

Meridith Graham
Atlantic IA High School

Dear Joanne Rowling,

I sat there, an incessantly gnawing hole growing in my stomach, the last page turned. Forlorn, emptiness, *yearning*: all words trying to depict the indescribable feeling I get after reading one of those rare books that leave me with it. Then there's more, there's the feeling while I'm reading; the rush, the anticipation, that part where you get so caught up you're barely skimming the words to discover what lies next. Those are the kind of books that affect me, for a life time. Only few books accomplish attaining the two feelings – the Harry Potter series one of them. After finishing each book it left me with the indescribable feeling, yearning for even more to get rid of the empty space.

Nearing my eleventh birthday, I admit, I secretly, desperately hoped that an owl would swoop by my window, and leave behind a one way ticket to the words you wrote. I wished nothing more than that piece of parchment, telling me that I would soon be in Diagon Alley, buying a wand, a caldron, and all my new Hogwarts school supplies. Most of all, it would tell me that it was real. When my birthday came and passed, I was only (as I'm sure many eleven year olds across the world were) let down at this false hope. I even tried making up excuses that the owl had flown threw bad weather, and was just a little late. But the letter never came, and I was crushed. For a while I even stopped reading the books, knowing that I would never be a part of them. I thought it would end right then and there, but it was only the beginning of where they would leave me.

About five years ago is when I first stepped into Harry Potter's world. Since then I've read the series seven times, going on eight. They never seem to get tiring. Every time I reread it I marvelously catch something new I mistakenly missed before. I could relate to Harry's deficiency in Potions, I was the same in math. I felt right along with him when he received his short-of-even-alright O.W.L.'s, while I was doing just as heinous in math. Hogwarts was my dream world, it's the fantasy I'd imagine and play over in my head before I went to sleep. It helped me more than just relate though, it opened my eyes to creative writing. Your words did more than give me something to read, they *inspired* and *taught* me. There are so many notable coincidences, death clues, and oddities that many people haven't even realized or appreciated. Who knew that an anagram of Remus Lupin is Primus Lunes? Which in Latin translates to full moon, and he's a werewolf. Those little things taught me appreciation for literary books by seeing all the organization, planning, and intellectual aspects in yours. Not only did they teach me about writing, they helped me write. A little over a year ago I actually even got into writing myself. It connected the nascent skill synapses and ignited inspiration. And my writing, grammar, and vocabulary have improved dramatically because of it.

Reading one of the Harry Potter books is like first chewing on a fresh piece of peppermint gum: for a while you love it, so you just keep chewing. But when you're handed a new piece of the same gum, you're reawakened to the thrilling taste. Last summer it was almost exactly like that when I received the unmarked, brand new copy of

Harry Potter and The Half-Blood Prince. So now I am sitting here, anticipating and longing for the crisp smell of freshly printed paper, the gilded pages of the last Harry Potter book. Contradicting my mind, I'm actually craving for the indescribable hole in my stomach that I'll be abandoned once again. Only because I read one great piece of literature that changed my life and made me see past just the basic. Thanks Joanne Rowling, for not only making me a better writer and more innovative, but for giving me a greater imagination.

With care,
Meridith Graham

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