January 25, 2023

Dear Rick Riordan,

As a boy, my imagination was and still is dominant over my everyday reality. It still lines my thoughts with mythical ideas. The way that you present Percy Jackson and the mythical creatures around him in *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* creates a relatable world that I am drawn into, like a moth to light.

The way Percy protects and battles for his friends makes me look up to him. He somehow finds courage inside of him when fighting for his life even in the darkest circumstances. Your book taught me to react to situations with courage, not cowardice.

I believe that everyone has the potential to be courageous, it just needs to be unearthed and nurtured. Once a person recognizes courage, it is like a seed. And it grows, and grows. I recently uncovered the seed of courage and it has grown inside of me. The seed tells me that I can really make a difference in this world. I discovered courage when I conquered what many consider to be the world's number one fear: public speaking. My goal was to become president of my school's student council. In order to achieve that goal, I needed to give my speech to three full grades packed into our cafeteria. While my body was literally trembling from head to toe, I felt a surge of power and confidence. I looked out into the sea of faces and saw my teachers' reassuring smiles, urging me on. Giving that speech was one of the most challenging things I've ever done. The courage that it cost paid itself right back when I won!

I wish I could have discovered my courage seed earlier in life. I really wish I did. My life could have been so much better. I could have used a character like Percy in my life when I was younger, around six years old. I wish he could have been my idol. I wish I could have met him sooner. Knowing Percy could have helped me confront the "ghosts" that I believed were in my house.

I imagine every challenge as a monster. If I don't use my courage to subdue the monster, I won't be able to use that courage for anything else. It just feels like I have an incomplete quest that I need to finish. The monster takes the seed captive until I save it from its horrible clutches. I am becoming the monster-hunter who slays the monster, Fear.

The immense courage that Percy Jackson carries with him inspires me to be braver. Your series has deeply influenced the way I handle fears and challenges in my life. The "seed of courage" has made me braver about risk-taking. At least I got to meet Percy with plenty of time before heading off to middle school next year. Thank you for giving me Percy Jackson.

Yours truly,
Ryan Chass
Grade 5