

I have a luxurious life but sometimes luxury isn't that great. I rely on other people to do things I could possibly do. It's like being a queen and Hattie is definitely not a queen.

But the real thing that caught me about *Hattie Big Sky* was its ending. I do not want to tell it to everybody but it was the most touching part of the book, the part I related to the most. You see, my family just built a house and thought we were going to stay here forever. We had dreams for it, but we had to sell it and we're moving out in three days. Like Hattie, I will not throw a tantrum when I leave because leaving is just another bump. Hattie is ready for another adventure. I am glad she faces herself west on the train. I am ready for another adventure, too. Hopefully, I am going to be as strong as Hattie.

Thank you again for your book *Hattie Big Sky*.

Sincerely,
Eleanore Hamilton

I love to ski, swim, write, sew, make art, and play violin. I have seven cousins and when we see each other every Monday night at my grandma and grandpa's house, we love to make dances and skits with each other. When I grow up I want to be an astronaut. There's so much to discover in space. There's the feeling of openness and flight. I have always wanted to fly.

L E V E L 1



HONORABLE MENTION, LEVEL 1

Katelynn Kelly, Grade 5
Andersen Elementary School
Newport Beach

A Voice of Her Own: Becoming Emily Dickinson, Barbara Dana

Dear Barbara Dana,

A Voice of Her Own: Becoming Emily Dickinson is a tale of courage, sorrow, and honor. I have trouble with anger, as I know Emily does from reading your book. Until I read your book, I could never control my actions or emotions. My words were hurtful to others and I hated just standing there after I crushed somebody's hopes or dreams. Your book gave me new inspiration to work on controlling this matter. Finding out that I was not the only one with this problem was a major relief to me. I kept on trying to achieve my goal even after I finished your book with one of Emily Dickinson's inspiring messages wired into my mind: "I was bursting with the joy of words, of what they could do, of what I could do by putting them together in countless ways."

Now at a comfortable stage with my anger, I became silent, moody, depressed, and negative. My aunt had just passed away putting me in a foul mood. I spent countless nights mourning in my room over my loss. I just wanted to have time left with her,

to be able to really appreciate her before it was too late. I had never really thought much of writing before now, but now I turned to it along with reading anytime I was feeling miserable. I reread your book many times during that period and really began to understand what it was about. The characters in your book had to face all I have had to and much more, living in that time of sadness that your book describes where they didn't have the resources or blessings that we now do, and I realized my problems are very small compared to what they or probably ninety percent of the modern world has to face. Though out of all the characters in your book that each held a little part of me in them, I felt I was closest to Emily, an innocent girl growing up quickly just like me.

Then we moved. I missed everything that I had ever known especially my friends, home, and school. The single thing that I missed the most, though, was the trees illuminated against my window protecting me from all evil and harm. I would sit on empty nights in my new house huddled in the corner remembering life before we moved. It was then that I realized that life is just a story on the big screen, and my actions really can make a difference. Writing is my escape from all this, because in writing anything is possible. As Emily Dickinson herself said, "I am proud of my writing. I was getting a sense of saying a thing just so and no more. It was a thrill—a secret thrill—as no one knew but me." That alone is the power that writing can grant you! Unlimited opportunities to bring your story to life!

*Sincerely,
Katelynn Kelly*

I would like to work in the legal business someday because I think it would be wonderful to have a world where everybody cared and supported our planet and I would like to enforce this idea in the future. I love to read and write and enjoy Mrs. Robert's writing class very much. I never would have read this book without her encouraging me to try a book out of my comfort zone. She helped make this honor possible for me.

L E V E L 1



HONORABLE MENTION, LEVEL 1

**Kaitlyn Xiong, Grade 6
Deerfield Elementary School
Irvine**

The Tale of Despereaux, Kate DiCamillo

Dear Mrs. Kate DiCamillo,

Many times in my life, I felt like I could be more courageous, But I never really succeeded until I read your book, *The Tale of Despereaux*. Everything seemed so different. I felt like I could actually do something instead of always holding back.