

Level II

Honorable Finalist

Isabella Adams

(Grade 7: St. Michael the Archangel School, Canton. Sponsor: Amy Krajeck)

Letter to author Chantele Sedgwick concerning her novel, *Love, Lucas*

Dear Chantele Sedgwick,

When I was about seven maybe eight years-old, my grandma was diagnosed with breast cancer. It was a very scary thing for my family. When my grandma is over from her part-time home in Florida, she does everything for us. She's always at our sporting events, running us around, and most importantly, preparing and cooking us food. Unfortunately, when she was diagnosed with cancer, she was in Florida so it was even harder because we couldn't see her. But unlike Lucas, Oakley's brother who was also diagnosed with cancer, my grandma beat it. Which still had me thinking because in the book, *Love, Lucas* everyone was so sad seeing the person they love in the hospital fighting for his life, especially Oakley, and all I could think about was how scared my whole family was for my grandma, especially my mom.

I can relate to Oakley because even though my grandma is still here today, it was frightening having someone you love so much, who does everything for you, go through so much pain. Like Oakley said in the book, "It's hard to forget someone who gave you so much to remember." She said this when she was having a hard time getting over her brother's death because they had so many memories. So all I could think about was all the good memories like playing catch in the backyard or trying to get to one of my sporting events but getting lost. All we would do is laugh. Thinking about those memories helped a lot because I knew that when she would get better, we would all be able to make more fun memories. Although having my grandma in the hospital was a scary feeling, I think it was scarier not knowing what was going to happen or how she was going to feel the next day. I had a lot of hope because I knew my grandma could beat it because she's one of the strongest people I know. Like Lucas' parents, having someone you love in the hospital was terrifying for my mom because she's her daughter. Like, can you imagine the mother who loved you and cared for you your whole life fighting for her life? I definitely couldn't. My mom means everything to me, especially because it's usually the three of us and if something were to happen to her, I would probably lose it.

Just like Oakley's parents, my parents fought, too ... like, a lot. Even though my parents weren't married and didn't lose one of their children to cancer, my parents had their share of problems. Although I was young, I still knew what was going on and I knew what was going to happen, just like Oakley did. Since I was young when my parents decided to separate and I didn't have an aunt in California like Oakley, my older sister (who I am very close with because she's all I have besides my mom) would take me out of the house to hang out with me or sometimes she took me along to one of her friends' houses or to our cousins. Also, because I was young, I didn't fall in love with someone that I could talk to, but I did have my sister who I love more than anything. She helped so much. She would always make me laugh and take my mind off things—not just my mom and dad fighting—but with other stuff that would make me upset or hurt my feelings.

Even though I can't relate to everything that happened to Oakley in this book, it helped me think more about life and how fragile it is and to also not be afraid to try new things. It really

got me thinking about how hard it is losing someone you love to cancer, especially a sibling. I couldn't imagine. I know it's hard having parents break up or go through a divorce because everyone gets so used to two parents always being there loving you. Even though my mom is a boss at being a single mom, she makes sure everyone is loved and cared for all the time, which sometimes is suffocating, but I love her. I don't know what it is about the book *Love, Lucas* but I keep coming back to it to read because I have read it four times now. Each time I read it, I am still surprised and excited and even confused as to why Oakley does the things she does. My favorite part of is definitely when Oakley and Carson kissed after having an emotional day at the beach, and even though I know what's going to happen, I still get scared when Carson gets attacked by the shark. I love it all—even the romance in the book. So thank you for the wonderful book *Love, Lucas* that I still can't stop reading! Well, if you don't mind, I have to go start reading *Love, Lucas* again for the fifth time!

Sincerely,

Isabella Adams, age 12