



Natalie Chen, Grade 5
Heritage Academy
Los Altos

Martin the Warrior, Brian Jacques

Dear Mr. Jacques,

When I first picked up your book *Martin the Warrior* I never wanted to stop reading it. The story was intense with action and emotion. I felt like bursting out laughing whenever the Rambling Rosehip Players performed, and bursting into tears when the searats killed Felldoh the squirrel. I was relieved when Rose sent the dipper for help, and shocked when Druwp discovered the escaping slaves. However, the part of the story that impacted me the most was when Badrang killed Rose, Martin's closest friend. I was touched by his feelings of loneliness and loss. Reading about Martin's kind heart towards Rose surprisingly softened my own hard heart toward my grandfather.

Unfortunately, my grandfather was diagnosed with lung cancer in 2004. Unlike Martin's close relationship with Rose, my relationship with my grandfather was distant. Every time I visited my grandparents' house, I would talk to them a little bit, but not want to have a full conversation with them. I loved my grandfather, but I never really showed him. When he became sick, I didn't do anything to help him. When I read how much Martin cared for Rose, I realized that I should have cared more for my grandfather while he was still alive. My cold heart had kept me from truly loving my grandfather, which greatly disappointed me.

Martin eventually continued on in life but Rose's death transformed him. He was changed from a warrior into a peaceful mouse. I was also changed by my grandfather's death. My heart of stone was softening into a heart of flesh. Even though I was disappointed in myself, I was also relieved because hopefully this would not happen again in the future. In the past, I would avoid interacting with my elders. Now I realize that getting to know them is something that I want to do.

Thank you, Mr. Jacques, for writing *Martin the Warrior*. It has really helped me to change my heart and to care more about others.

Sincerely,
Natalie Chen

I am 11 years old and currently attending Heritage Academy in Los Altos, California. I live with my dad, my mom, and my older brother. My hobbies are writing, art, and reading. I love spending time with my family, whether we are skiing, playing games, watching movies, or traveling together. When I graduate from college, I would like to either earn a teaching degree or become an author.