

Alexander J. Lin  
5520 Grouse Place  
Lincoln, NE 68516

Dear Mr. Mark Twain,

Driving in the western Sandhills of Nebraska, I envision what the land must have been thousands of years ago. The land, still undeveloped, has a rustic feel, and inspires a sense of grandeur. I imagine the thousands of buffalo roaming on the endless undulating hills, and I wish the adventures of before were available to us today. In the exciting frontier days, people went on long journeys and adventures--on foot, wagon, or horseback--and the journeys provided physical, intellectual, and emotional blossoming. In today's world, these romantic adventures are not so readily presented before us, but reading your book, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, has taken me through a journey of discovery of my own.

You beautifully satirize King Arthur's Court, where chivalry and oppression live as neighbors. I had never thought to look at knighthood from the point of today's world and democracy, but your book forced me to wonder how history will view us today. While the knights all had good intentions, they only knew what they were brought up with, and so they actually would be antagonists in today's world. I've been privileged to grow up in America and belong to an immigrant family. My education has been a blending of both Chinese and American. But I can't understand any other take on life that I have not been exposed to. I now have to question how the rest of the world perceives me because not everyone thinks like me and has my background.

Sir Boss in your book is the quintessential man, yet with all his knowledge, he is

almost always wrong about how the people of King Arthur's time will act. Sir Boss mistakenly assumes people innately all have the same ideals and intuitions as him. Though revered and more likely feared, he was not accepted into the culture of King Arthur. Traditionally, Asian culture dictates a student consumes himself in learning and work at all times because this leads to success. I am revered in school for my academic success, yet, truly, academia is not all America is about. Sir Boss made me realize that to be respected is not the same thing as to be accepted. He has led me to take another journey to find a balance in my life of two cultures because, clearly, when in Rome, one must do as the Romans do, yet one must hold his own beliefs dear to heart.

Though your book is a commentary, do you really believe humans are so pigheaded that they cannot accept new ideals? Both King Arthur and Sir Boss were good in heart, but since they came from two very different eras, medieval times and the industrial revolution respectively, the book ended in a clash of ideals and disastrous death. That's quite pessimistic Mr. Twain! Yet ... there is truth. Americans have a tendency to view the Middle East as evil terrorists. The Middle East sees America as greedy expansionists. Because of the difference of backgrounds and ideals, we just can't get along. After reading your book, it gave light and realization to me that conflicts are not caused by "evil". No one tries to be "evil", because everyone is doing what he or she thinks is right. This lesson has helped me to not hate. To hate is to not understand where the other person is coming from, and so with each conflict I am offered a chance to become wiser, not wrongly judgmental.

Through *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, your biting humor has acted like the voice of a mentor to me. In my journey to adulthood, you have made me

aware of other viewpoints, discovering my own balance of ideals, and to resolve conflicts by understanding base reasons. The journeys going on today are no longer cross-country; they are worldwide and involve all six billion people. Our ideologies may never be all the same, but at least you've taught me the destruction that can come from not compromising. Thank you for that.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alexander Lin", written in a cursive style.

Alexander Lin