

Dear Walter Dean Myers,

For the past ten years, I've read hundreds of headlines and listened to numerous reports on the war in Iraq. My understanding was limited. In fact I didn't even know where Iraq was, but that all changed when my father mentioned West Point Military Academy. I was fascinated about the cadets and their preparation for life in the military. I wondered if some of them would head to Iraq after graduation. When I saw *Sunrise over Fallujah* on my eighth grade reading list this past summer, I knew I had to read it.

I wanted to truly understand the situation in Iraq and how an American soldier plays an active role. I had lots of questions. As I flipped through pages, it was clear to me that every day in Iraq is a struggle. Lives are being lost and American soldiers are being attacked from every angle. It was fascinating that the soldiers that fight for our country such as Birdy are just as terrified as everyone else because of the danger in Iraq. Birdy, Jonesy, and Marla wake up every morning not knowing if it was going to be their last day. I was shocked when Birdy, Jonesy, and the rest of their unit were blowing up houses that were possibly filled with innocent people. It seems that the military doesn't do much planning before they take action. Your book has changed the way I think of war because the story of Birdy tells that war isn't based off of guns and battle, but is based off of strategy and strength.

I thought war was like the video games I play with my friends, but that was before I read your book. It is unbelievable how false our common video games are on the war. To video game creators, what they offer is guns, death, and intense missions, while trying to make good money. That is their definition of war. Perhaps it is on an Xbox, but in real life it is men who are far away from home, lonely and afraid, fighting for their country. Almost every day they're losing friends in battle and are dealing with life versus death situations. Birdy is a true American hero.

Whenever I hear reports on the war I always think of *Sunrise over Fallujah*. Anybody who feels that all Iraqis are terrorists has to read this book. Iraqis can be innocent children running up to American soldiers, begging to play one soccer game while war rages around them. Thank you, Mr. Myers, for showing me that war is not a video game, or any other kind of game. War is terrifying and frightening for every single person involved.

Sincerely,

Michael

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