

Dec 14, 2023

Dear Mr. Wright,

My name is Tilley Wilensky, and I am in 8th grade in Norman, Oklahoma. When I first picked up The End of October last year, I was going through a rough patch. I had recently moved 706 miles, leaving behind childhood bonds, to a place I knew next to nothing about, then it felt like things just kept getting worse as my blood sugars spiraled beyond control, and seemingly out of nowhere I acquired a slew of digestive problems that the doctors could not explain. As I bounced from one clinic and doctor who couldn't explain my symptoms to the next, I brought your book with me, almost as a talisman, and it became my hiatus from reality, my temporary escape into Henry Parson's desperate race around the globe.

As I grew weaker and weaker, it gave me an odd sort of hope and empowerment, a reminder that there were networks of people who can help in crises, people who will give it all they've got. And even though, in the end, the world crumbles to ruin in a state of anarchy, Henry Parsons doesn't stop fighting to get back his children. This drive, this inspired me, reminded me that even when I had hit my lowest point, there were people who would move mountains with their bare hands for me. There were people who loved me. And this feeling, this feeling of devotion, helped me persevere through, push my limits further than I ever thought I could to speed up my recovery. It reminded me, while I was on activity restriction, that there were other worlds I could explore, places books could take me that no one has ever been, lessons that could be taught that I couldn't've found anywhere else.

For that, I am forever grateful. Grateful for the opportunity your book gave me, and what it taught me about my will to fight through challenges, even when it's an uphill climb that seems insurmountable at the time, one that I never thought I would be able to beat. Your book showed me how strong I am and the tenacity with which I can confront challenges. I took the best parts of each of the characters and found them in myself, from Henry's daughter, who found it in her to bury her mother by herself and keep her brother alive, drive them to her aunt's place, and the kindness the submarine crew showed to Henry, a stranger, whom they were willing to accept on board, to the never ending love Henry had for his family. I take the best of these characters, and channel their strengths to push on, push through.

I'm happy to say that this mindset, of growing through my challenges and coming out a better person, has helped me immensely. Finding the best in other people when I couldn't find it in myself showed me how much there was to live for, how rich life could be, even when it's challenging. That fighting the rough fight is immensely more rewarding. That's not to say your book immediately fixed my life, the struggles will always be there, but you enabled me to see what I had previously been ignorant of in a time when I needed it most.

Dec 14, 2023

Sincerely,

Tilley Wilensky