

**Selin Misirlioglu (Grade 8, Middleton Middle School, Middleton, OH)**

**Level II Honorable Finalist**

**Letter to author Jandy Nelson concerning her book, *I'll Give Yu the Sun***

Dear Jandy Nelson:

Your book, *I'll Give You the Sun*, has served to remind me that no one, not a single soul in the world, is better than another. We all as human beings have certain qualities that are simply beautiful, whatever they may be, and after reading *I'll Give*, I better understood this. When I first read your novel, I immediately fell under a trance. I could almost see the images it conjured dancing before me, each and every detail making the picture clearer. This book made my heart leap across my ribcage, inspiring every bone in my body. I had related to both Jude and Noah so much that it had hurt me, physically, to read about each of the tragic moments they had faced. The messages that you had given me, to all the readers of your novel, about betrayal, and loss, and determination were so fluent and transmissive that for weeks after reading, I thought constantly about every interaction.

My twin brother and I have stumbled upon many inconveniences, whether it be emotional troubles or family disturbances. I have been an artist for as long as I can remember, similar to Noah in the story, and have felt the flourish of comfort when I lift a paintbrush or pencil to sketch or draw any type of material I see that brings me inspiration. Because of this, we often argue about who has more talent, whether it be his quick-witted knowledge or my attention to beauty and arts of all kind. I, along with Noah, have realized that this very competition has driven us all to madness, and that to compete amongst each other for certain titles and labels is simply foolish. After finishing your book, I sat back and wondered if what we were doing was similar to their story. Our relationship was tearing apart, and we had been inching away from each other, splitting into halves. I was shocked, my mind racing with the thought of us ending up hating each other, nor not being able to speak because of silly arguments about who is better than the other. Because of your book, I was able to resolve this, and have since closed the gap that tore us apart, gluing us together.

Even still, I admit to competing for the most attention from family members. It is natural for us as human beings, as children, to have a competitive nature. Feeling the glory of impressing someone will always make me feel as if I have done something right. But, like Jude and Noah, I realized that this brother/sister bond is more important than the praise that is given by others. We all have relationships among ourselves, whether it be with siblings or parents or even other people we choose to let into our lives, like Oscar and Guillermo. The desire to win at something or be told that you are good at something has affected our society so much that it is second nature to compete for the title of the best. This story taught me that trying to become someone for other people, putting on another face in order to be told that you are amazing or stunning, is something that I should not strive to do. Jude had done this, had made herself look appealing to most of the children in her school by doing what most of the others had done, blending in with her friends and losing all traces of distinctness. Sadly, I feel like I relate to this also, and admit to having to change my appearance just to be the same as everyone else. But, trying to be the best at a certain job or to look the best out of a group is a desire that is not fulfilling, and I have learned this the hardest way possible.

*I'll Give You the Sun* caused me to feel such great emotion and passion for the things I do today, and I know that it wouldn't have been this way if it wasn't for you. My brother and I have changed the way we look at things, becoming better people, after reading a story about twins like me and my brother. Thank you for showing me that in life I will only be as successful as the people who I help, not compete against.

Sincerely,

**Selin Misirlioglu**