Dear Omar Mohamed,

Dear Omar Mohamed,

Hi! My name is Leena and I am ten years old. In life, I have never been very grateful for everything I have. Your book, *When stars are scattered*, changed that completely.

It made me see the world in a whole new way. Your words were so powerful and strong, they seemed to toss me around, like the ocean waves, and when I crawled out from the end of the book, I was a whole new person. I stopped wasting food, and donated to the poor. I valued my friends and family more, and I thought a lot more about women’s rights. Then I found out that you are the character. Well that just made me think even more about how much I have and how little other people have. Then, I decided to change. Here are just a few of the things I decided to do because of your book.

The first thing I thought of, and did was that I stopped wasting food, and started donating to food banks. I also cared more about the poor. One of my favorite lines in your book is when Fatuma says you look like you woke up on the wrong side of the bed, and you say that you don’t have a bed, and that’s part of the problem! The day after I finished your book for the third time, I was eating a banana, and didn’t want to finish it. Then my mind went back to your book, and I thought about all the people in the world, who would do so much for this piece of banana. I finished my banana then, I went over to my mom and asked if we could donate some food or money to the poor. She said yes, and the next week, we donated two boxes of food to our local food bank. Now, we donate to food banks a lot more than we used to, and I don’t waste my food anymore, or at least less than I used to.

One other thing I did after I read your book was that I started to value my friends and family more. In your book, Omar, or you, thought of your friends as, well, just friends, and your family, just family, but in the end, you have to leave your friends and some of your family, and you are heartbroken. You showed me just how darn much everyone really matters to me. My family and friends mean so much to me, I just couldn’t ever leave them, and your book has shown me that. You had almost nothing, no house, you are in the middle of the desert, you don’t have any parents to help you through all of this, but you will do so much for your friends, like Jeri and Maryam Nimo, and your family, Hassan and Fatuma. Lots of the book is about how you worry about Hassan’s future, which is one of the things I love about your character—you love your family so much, and you made me love the people in my life even more. As you can see, this is another way your book has changed my life.

The last thing your book did that I am going to list is that I cared a lot more about women’s rights after reading your book. In Dadaab, women didn’t have a lot of rights. For example, when most girls couldn’t go to school, or when Maryam was forced to marry someone she didn’t want to. This made me care more about women’s rights and education. Now, I don’t let boys tease me.
about how I like to climb trees and run and race, just because I am a girl. Also, when my friends get teased because they don't wear dresses or makeup or other things like that. I go right up, and remind whoever is being mean to them that it isn't the 12th century, and that girls and women can do anything that boys and men can.

I loved *when stars are scattered*, because it showed me most people's lives, and put me into perspective. I don't think my life is so bad anymore, and see how so many people have much bigger problems than me. Thank you for inspiring me and many other young people. Your book is truly amazing, and you should keep writing.

Sincerely,

Leena, grade 5
OFFICIAL RULES

Wyoming Letters About Literature 2022 is open to students in grades 4-12 who attend school in Wyoming or, if submitting individually and not as part of a class, are legal residents of Wyoming. Students may not enter in more than one state’s Letters About Literature contest. Students must be in grades 4 through 12 during the 2022-23 school year. There will be three (3) Levels of competition: a) Level 1 for Grades 4-6, b) Level 2 for Grades 7-8, and c) Level 3 for Grades 9-12.

Entries must arrive between November 14, 2022 and January 31, 2023 (or be postmarked by January 31, 2023)

Students select a fiction or nonfiction book, short story, poem, essay, play, or speech (excluding song lyrics) that they have read and have strong feelings about. They then write a personal letter to the author of their selected piece explaining how the work changed the student’s view of themselves or their world.

Entries must include a date, greeting, body of the letter, closing, and name/signature. Entries must NOT include a return address, email address, or phone number on the letter; this contact information must be provided on the entry form.

Each entry (a) must be the original creation of the submitting student; (b) must be previously unpublished and cannot have been submitted to any other competition; (c) must not infringe upon or violate the rights of any third party; and, by the act of submission, warrants and represents that the student (and parent/legal guardian if student is a minor) fully and completely conforms to the stated requirements for entry. It is the responsibility of the educator or individual submitting nominations to evaluate the submission materials and take appropriate action if the materials contain any expressions of the intent to self-harm, depression, or other sensitive subjects.

The educator or submitting individual should follow the policies of their school or educational institution in handling such matters or contact the appropriate local resources to follow up with the student and, if appropriate, with the students and parents or legal guardians, as the local policy and confidentiality guidelines permit. Submitting educators and individuals agree, by submitting materials to Letters About Literature, that they have reviewed the materials for this purpose and taken appropriate action.

By submitting an entry form, student and/or student's parent/legal guardian agree that portions of or entirety of the entry of selected winners including the student's name, city/town, school, grade, and letter may be published and used to promote the Wyoming Letters About Literature contest. All submitted entries become the sole property of the Wyoming Humanities and will not be acknowledged or returned; works may be shared by Wyoming Humanities online or in print. Limit one (1) entry per student. No other form of participation other than as stated in these official rules is valid.

ENTRY FORM

Complete this form and send along with your letter. Please print legibly and complete both the top section and either the class or individual entry section.

Student Name: Lenna Martel Age: 10 Grade: 5

Title of Work: When Stars are scattered Author: Omar Mohamed

School/Library: Kelly Elem. Address: POB 128 City: Kelly State: WY Zip: 83011

Teacher/Librarian Name & Signature (required): Lisa Lowenfels From: Lowenfels

Email: llowenfels@ftcsd.org Telephone: 307-913-4947

Fill out ONLY if you are submitting a letter individually. Otherwise, this section is optional.

Home Address: City: State: Zip:

Parent’s/Guardian’s Name & Signature (required):

Email: Telephone: