

Vera  
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Senior

Dear Mr. Mitchell,

Your novel Castaway Kid has been a great inspiration to me. That someone could withstand so much heart-ache and neglect and become better for it is a truly amazing act of God. The "Atlanta" chapter was particularly moving. I can't imagine what it must have been like to have family and wealth dangled before you and then to be denied. To think you were so close, but were, in reality, walled off from life with your relatives in Atlanta. The way you characterize Pawline in this chapter is extremely poignant, especially when one knows what she was doing to your life. "She wore too much white, powdery makeup and too much lipstick. And why did an old woman have waist-length hair that was always in a bun on her head, like a little hat?" It seems that Pawline Mitchell was a very superficial woman indeed. Not only was she concerned with her reputation and social rank, but she was determined to maintain the pretense of youth and beauty, even when shut up alone in her room all day. She also exhibits a stubbornness like none I have seen before. This woman had a hatred that drove her son to suicide and his wife to insanity. I think perhaps it is a providence that she was dead when you found the

courage to forgive her. Had she still been living, I imagine it would've been more difficult. When I think of Pauline, images of Charles Dickens's Great Expectations flow to the forefront of my mind. Your grandmother was one wedding gown away from being Miss Havisham. You don't make a bad Pip, either, visiting her room out of guilt and leaving as quickly as possible.

My favorite chapter, however, was number 23, "Into Africa." The change that occurred when you accepted Christ was not truly clear to me until this chapter. In Africa you finally learned to overcome the old self that could not trust anyone and longed to pick a fight. In this chapter, it seemed that the transformation was nearly complete.

I liked your story very much, and while most of it was heartbreaking, that simply made the happy things even happier. Thank you for sharing your life with us.

Sincerely,  
Vera