself, and I? I had all of the latter, and much more. By reading the entire Harry Potter collection, I gathered lessons and teachings not just about magic and spells, but also important things regarding the world we live in today. **Probably the most important was that we see only what we want to see.**

Before I read Harry's story, and before I started to really enjoy books, that's what I saw, every day. I saw my toys and I saw my bedroom and my school. I saw chairs and tables and white boards and dress up clothes – it was what I wanted to see. When I was younger, my imagination was limited to things I could see, touch. I was only a princess when I wore Cinderella's dress. I was only an architect when I built with Legos. I only saw colors when I visited an art museum.

Then, one rather fortunate Saturday in third grade, I went to a fair, and came home with a shiny copy of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. At the time, I was starting to read chapter books, and although my father pleaded with me to read it, your book intimidated me to a point where I downright refused to ever give it a chance. However, my dad persisted, and I had begun to get sourly annoyed by his requests. So, I took the book off my bedside and brushed the dust away. I read the first page. And the next. And the next. After long, I couldn't stop.

At first, all I thought I had taken from the book was an obsession. But I realized – now I was seeing what I wanted to see, and not in the way I was before. Now, instead of white boards I saw canvases, and instead of pencils, I saw instruments. Now, my thoughts were completely original, and not given to me by a physical presence. I saw beyond what I could touch. In my head I imagined improvements, combinations, and colors everywhere. My creativity began flowing. I started reading more and more, and even tried my hand at writing, only to discover that it brought me the same happiness that reading did. Then came drawing, and constructing, and singing. I grew so much, and I now have so many better qualities within myself.

Now, the more I look back, the more I find. I can read the map backwards, to my starting point: Harry Potter. I grew up with Harry, and unlocked things about myself that even I didn't know. Thank you so very much for handing me the key. And thanks to my father as well, for insisting I use it. I now see whatever I want to see and I now walk about my daily life with colors bursting around me, and imaginary ribbons dancing through my vision.

Characters pulled from the depths of your imagination have taught me that even though it may be happening inside my head, that doesn't mean it isn't real.

Sincerely,

Grace

Grace
Cambridge
Grade 7