

Walbert High School
Dubuque, Iowa

Dear Forrest Carter

I've never really liked human beings as a species. We pollute, we destroy, we fight each other, and we take from the environment for our own personal gain. Okay, I exaggerated a little. People aren't really all that bad – it's just the few not-so-nice ones that ruin it for everyone else (you probably know one of these.) But I believe I've made my point. We, as a species, really haven't taken good care of what we've been given. Your book "the Education of little Tree" showed me that there are some good people out there and that if we listen to those people we can turn ourselves around and start down the right path. I learned many things from reading it.

"The Way" in particular, was very enlightening. If all people only took what they needed and nothing more the world would be a much better place. We don't *need* to buy huge wasteful vehicles to show off our wealth or look good; cars were invented as a method of travel. We don't *need* to have the option to "Super size." We don't *need* extra strength paper towels. These are things that we *want* to have, so we can make our lives easier. I think we would be better off if things weren't so easy. The way Grandpa and Grandma live is my preferred lifestyle. I love books where the characters live off the land and are in harmony with their environment (I don't like to think of myself as a "city slicker," but I am.) From doing farm work I know that you get a certain feeling of gratification when you get a big job done (such as spreading leaves over the corn field.)

I also learned that nothing is as simple as "good" and "bad"; people do what they need to to survive.

When I read about Grandpa's "trade" I saw things from a different perspective. I used to think that the whiskey tax and prohibition were just to keep crazy hillbillies out of trouble, but in fact it put many people out of jobs. Even though they were breaking the law, they still weren't doing anything wrong; the government was actually going against its own Constitutional beliefs.

This is a great book, and I think everyone should read it. If everyone followed the lessons learned in it the world would be closer to perfect (the human part of it, anyway.) I truly was changed by your book. The huge amount of life lesson to be learned by reading it is simply staggering.

I was wondering: do you have any other books out? I'd really like to read another one of your works. I'm looking to learn some more lessons.

Sincerely,

Max White