

Merrill Middle School
Des Moines, Iowa

Dear Andrew Clements,

Thomas Jefferson wrote in the Constitution, "We the people." He didn't write "We the white people" or "we the colored people." Your book The Jacket changed my thinking about racism. It would be tough during the 50's living in the south when you're black. People didn't treat blacks well. This issue has changed, but it needs to continue.

Rosa Parks died October 25, 2005, just as I began writing. She didn't give up her seat like Daniel didn't give up his jacket. Your book also changed my thinking that everyone should have equal opportunity. Whites shouldn't exclude blacks or try to take control of blacks. Whites shouldn't be allowed to do one thing and blacks do something else.

I learned from your book that I need to treat others like I treat myself. I also learned not to judge people by their looks or appearances. It's like judging a car by its looks. It might look like a cool car, but when you drive it the brakes are bad. You have to buy a new car because the car didn't work. If you hadn't chosen the car by the outside, you wouldn't have to spend more money. You can't do that.

Thomas Jefferson wrote "We the people" for a reason. He wanted people to know that America needs to be a place where people can have equal opportunity. Your words made my life change, and I'm sure it changed many others' thinking about racism. I thank you for that.

Sincerely

Will Hemminger