

authors out there who shared their imaginations with us. I hope to myself become a published author someday soon.

L E V E L T W O



Jordan Borg, Age 12, Grade 7
Wilma Cavitt Junior High School
Granite Bay, CA

Dear Natasha Friend,

Thank you so very much for bringing the book *Perfect* into this world, because not only myself, but also many other girls my age could really use the messages it portrays. Before I read your story, I felt very insecure about myself because I am a little bit bigger than most of the “twigs” that are my friends. Plus, I entered junior high this year and it is very hard for me to adjust to the many changes, without having that feeling that I need to be perfect. A lot of girls that I know are like Ashley, in your story, and just appeal to me and many other kids as a flawless, beautiful, perfect, and smart human being. When I’m up against them, I feel like I am a little microscopic insect with no life, waiting to get squished by one of their expensive shoes. Reading *Perfect* helped me overcome feeling like an insect, and I’m thankful for it. The other important message that I received from reading *Perfect* is that it is better to be yourself than trying hard to be someone else. In the section of *Perfect* where Isabelle, the main character, goes shopping with Ashley and buys hundreds of dollars worth of expensive clothes, it reminded me of the experience I went through a few months ago about clothes shopping for school. I felt like I was going to die because I thought I didn’t have the right clothes for school. So I fell for the voice inside my head and went shopping for the expensive clothes that would supposedly make me look better. Now looking back on that, I see that it was a poor decision because I have friends who like me for who I am, not the way I dress. *Perfect* helped me realize that I am just as good as any of those girls who appear to be super-human, and that I don’t have to be very skinny or have the right clothes to lead a good social life, and have a successful school year. Now I feel so much better about myself and have so much more self-esteem. Today I look in the mirror and see a beautiful girl rather than some monster or something ugly. When I picked up this wonderful novel, I read it because it sounded like a very interesting book. Now that I have finished *Perfect*, I realize (apart from it being an excellent story) that it actually helped me deal with the small problems I was facing about what I thought of my overall body image.

I play the trombone and cello and am hopeful to attend the Julliard School of Arts to become a professional musician who plays in the Hollywood Studio Symphony Orchestra. I love to read and write as it allows me to explore different universes. I enjoy singing in the Sacramento Children's Chorus and playing girls lacrosse.

L E V E L T W O



Teresa Castillo, Age 13, Grade 8
Marina del Rey Middle School
Los Angeles, CA

Dear Mr. Pelzer,

It touched my heart and made a great impact in my life. I fell in love with your phenomenal story, *A Child Called It*.

Now I see a whole other side of this very cruel world, thanks to your outstanding memoir. It opened my eyes, and made me see how young innocent children can get mistreated. You welcomed me into your rough childhood that truly touched my heart. It was as if I was in the story, and felt all your pain. I cried, and I felt your pain through every punch, torture, and tears you shed.

My mother and brother don't get along much. My mom may not hurt him physically, but she doesn't show him love. I have to go through that and I can relate to you. It hurts to see the two people I love the most in the world argue, not hug each other, or even say the simple words "I love you." Thanks to you Mr. Pelzer, you motivate me every single day to not give up, and see that my family is not the only unperfected people in the world. I'm comfortable and I don't have to hide that cops came to my house before and so have social workers. Now that I know that there are many others out there that have gone through that it relieves me. I would act as if my life was just as normal as my peers in elementary school, and sometimes even now. I was confused and didn't know if that's what happened to their family as well or if I was ever going to see my brothers again, or if it was my fault. I didn't know, honestly! I was just a young child and as confused as you were.

I am not the type of girl who loves to read, but when I was looking for a book that I was supposedly going to read, *A Child Called It* caught my eye. Little did I know I was going to be so interested in your childhood. Once I started reading, I just couldn't get my eyes off it and had to keep reading and reading wanting to find out what was going to happen to poor little David next.

You have made me a more loving and caring 13 year old. I can picture your amazing story, you not knowing whether this or that was happening because of your fault. Although your mom hit you, and my mom doesn't hit my brother, there's no