

**Title:** *Golden Arm*  
**Author:** Carl Deuker  
**Genre:** Realistic Fiction

**Reviewer Name and Grade:** Yujay A., 10<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Date Reviewed:** December 30, 2021

Lazarus “Laz” Weathers is an ordinary high school student who loves playing baseball. Laz is a very good pitcher, but has never had the opportunity to play for a good baseball team and get scouted by the major leagues and colleges. Laz lives with his half-brother Antonio and mother in a small trailer and attends North Central High School in Seattle. Antonio and Laz used to be very close and played baseball together, but Antonio began hanging out with the local drug dealer, Garrett. While Antonio is liked by everyone, Laz has a speech impediment and struggles to make friends. Laz dreams of playing for the major leagues one day, and he is hopeful that this will be his chance when he leads the North Central baseball team to a 6-0 record. However, half the baseball team is caught with alcohol at a movie theater and are kicked off the team, including Antonio. As the team does not have enough players, they are forced to forfeit the season. Laz loses all hope and thinks he will be just another ordinary guy who pitched in high school. Over the summer, Mr. Leskov, the man who runs the community center, makes a baseball team and Laz decides to play. Laz convinces his brother and several kids from school to join, and they are able to find games against real clubs. The team's first game is against Ian Thurman’s team. Ian Thurman is one of the best players in the state and is guaranteed to go to the major leagues. Laz has one of his best games and beats Ian’s team. While there are no scouts or coaches in attendance, Ian’s dad takes notice of Laz and compliments him. The team goes on to beat other select teams. Over the summer, Laz notices that more and more cars begin to show up at Garrett’s house while Antonio is there, and Laz worries that Antonio could be in danger by associating with a drug dealer. Laz finds out that his school won't have a baseball team his senior year due to the new principal, but his coach tells him that Laurelhurst High school, a rich high school across town wants him to play for them. Laurelhurst is the school Ian Thurman plays for and are the favorites to win the state title. Laz practices with the Laurelhurst preseason team and knows that he is good enough to be the starting pitcher for them. One day, Laz’s family receives the news that their trailer park is going to be demolished and new buildings are going to be built. This means that Laz will likely have to move out of Seattle and will not be able to play for Laurelhurst. However, Ian’s dad steps in and tells Laz he can live with them and attend Laurelhurst High. Laz must prove to everyone that he is good enough to go to the major leagues, all while dealing with school, his brother’s bad friends, and cheating allegations.

*Did the plot (for fiction) or presentation of information (for nonfiction) keep you interested?*

The plot definitely kept me interested as there was a lot of suspense, action, and drama.

*Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?*

The pace of the book was just right, as I could comprehend everything going on while not being bored.

*What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?*

This book is appropriate for grade levels 7 and up, as there are some drug and alcohol references.

*What type of reader would you recommend this book to?*

I would recommend this book to anybody who enjoys playing or watching sports.

*What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?*

The novel is told from the point of view of Laz and has 5 parts including an epilogue.

I would rate *Golden Arm* 5 stars because it was a very fun book to read about baseball. The book does not require too much baseball knowledge to enjoy, and was full of action and suspense. I would definitely recommend this novel to any reader who enjoys playing and watching sports.