

Natalyn Kaser (6th Grade: Wadsworth, Ohio)
Level I Semifinalist
Letter to Sarah Weeks concerning her book, *As Simple as it Gets*

Dear Sarah Weeks:

I was completely captivated by your book, *As Simple as it Seems*, because of the specific details you use to explain the character's feelings. I enjoyed the book greatly. It had me on the edge of my seat the entire time. In class, when we had silent reading time, I would try and hurry to get my book out as fast as I could to get more of it to read. Then when I had to put the book down, it was hard because it was so addicting.

In your book, I really like how you added the twists into the plot. One of my favorites was when Verbena and Pooch were on the boat and the rope came undone. They were stuck and couldn't get help until Jack, Verbena's dog, came and swam them in. Also, when Pooch took out the brownie out of his pocket and ate it, then had to go to the hospital because it was made out of walnut flower. Then, at a different time, Verbena acted like a ghost to try to be somebody else, because she viewed herself as being mean.

Verbena and I do not have much in common, but sometimes I feel like I want to be someone else, too. Then I realize that being oneself isn't bad at all because each one of us is unique in our own way. Learning to accept and like yourself is important. That is how I related to Verbena and what made me enjoy the book so much more.

Your book also made me feel bad for Verbena because of how she lived for eleven years not knowing her real mom, Grace, was an alcoholic, or that her dad, Mike, was in jail for killing someone by snapping his neck. The book made me feel kind of warm inside at the same time because Verbena found a friend in Pooch, someone she could trust. In the end, they find themselves to be the best of friends and she tells him the truth about everything.

I ended up feeling many different emotions for the other characters throughout the book. Take her mom, for instance. I felt really bad because Verbena thought she was too fat or she yelled at her. For example, when Verbena would yell at her for being big or if she wore something she didn't like.

In my opinion, your book was amazing. It was incredible the way you described the characters with so many details. *As Simple as it Gets* made me feel that things can't really be that simple. Life can be hard, but no matter what, you can get through it.

Sincerely,

Natalyn Kaser