

Dear Jerry Spinelli,

My favorite color is pink. I have long, curly hair. I like kitties and bunnies. I have an American Girl Doll. My favorite sneakers are black with pink stripes. All pretty normal stuff for a girl. But I am a boy. And that is why when I read Stargirl I cry with joy.

Everything started in Third Grade when I decided to grow my hair in for Locks of Love. Up until that time I was a normal kid in my class with lots of friends. When I told everyone that I was going to do it, they didn't believe me. But when I came back from summer vacation at the start of Fourth Grade with hair down to my shoulders, all the trouble started.

Suddenly people who had been my friends started making fun of me and calling me a girl, or worse, telling me I was gay. I tried really hard to disregard their mean talk and it REALLY didn't bother me too much, but the more I ignored them the worse it got.

When I came back for Fifth Grade my hair was even longer and the teasing got worse. But then, my teacher read Stargirl to the class. Most of the boys in the class moaned and groaned when they heard the title, but by the end of the story we wanted to read it again.

Around this time I also got my hair cut off for the Locks of Love donation. When I arrived at school the next day, all of the kids who had made fun of me were crowding around me wanting to be my best friend. I let them, because I knew I would grow it again and I didn't want the hardship.

Now I am in Middle School and my hair is once again shoulder-length. I thought it would be easier this time, but I was disheartened to find out the Middle School kids are 10 times worse. I have been physically threatened, verbally abused, and kids have thrown stuff at me in the cafeteria.

Yesterday in Art class I was one of two kids that got a 100 on a test. The teacher asked the class to clap for us. The other person got clapped for but no one clapped for me. When stuff like this happens, I think of Stargirl and it makes me smile. Thanks for helping me smile through the rough times.

Sincerely,

James Dal Santo