

Thanks, all

Posted on Dec 21, Posted by [Lois Lowry](#) Category [Uncategorized](#)

Thanks to all of you who sent comments to my post yesterday which quoted an email I had received from an 8th-grade boy. Let me just say once again that I get a huge amount of mail and 99% of it is intelligent, thoughtful and supportive.

And some is a little amusing, like the email I got recently from a young girl that said only: "I don't think kids should read this book it has bad stuff in it." I wrote back and explained that I had written 35 books and don't know which one she was referring to. (Actually, I assumed it was 'The Giver' since that is the one that draws the most objection). But no. She replied that was 'Anastasia has the answers, that is the one with bad stuff.' I replied again, asking what she meant by "bad stuff," that I couldn't recall anything at all that might be offensive in that book; and she replied that "it talks about sex, you should read it again." Mystified, I did so, and found two references to "sex." One is when Anastasia suggests to her 8th-grade English teacher that he teach "Gone with the Wind" instead of "Johnny Tremain" and he replies that he thinks it inappropriate. She counters that it has no explicit sex in it, but he stands firm. Later in the book, an 8th-grade friend of hers paints her toenails and says that she thinks they look sexy.

So I replied once again to my correspondent that I had, on her advice, re-read the book. I told her the two places I had found where "sex" was mentioned, that I didn't think they fell into the category of "bad stuff" and that I would be happy to have my young grandchildren read the book. No response from her yet.

As for the boy who wrote yesterday's email, I just replied to him briefly that I was sorry he hadn't liked the book, that perhaps he was not mature enough yet to understand it well. (I said the same thing to another boy a few years ago, in an email, and he replied, "F___ you, lady, I'm very mature, I'm 17" His reply qualifies, in my opinion, as a good example of *Quod Erat Demonstrandum*)

Actually, I think the little girl was the more intriguing correspondent, because she felt strongly about something in the book, and tried hard to convince me. Perhaps that's why I replied to her at greater length. The boy? He was just annoyed that he'd been assigned a book to read, and

he was being a smartass, and probably showed his friends, with some pride, the rude letter he'd written. It's an age a which disrespect is somehow a badge of honor, and the immediacy and anonymity of email makes it so easy.

The best thing about immature people is that they eventually become mature. Most of them.

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