

12/11/2022

Dear Ally Carter,

My name is Olivia Baldwin and I'm a fourth grader in Oklahoma. I have a real passion for reading and I'm always looking for exciting new books to read. The assistant librarian at my school, Mrs. Mullins, recommended your book, "Winterborne Home for Vengeance and Valor". After the museum fire chapter I was hooked. I couldn't wait to see what happened next. It kept me on the edge of my seat page after page. Once I finished the first book I was ready to dive into the sequel, "Winterborne Home for Mayhem and Mystery". I was not disappointed. For the first time ever, I thought the second book was a little better than the first book. That never happens for me! I really connected with the characters and their journey took me on a rollercoaster of emotions in both books. Emotions like being scared, sad, excited, happy and relieved. It was great to have so much packed into these books.

There was so much detail in the books I could really imagine what the characters were experiencing. It was like I was there watching a movie. The adventure and mystery was never ending. I found myself connecting the dots to solve the mystery as I read along. It's like I was a detective.

One of the things that affected me the most reading the books was the background of the characters journeying through the foster care

system. I didn't realize children went from house to house when they're placed in foster care. I thought they just went to one home and that was their forever home but that's not the case. I also did not realize that they had to go through such a hard time to find their forever homes. I've had 6 close relatives journey through the foster care system and it really gave me insight into what they may have experienced. This past year I actually created a project called Luggage of Hope to help with easier transitions for Oklahoma's foster care youth. Just like in the book, children in foster care have very little personal items. April only had her key for example. My Luggage of Hope project provides luggage, hygiene items and even stuffed animals. It's just a little something the children can call their own. The books made me realize that my project and efforts are helping those in foster care even if it's just bringing a smile to their face.

In the end, the happiness the children found were not in things but in people. Gabriel was their happiness. This really made an impact on me. Sometimes we do get wrapped up in things and don't spend enough time with the ones we love.

As you can see there were a lot of lessons I learned from these books and I really wish you would write more Winterborne Home books. I enjoyed reading them, relating to the characters and I feel there are many more lessons I can learn from your books. Please write more!

Love,

Olivia Baldwin

4th grader from Blanchard, Oklahoma