

**Kaavya Ramachandhran (5th Grade: Mason, Ohio)**  
**Level I Semi-finalist**  
**Letter to Lauren St. John concerning her book, *White Giraffe***

Dear Mrs. St. John:

The reason why I am writing this letter to you all began with my love of animals. At a school book fair, I had seen *The White Giraffe* sitting on a shelf. Consequently, here I am, a ten-year-old in Fifth Grade, writing a letter to you.

You have brought Martine Allen to life in such a way that I confront her in vivid dreams. She is a beautiful character, both physically and soulfully. We both share a belief that the game park that the story takes place in is breathtaking. Nature is close to my heart, as it is with Martine. However, of course, I do not live in the Sawubona Game Preserve, and, even though the thought of living there mesmerizes me, I would rather stick with my present, normal life with all my family and friends. Your book has opened a door in the vast hall of my life. This door has boxfuls of marvelous information about Table Mountain, sugar birds, bush babies, and many other creatures and plants. I thank you deeply for opening this door to me. With your help, I may someday expand this hall enough me to get a good job, give birth to children, and live a happy, hopefully long life.

This work has been so meaningful to me that I do not consider it to be work. I think of it as another door in my hall. This door is very important to me and it has a well-known name: opportunity.

Sincerely,

**Kaavya Ramachandhran**