

Merrill Middle School
Des Moines, Iowa

Dear Pam Munoz Ryan,

Before I read your book, Esperanza Rising, teasing was a part of daily life, but I never really noticed it. At school someone would get teased in a joking way. The victim of the teasing might laugh it off on the outside, but deep inside they might feel hurt. You made me realize this. Your book captured my soul with powerful words and real characters. I think your book can change the way people think about discrimination. At least, I know you changed mine.

Esperanza Rising lifted me above the cloud of hate, and revealed the good in everybody's heart, whether we are short or tall, black or white. You changed my life by making me realize that even small, discrimination hurts. I know because I have been discriminated against because of my race. I was called stupid for being Chinese. I can assure you it hurt. You made me remember that incident. Now I put myself into others' shoes, and ask myself these questions, "What do they feel like right now?" or, "Would I want someone to do that to me?"

You've changed my view of others and myself. Now I watch my actions that they're not selfish and self-centered. I watch my words that they're not hurtful. I truly want to show my gratitude for all the lessons you've taught me. Thanks you.

Sincerely,

Ruth Minahan