

LETTERS

FOR

HAYAO

MIYAZAKI

FROM

SHEILA JONES

THANKS TO YOU

Dear Mr. Miyazaki,

The first movie of yours that I watched was Spirited Away on Cartoon Network when I was in elementary school around 10 years old. I remember that day very well because it was the day my mind expanded completely. It was like a cold wave refreshing my mind, reinventing me in the process. I fell in love, and

I couldn't stop talking about it or wanting everyone I knew to watch it and be just as obsessed as I was.

The experience was like meeting someone for the first time who you instantly click with, like you were meant to be with each other. I became a fan of your movies, partly because they are all wonderful and magical but also because I could see in every one that I watched that a great deal of love and passion was put into them. I am grateful to you because you changed my life and the way I see things, think, and behave.

I was always really sad with myself because I always thought I could be better, something more than what I was. But when I saw Spirited Away it inspired me in a way that made me fulfill the expectations I had for myself. I became more creative and open minded, crafting my own stories filled with magic and

adventure. It opened up my perspective of the world because it gave me hope.

I no longer saw the world as a bleak place. When I was somewhere I didn't like, I just daydreamed of your movies and of the beautiful nature in them and everything was alright. I still wish I could transport into your movies and be a part of your characters' worlds. But since that is very unlikely, I will continue to watch them and pass them on to everyone I love and know, because I consider your movies to be one of the greatest gifts anyone could receive due to the hope they inspire and the deep meanings they carry. The messages in them are important ones regarding people, the way they should treat each other despite their differences, acceptance, bravery, and being caring and nurturing instead of destructive and cruel. These are things some people forget about as they grow, so I'm happy someone has been teaching the importance of these traits. I don't know if you realize how much of a difference you've made in the world and in the hearts of so many people. So many people are happy and captivated and inspired by your work. Thank you for everything, Mr. Miyazaki, and I hope to meet you someday.

FROM

CHELSEA LANDVATTER

TO AN AMAZING MAN

The first encounter I had with your work was “Kiki’s Delivery Service”. I was young and didn’t know it then, but I would grow to appreciate your work. I was introduced to “Spirited Away” by a friend in high school and became hooked. There is so much love, magic, and meaning in your films that you cannot take it all in the first time you watch them. I still discover things I missed and hidden meanings and symbolism I did not notice the many other times I viewed these masterpieces. Your imagination and genius knows no bounds. I’m even now, in tears from how much respect I have for you and the many gifts you have given this world. Thank you Thank you Thank you for creating these beautiful stories and inspiring wonder and good character into all of your viewers. You have made it into our hearts, and we will always support you.

With Love and Respect

Chelsea L.

Texas



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and meaning in your films that
you cannot take it all in the first
time you watch them.*

FROM

GABRIEL JOSE CALDERON

THE BIRTHPLACE OF DREAMS

I was 13 years old, and was visiting my friend's house. They were picking between three movies, none of which I had seen, to show me. On a whim, they decided on Spirited Away.

I, like so many others who have seen it, were blown away by its artistry. But to me, something else was ignited in my heart. Each coming frame of the film added more and more to an inward excitement that I couldn't yet explain. When the film was over I felt confused, anxious, and joyful from top to bottom, all at once. I asked my friends if there were any other films like that one, and that was the first time I heard the name Hayao Miyazaki.

Arriving home, and in the coming weeks, I rented old DVD after old DVD and filled myself with Ghibli; Howl's Moving Castle, Nausicaa, Laputa, Totoro and Princess Mononoke. With each film, I became more and more aware of what had awoken in me when I first saw Spirited Away. The power of a story, of creativity, of a moving picture, yes for sure, these are things I learned. But most importantly, the power of a human being.

This is the moment I first realized who I was and what I was capable of. To be a vessel of joy, hope, and love for everyone and anyone around me. This is the time in my life that the world around me started

to change. I felt the weight of the responsibility I had as someone with a human heart. Through the beauty of the worlds and characters you've created, and hidden complexity in their simplicity, I see the real world. The real world reflected through the lens of fantasy. A challenging, scary world, but one with so much hope. One where the dreams and optimism of childhood can be brought to life.

Mr. Miyazaki, your films have since stood for me as a beacon of the power and importance that I and every human being have. The power to create, the power to feel, and the power to love. And though no film can ever take the place of a real life experience, I don't believe I could be the same person I am today without your films. Thank you for sharing with us your mind, your heart, and your soul.

With gratitude,

Gabe Calderon

Fairfax, VA

FROM

NOVA MARIE MOORE

PIECES OF ME

Growing up, I always felt really different. I watched all of your movies as they came out and as they progressed or, “grew up” with me. I thought I was the only one in the world who loved your movies the way I do, and often times still feel so... For the first time in my life I found someone who enjoys your movies as well as my knowledge of them. I’ve had the pleasure of showing him some of your masterpieces, and finding out about your retirement was a pain I ended up not having to endure on my own. Although

I’m sad, I will always respect your decisions because clearly, you have yet to have a bad one. Each movie you’ve treated us with became pieces of me. Each character has a place in my heart, and will remain there for as long as I live. Your movies taught me how to be brave, and how to appreciate things. I will always idolize you, and the impact you left on me will be everlasting. I’d just like to thank you for your existence and for making my life a fantastic journey.

FROM

KAYLA ANN DODDS

OPENING MY EYES

My first Hayao Miyazaki movie was Spirited Away. At the time I saw it, I was about Chihiro's age. After watching it for the first time, I realised that I should be braver and more confident in myself. It really made me think better about myself. From that point on I continued watching Hayao Miyazaki movies and with each one I felt like my mind was being opened to a whole new world. The movies inspired me in different ways: to be brave, to be patient, to love unconditionally, to be adventurous, to stay true to myself, to be loyal. All these different traits made me into a better person and helped me through some tough times. If I could say one thing to Hayao Miyazaki, it would be thank you. Thank you for all the memories, the laughs, the tears, the friends you have given me throughout my life. I couldn't have asked for a better gift. You will always be the greatest story teller to me.

-KD



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