



*2018-2019 Letters About Literature Contest
North Carolina statewide winner from Level 1¹
Annika Deedy of Greensboro, NC*

Dear William Ernest Henley,

18 years, 6,570 days, 157,680 hours (all the same amount of time), Nelson Mandela spent reciting "Invictus" in his cell on Robben Island Prison, knowing someday he would be free. This poem gave him - and others imprisoned with him- the strength to keep fighting no matter what. Nelson Mandela was freed in 1990 and became president in 1993. In 2009 they made a movie named after Invictus about Nelson Mandela as president.

Your poem has inspired and influenced so many people, sending them into a better world than the one they first lived in. I am part of those many people, when I was younger I was very shy...Everything changed when I heard your poem.

..."It doesn't matter how straight the gate, How charged the punishments the scroll" This to me from my perspective means it doesn't matter what others think of you, the only thing that matters is how you look at yourself as a person. It also means that no matter how much trouble you find that you have stumbled into all you need to think about is how you are going to fix what you have done to yourself and then face the world outside.

Out of this entire poem, my favorite line has to be "I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul". This one line, in my opinion, could probably save lives, it could keep people from going down that path of darkness and depression. Furthermore, I believe that "Invictus" could change our entire world if people read it and listened to the true meaning of unconquerable. Thank you for reading my letter

Sincerely,

Annika Deedy

¹ Some sections of the letter are omitted for privacy.

The North Carolina Center for the Book is a program of the North Carolina Humanities Council and is an affiliate of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. Through a variety of program formats and initiatives, the NC Center works to foster an interest in books, reading, libraries, and North Carolina's literary heritage. The North Carolina Humanities Council began operating the NC Center in 2018. To learn more visit www.nchumanities.org **Letter's About Literature** is a nationwide competition that asks students in grades 4-12 to read a book, poem, or speech and write to the author about how the work affected them.