

Austin Bolinger  
Creston, IA, St. Malachy

Dear Harriette,

You really changed my view for African Americans and what they had to go through just so whites (like me) would see them as equals, in Walking to the Bus-Rider Blues. I am really thankful for getting a chance to hear this book read to me aloud.

Before I heard this book I use to think of African Americans as people but never associated myself with them. Now, after hearing your book, I see them as equals that never gave up to get what they definitely deserved. I can not wait to show African Americans that I will not treat them like my ancestors, for I am beyond that. I can not even imagine people treating others like they did in the years before now.

I got to take a ride into a life of an African American's life style in America, to see what they went through. It seemed so real that I kept having to remind myself that it was fiction. Yet it really wasn't. That is what you have helped me see. You wrote it as historical fiction so my weak stomach could take it but get a sense of the reality too.

I have heard of Martin Luther King Jr., but I never got a real sense of what really went on, until I heard your book. I use to think of it as a time where a man spoke up and got what he wanted. Period. Now I see it as a time of hardship and pain for the African Americans, who fought for what is right. Then, after a long time, they slowly got what they deserved.

I can not even come close to Alpha's troubles. I mean I have troubles that I think are greater then everyone else's. I have times where I think I am being treated unfairly or rotten, but it all does not even compare to what African Americans had to go through. I have a home, clothes, food, money, and things to do for fun, all in abundance.

Even though Alpha is fiction, I can connect and feel his pain, even though I can not compare with my life.

I just can not express all that your book has taught me, opened my mind to, and helped me understand.

Thanks,

Austin Bolinger

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