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Dear Mr. Tolkien,

I am not three feet tall. I am not an elfin princess or a shieldmaiden of Rohan. I am not the rightful heir to any throne of men, or the protector of a magic ring, but I could relate to any and all of the characters in your book, The Lord of the Rings.

As I journeyed through the Shire I felt Sam's sentimentality at leaving the only home he knew. At Bree I sat by Strider in silence, watching the hobbits and waiting for whatever may come. At Rivendell I felt Elrond's sense of foreboding when Merry and Pippin insisted on going on the quest. In Rohan, I shared Eowyn's fear of being caged in all her life.


Reading this book I unexpectedly understood the fear of being killed in battle and the courage and loyalty needed to go into it. I shared Aragorn's pride and fear as he wrestled with who he really was. This helped me to embrace who I really am, too. Reading about the athelas plant made me, a person who is not interested in medicine at all, want to find out more about medicinal herbs, and the elves made me muse about what it really means to be immortal.

This book made me want to be a better person. I was inspired by the bravery, loyalty, and determination shown by most of the characters. Even antagonists like Gollum and Saruman showed some of these qualities, though I noted that neither of them showed much loyalty to anyone but themselves. Frodo, I think, showed the best and worst of the world. He kept going, even when he was mortally wounded, and he never stops, even when he is tempted onto the side of Sauron.

Another thing that really struck me when I read your book was the certain kind of strength demonstrated by all of the characters. It made me realize that strength is not just the size of your muscles or never ending courage. Strength is being able to let go and to show when you are sad. It is being able to live, and laugh, and smile, and weep. It is being courageous, being determined, and being loyal to yourself and what you believe in. That is strength.

Thank you for helping me to understand the lure of power and evil and the strength you need to fight it. I think, because of reading this book, I know more about what life is like.

Sincerely,



Claire Wiebe