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Mike Lupica  
Letters About Literature  
Competition Level 2  
P.O. Box 5308  
Woodbridge, VA 22194

Dear Mr. Lupica,

As I read your book, *Heat*, I realized how privileged I am to just have a family that cares for me, feeds me, and cheers me on. Here I am, a kid just about as old as Michael Arroyo, wanting just about everything in the world, whereas Michael doesn't even have his own father anymore. It pains me just to think about losing a family member, especially when I am reading a book about a boy my age who loses just about everything. It would tear my life to shreds. Michael is a lot more perseverant, hardworking, and determined than I am. This is part of the reason why I am such a fan of you and this book.

I am a 12 year old boy, just the same as Michael, but I have gone through a lot less. I know this is a fictional book, but he lost his father. Nonetheless I could not even bear the thought of losing my own father, or anyone of my world really. This scenario and this story has inspired me to look at the world through a different set of eyes. I realize what so many people have to mourn through every day and before this, I just shrugged it away and moved on with my everyday life. Now I see what so many people fight through and I can just begin to feel more compassionate towards those people.

Even though Michael was dealing with the loss of his father, financial issues, and trying not to lose the sport that held him together so many years, he is a lot more hardworking than I am, I admit. If I faced all these setbacks, even if I was as great as Michael was at a sport, more than likely I would just give up. Being rejected by your home country just to receive something as silly and little as a 12 year old boy's birth certificate would be just devastating to me and probably a lot of other people my age who just want to get back to doing the thing they love the most. I'm sure many people, maybe all people, go through setbacks in their everyday lives, but Michael's roller coaster life was halted by so many difficulties it just makes me wonder, what if that had been me? Would I have the courage to make it past the obstacles? There are people of the world who would just give up after one of those obstacles, but I have been inspired to not give up after one or however many of those roadblocks that I may be unlucky enough to encounter.

When Michael is finding out he is not going to be allowed to play baseball because of the allegations of him being too old for Little League submitted by "a group of opposing coaches who feel like their team is good enough to win," Michael is still determined to lead his team to the District 22 championship even if he is not on the mound or even on the field of play. He still

shows up to his team's practices and games, and is even invited to help coach for the playoffs. I would probably break down from the pressure of coaching and the fact of being very pressured to find my birth certificate to lead a team as the star to the Little League World Series. My father always tells me "try as hard as you can and you will be fine," but Michael doesn't have a father to tell him that, and the fact of the matter is, it might not be all fine. He could lose his home, his favorite sport, and he even could be separated from his own brother. I would not be able to face that much adversity, especially in such a short time period.

In conclusion, I could not face all the pressure, adversity, or anything really of the things the character Michael Arroyo has to face. What I would like to do though, is be like you Mr. Lupica. It would be a dream of mine to write about and talk about sports. I would probably have to start working harder and face some hard times to reach that goal, though. But because of you and this book in part, I now have something more to strive for.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Owen Morrow". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'O' at the beginning.

Owen Morrow