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Dear Wendy Mass,

You've felt lonely but complete, haven't you? If you didn't truly feel, then you wouldn't have written *A Mango Shaped Place*. I feel it too. Every word had love and care, every word had feeling. Mia is my age and I can really relate to her. I lost my great-grandpa two years ago, and I couldn't enjoy a cool lemonade or the smell of a flower without thinking what he would say or what joke he'd make. I couldn't be myself until I read your book. Now I know that you just need to let go and start over. Holding on to something so long, keeping a secret too big to hide, can make things even worse.

Envy runs through my veins, my eyes searching for what she sees, what Mia feels. Being in the minority is good, most of the time, especially in my grade. Everyone works together, all in the same machine, all in the same factory, all in the same business. They all focus on the outside, not bothering to dig a little deeper where the true gold lies. Mia was too good for Adam. He seemed nice through e-mail, but all he wanted was the body, not the broken soul inside. I about screamed! He better watch out, because right now I could give him something I know how to use! Attitude! Kids at my school are just like that! How can they be so narrow-minded when there's a whole playground outside their front door?

You probably already know where I fall into place. I like to stand out, live life on end. Yes, I do have a weird family. Jaicee, 10, loves to clean the toilet, and Rye, one, has a head about the size of mine. With all of their flaws, you can't help but love them. Were you ever teased while growing up? See, the older part of my family was. Just because someone is better than you, or different, doesn't open the door to the dragon inside our hearts, right?

Wendy Mass, I thank you most kindly for reading my thoughts and for writing this book for others. Your book brought me out of the gutter, bringing me back to the light. I hope I can do that with my words someday, opening a new door, or creating a new space for all.

Until we meet again,  
Madelyn L. Vincent

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