

Cameron Lansing 2025 LAL Top Prize Winner Level 1 (grades 4-6)

January 23, 2025

Dear Dan Gemeinhart,

I'm feeling anxious. Anxious about this letter, and I don't know why. You're just a guy who writes books, Just a guy. Well, I've read all of your adventures. I've rode along on Coyote's bus, walked through the streets as a runaway, and saw dog spirits protect family, even in the afterlife. I've been immersed in your world and changed from your stories. I've grown into a person who writes my own stories, a person who was inspired by you. I owe you very much.

I would have never written if not for you. I started out lost in jumbles of words, struggling to spell and speak. My teacher told me dyslexia didn't only make writing a little harder, but typing and spelling. I felt hopeless. My mind was flowing with stories waiting to be captured, but I just didn't have the motivation. I'd pick up a book, read maybe two chapters, and quit. I'd tell my teacher I read my chapters for the night, lie on reading check-ins, guess for every question. But then my teacher read *The Remarkable Journey Of Coyote Sunrise* to the class, and after relentless begging, *Good Dog* as well. But I was so absolutely amazed and needed more, but how could I read a whole chapter book on my own?

Well I did. Then I read another book, then another and another. One after the other things clicked, gears in my head turned. I stopped seeing my reading teacher and for the first time in my life I was actively reading books for fun! My librarian must have seen me one million times that year, and I slowly got better and better at reading!

Two hundred, four hundred, eight hundred pages! I explored new authors, read series of books like *Land Of Stories* and *Diary Of A Wimpy Kid*, and continued searching for more.

Honestly the main reason I wrote this letter is to say thankyou. That day, sitting at my desk, listening to my teacher reading about your world, Coyote's world, it deeply, truly, shaped the way my life unfolded after that. I've now written five books, (none published, yet) and

am reading the Warriors series at the time of this letter. It is hard to capture by words how greatly you impacted me, and how your impact is still sending ripples through me to this day. Writer's block doesn't haunt my days, your ripples inspiring many of my short stories and novels.

I'm only twelve, but whatever I do when I grow up, I will never stop writing. Never stop diving deep into characters, spending hours on the simplest details of a world, experiencing the flood of words pouring out like a rushing, uncontrollable river.

Never, Never ever, will I ignore the ripples pushing me forward. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Cameron Lansing