

Dear J.K. Rowling,

I was obsessed. I dreamed that one day, when I turned eleven, a half giant would break down my door and say that I got to go to Hogwarts. I dreamed that I would make my way onto a puffing steam train and make my way across the forests and rolling hills of Britain. I thought I would meet my own version of Hermione and Ron, and we would spend our days there adventuring and breaking every rule to help save the school. And in some ways, I did have that. I had two very close friends during the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw each other every day, and we would go and have battles against the trees. Despite all that we still dreamed of the one monumental day we got those letters. We painstakingly searched for some sliver of a chance that the world truly was real.

But my eleventh birthday came, and with it, news of what you said. My mouth closed and opened, unable to speak a word. My jaw clenched. My eyes unfocussed and all I could hear was the hope in my chest folding in on itself, until the last ember of any dream of my future was gone.

At first I couldn't believe it. You were my *hero*. I wanted to be just like you. To write world changing books. I wanted to alter the pure meaning of literature with a story as powerful and loved as yours. Denial can only last for so long. I began to see it for myself. Can you imagine a kid who was trans read your series and enjoyed it like almost ninety nine percent of the world? If they practically worshiped you and your works? In 2022 the Williams Institute estimated that about 300,000 youth in the United States

are transgender. Can you imagine how they would feel if they found out about those comments? What would they do? Would they hurt themselves? Would they hide their identity, and suffer in silence? Kids my age are already going through tons of social issues in their own personal lives, whether it's experimenting with the LGBTQIA+ community, or conflicts with the people in their lives. What you said would only amplify the amount of stress taking up space in their minds.

I know that when I read some of what you said, I felt confused and betrayed. You left a gaping hole in my heart, where Harry Potter once was. I spent my nights lying in bed contemplating whether or not I should read your books. What you said went against all of my virtues, and so I had a brutal internal war, between the stories that had made up the complex of my life, and what I stood for. I saw myself in so many of the characters in Harry Potter, and I wondered if any trans kids saw themselves in them too?

My chest aches for anyone who has to go through something like this. And yet, you keep posting these invalidating comments, and they don't go unnoticed. Your words have a power that you could never imagine. The most insignificant comment or post could have a much greater domino effect that could lead to so many possibilities. Also, the fact that you keep repeating the comments that brought hate and disunity in the fan base, despite the results that the last ones had, astounds me. If you knew how many kids look up to you, and you still said that they weren't who they were on the inside. It would make your actions all the more worse.

What do these comments bring you? Joy? Satisfaction? What does this do *for you*? How is it enjoyable to sit on your phone or laptop and spam hate comments all day? *Your* words can shape the course of someone's entire life. *Your* language holds the weight of the world; one slip up can determine the fate of countless people. The words *you* bring into this world can be like deadly bullets, or can inspire a new generation. This is *your* choice, so you need to choose which path you take, or you will never know what will happen if you don't reverse your actions.

You have shown me what it means to be a good writer, despite having the wrong morals. So from now on, I am going to be careful with what I put out into the world. I am going to be mindful of my words, and the power that they give me. I am also going to help other people find their voices, and help them discover the power that you have uncovered for me.

Thank you for showing me this,
Cora Chenier