LETTERS ABOUT LITERATURE

MASSACHUSETTS LEVEL II HONORS 2009

Dear Daniel Ehrenhaft,

I most absolutely love your book *Drawing a Blank or How I Tried to Solve a Mystery, End a Feud, and Land the Girl of my Dreams*. It almost completely reflects my life, in a way. It is true, my father is not crazy, my mother is not dead, and there are no evil Scottish freaks after my sacred letter opener, but the main character, Carlton, is definitely me.

For my whole life I have been a misanthrope as well as one who writes comics during school. I have avoided society as much as possible. I do have some friends, but I like to keep to myself 85 percent of the time. My life has also been very depressing, for I have experienced much death and sorrows. I never knew my grandfather and my other grandfather died when I was around six or seven. I was always the odd one out; no one really liked me that much.

As I grew older, I also grew colder. I became one heck of a messed up kid. I was on a quest to find a salvation of happiness, just as Carlton was on a quest for his father. On this quest, if you will, I found a new life, a girlfriend, and a mystical item of power.

For many years I have written poetry/music to express my feelings. But one day, I found that my songs were missing their usual zest and feel. I pondered why this was for many days. Finally I found out that the reason my songs were horrible was that I no longer felt any emotion. This was my quest. I had to find out where my emotion went. I read a lot of books, and I find that they give me answers to all of my problems. One day in 6th grade, I picked up your book. It's insanely long title drove me to check it out because I thought it would show me how to do all of those things.

As I read it, I found myself relating in many ways to the storyline. The quest was unfolding as I realized that I was constantly staring at a girl in my class. This is when my emotion returned, and this time, instead of sadness, there was love. This girl was so beautiful that I couldn't help myself. When I got to the part where Carlton met Aileen (Anabel), I was ecstatic. Just as Aileen saved Carlton from the car, this girl saved me from depression.

And so this is the end of my quest. I fought my shyness and the thought that people were gonna laugh at me after I said I liked her, and I told her. It took her a long and painful half-a-year to get back to me, but she said she liked me back. There is the end of mine and Carlton's quest, for you see, this is when I finished the book. This was when I was drawing a blank, and how I solved the mystery of my emotions, ended my eternal feud, and landed the girl of my dreams. And just a few weeks ago, she told me, "Matt, there are something things you just have to take to the grave." And I said, "Bollocks."

Sincerely,

Matthew

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