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Dear Mr. Spinelli,

I didn't wear the "coolest" clothes. I wasn't very good friends with "popular girls" in my school. I wore glasses and was soon to get braces. I was always immersed in schoolwork.

A young adult author probably understands the numerous worries of a middle-schooler. In their adolescent years, many wonderful people change because of the influence of others. Donning the hippest clothes, littering their speech with slang, changing their interests from what they love to what others want them to love, characters become conformists.

The most beautiful personalities are covered with graffiti. Realizing that the paint is still wet, the personalities change themselves before it "dries". The graffiti is gone, but so is the original person. Entering middle school, I almost changed myself in this way, watching students around me modify themselves. Then, I read *Stargirl*.

When I read the sentence "If we happened to somehow distinguish ourselves, we quickly snapped back into place, like rubber bands," it seemed as if a light bulb had gone on in my head. Was that how our school was? That, I couldn't answer. But one thing was for certain, that's not what I wanted our school to turn into. And that's not what I wanted to be.

But another thing captured my attention after reading *Stargirl*. It was the kindness that Stargirl always showed toward everyone, and the good deeds she did without thanks. I was enraptured by the way she found time to do a little something for everyone- smiles, pennies, flowerpots, even things as large as scrapbooks or bikes. Could I ever do such things?

*Stargirl* didn't affect me all at once. It affected me little by little. For example, sometimes I'll wonder if what I'm wearing is "cool" enough, or if it's from the "right" store. Then, I think to myself: "Do you like what you are wearing?" If the answer is yes, then I try and forget my thoughts, remembering Stargirl's 1920's flapper dress.

Other times, I'll smile- just smile- at miscellaneous people. Remembering *Stargirl*, I'll think about how I may have brightened someone's day, if only slightly.

After reading *Stargirl*, I realize you can't shut your personality up inside of you, as Susan did. You should always let it shine, with as much brilliance as you can muster. Even though people will still occasionally tease me about my good grades, or "physical inability" in basketball and football, I try to let the comments roll off my back like water, never letting them saturate through my skin.

Nowadays, I comprehend how much *Stargirl* applies to the real world. Kindness and caring matter so much. Being yourself (instead of someone somebody else chooses) makes you who you are. And, even though I would never go to school wearing a pioneer dress, advertise my crush on a bulletin board, or make a scrapbook of my neighbor's life, I still do my best to be myself.

Thanks for writing such an amazing book.

Warmest regards,



Jenny Uehling