

December 12, 2025

Dear Mrs. Kelly Yang,

Most of the time after I read a book, I forget almost everything about it—just like a promise I swore to remember. But your book, *Front Desk*, has turned my world upside down. I've always been a shy kid who doesn't talk much and keeps millions of secrets. My biggest secret? I dream of designing something that feels truly mine. But fears have always hold me back from letting all my ideas out. After reading your book, that fear started to fade away. And now I just feel more comfortable letting my words out into the world.

Your book encourages people to follow their dreams and never give up. Though this might be a common moral in many stories, it just hits different because Mia's situation is somewhat similar to mine. Sure I didn't have to live in a car or work at a motel, but Mia's goals and dreams are very similar to my own. I've always wanted to become a programmer or graphic designer. But such a role requires patience and motivation, which I'm still struggling with. It also doesn't help my parents' hope that I'll become a neurosurgeon someday. I totally understand that they want me to have a future, but sometimes it gets in the way of other things important to me.

Sure, wanting to be a graphic designer or a coder might sound like a child's dream in a field full of butterflies. And that's what people sometimes tell me. But your book inspired me and encouraged me to chase my dreams like a moth chasing light. One key lesson I learned from *Front Desk* is to try new things. Actually, I've tried a bunch of new things since then.

Yes, I've experienced many setbacks and some things just simply didn't work out. For example, I once tried to create a game about running away from triangles, but it ended up full of glitches. Then I recalled the time in the story when Mia lost the essay competition. Instead of giving up, she tried new solutions. Encouraged by the story, I started to make much more simpler games first, then I moved to creating more complex games. This really helped to boost my self-confidence up and made me be a much better coder in general. Soon after that, I started to have a lot of fun coding, and even showed some of my games to my family. We laughed

and had fun together playing those games. My brother and dad even gave me feedback on what to add or remove from my games.

I've always loved coding, but there was one part of coding—also part of other tasks such as writing and researching—that I've never really enjoyed. DUE DATES! I hated due dates. They make me feel stressed, like a termite with the flu. This stress even gave me a panic attack once. I remember an assignment where we had to write our own story based on a topic we picked. I chose a story of a food fight. At first, everything was smooth sailing, until I hit my first roadblock. I had to copy my story into Google Docs and submit it so that my teacher could print it out. However, there was a problem. At the time my story was half finished, I thought I had more time. NOPE. Immediately I was panicking like someone collapsed on the school floor.

I felt so hopeless, until I remembered a section of *Front Desk* where Mia had lost the essay contest. Even though it seemed hopeless for her, she didn't give up. Instead, she figured out a new way to get a motel. That inspired me to find out a way to finish my book before the deadline. I created a method called AWDS, which stands for "Add Words and Details, then Spell-check". It worked! I successfully got my book printed out while meeting all the requirements.

Sometimes life looks like impossible. But I've just learned that a few right words, lined up together, can change your head upside down and twirl it a million times. As I continue my life, I just want to say thank you for the change your book brought to my life, whether it's little or massive. I'm forever grateful that I read this wonderful book, *Front Desk*, at my early age.

Sincerely,

Jinlin Chen