

Alyssa Bignall  
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Dear Julie Anne Peters,

One day when I was at the library I happened to come across your book Far from Xanadu. It caught my attention so I picked it up and read the back. It looked interesting so I checked it out. I never thought that a book could change the way you see the world or yourself, but your book definitely did that for me.

I have never been prejudiced toward gay people or thought that they were abnormal. I just didn't think that much about it. I never knew what it would be like to be gay. I thought that it might feel really different from being straight.

I get really nervous around the guy that I like, I'll call him Tyler, and I often chicken out of talking to him. When we do talk I can never think of anything to say. It was the same way with Mike. She always got tongue-tied and nervous when Xanadu was around. Mike wanted to tell Xanadu how she felt about her, but didn't for a long time because she was afraid of rejection. I'm the same way with Tyler. After reading her story I realize that Mike and I have a lot in common in how we act around people we are attracted to. Your book made me realize that all people have the same kinds of feelings. The only difference is that some people are attracted to the same instead of opposite gender.

I've always avoided participating in jokes that make fun of gay people. But, now when people say things like "that's so gay" about something they don't like I think of Mike. Since about 10% of the population is gay it makes me think about all my friends and classmates that aren't straight or are unsure if they are. It must be very hard for them, while still trying to figure out and accept their own sexuality, to hear "gay jokes" on a daily basis. Knowing this makes me want to stop being a bystander when I hear gay jokes and try to stop them. I want people to know that not everyone thinks that gay jokes are funny. Also I want my friends to know that I'll be there for them if they need me.

Having read Far From Xanadu I have realized that Mike and I have a lot in common and it doesn't have anything to do with our sexuality. As a result this book changed the way I think and the way I want to act. I now know that being gay or straight doesn't affect the way you act toward people you are attracted to. I'm now also more aware of how people I know that aren't straight are affected by gay jokes.

Your book changed me for the better. I hope that the changes in me and my actions will not only make my life better but others too.

Sincerely,  
Alyssa Bignall