

Joey Lagucki (8th Grade: Columbus, Ohio)

Level II Third Place Winner

Letter to Kate DiCamillo concerning her book, *Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*

Dear Kate DiCamillo:

I don't remember it clearly, but I remember that it was silent reading time in Third Grade when I first saw your book. It was being read by one of my friends from across the round table from me. The cover—a drawing of a small china rabbit doll walking to a brown house—piqued my curiosity. It really did what a cover for a book is supposed to do, pique the interest of the people. Looking back, it's surprising how much more I was interested in my friend's book than in my own, my book being that kind of novel one reads just because a lot of other people are reading it (am I the only one who considers that a genre?). I was locked on that book. I really wanted to read it. That book was the *Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*.

Never before has a book touched my heart that this book did. It even changed how I read. In kindergarten, my teacher always thought that I could read above my grade level. She would have me read the typical *Frog and Toads*, the *Miss Nelsons*...those kind of books I remember always reading at the time. What my teacher and I didn't know was that I wasn't actually a good reader. I could technically read, yes, but what I wasn't doing was actually, literally, thinking about what the words printed page by page were saying. Throughout the next three years, I would always learn about the reading methods such as picturing ideas from the book in your head. Did that ever stick in my head? No, so neither did the content I was reading. Well, not until I read *Edward Tulane*.

At the time I was reading your book, my teacher was teaching the class about reading comprehension. My teacher knew that I wasn't the best at comprehending my reading: surprisingly, she was the only one of my teachers who had noticed that.

Thanks to the engaging plot of *Edward Tulane*, my reading comprehension spiked up, and so did my enjoyment for reading (I'm still not that much into reading, but I enjoy it).

The world of the story just provides a sense of realism and so much character in the reader's mind. Each location and character Edward sees is different and unique in its own way. I had never read a book that had such a realistic portrayal of the world and haven't since. I'll admit, maybe I even cried a little in some parts of the book...but that's not important.

In Language Arts class, we have been talking about the power of words, how words can change a person, make them happy, make a person sad, change a person's life.

The *Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* shows this power, greatly. It changed my viewpoint of some parts of the world, my viewpoint of some people of different parts of the world, my viewpoint of books, and even how I read. If it weren't for this book, I would not be into reading as much as I am now, even if I'm not totally into reading. Thank you for writing such an amazing book.

Sincerely,

Joey Lagucki