



Chief Honor

Sigmund Brouwer

Reading level: 3.1

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AR Quiz # 34968

Book Summary

Lauren Cross is the first female player on a WHL team—goaltender Joseph Larken's team, the Spokane Chiefs. For Joseph, the prospect of a season in the publicity shadow of a new female goalie promises to be a nightmare. Joseph has a medical condition that causes him to feel very little physical pain, but the only way he can deal with the emotional pain of his father's betrayal is to build a wall of anger. When a steroid scandal knocks Lauren off the team, Joseph is relieved at first and then enraged by the accusations Lauren directs at one of the team's coaches, a man Joseph reveres. After an injury sidelines Joseph, he and Lauren form an unlikely team to discover the truth about Coach Al.

Prereading Ideas

- What kinds of challenges do female players face when they play on teams that are mostly male? Why would a girl prefer to play on a team with other girls?
- Steroid use is a serious problem in sports. How is it controlled in amateur and professional sports?

Connecting to the Text

Character

Appearances can be deceiving. You can't judge a book by its cover. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree. These clichés all contain some truth. In *Chief Honor*, Joseph is called Gump, after Gump the Grump, a goalie with a bad-tempered look on his face. Joseph constantly refers to himself as stupid and ugly. Lauren says he is just like his father. With this in mind, answer the following questions:

- Why does Joseph hate himself so much? Find instances in the book where Joseph runs himself down and then find evidence that supports another view of him. For example, he calls himself stupid, but then he figures out a plan to save Lauren and Al.
- Joseph feels betrayed by his father and refuses to visit him in jail. How has his father's behavior changed him? Have the changes been positive or negative?
- When Joseph rejects his father, he also rejects his faith. What effect does this have on him? How does it contribute to his self-image?
- Joseph may have abandoned his faith, but he still has a code of honor. Find examples throughout the book of ways in which Joseph acts ethically.

Theme

One of the main themes of *Chief Honor* is forgiveness. Joseph is unable to forgive his father, and as a result he is unable to move on with his life.

- Ask students to think about a time when they have found it hard to forgive someone. Or when they did something that someone else couldn't forgive. Then ask them to imagine that one of their prized possessions (a car, a guitar, a piece of electronics) is stolen or vandalized. What would it take to forgive the person who stole or vandalized your possession? An apology? The passage of time? True remorse? Get students to write and act out a short skit in which they show the sequence of events, from the initial act to forgiveness.
- Research what different faiths believe about forgiveness. For example, Buddhists believe that forgiveness prevents harmful thoughts from causing havoc on one's mental well-being. In a class discussion, talk about whether it is necessary to have faith in order to forgive.

Plot

Answer the following questions about the plot of *Chief Honor*:

1. Why is Lauren the target of a prank during her first game with the WHL? What happens to her?
2. Why is Joseph's father in prison? Why doesn't Joseph want to visit him?
3. Why was Eddie cut from the team?
4. Who planted drugs in Laurel's duffel bag and why?
5. Where did Steve Haliburton get the steroids and who did he use as smugglers?

Connecting to the Curriculum**Science**

- Joseph suffers from a mild case of syringomyelia. What is syringomyelia and how does it affect people?
- Slap shots are relatively new to hockey. Investigate the physics of slap shots and other hockey shots.

Media Studies

- Joseph has perfected a routine that he uses when he is being interviewed in chapter 3. Have students discuss the wisdom of his approach. Is he making things worse or is he right to protect himself by stonewalling?
- Celebrities complain about the unwanted intrusion of the paparazzi and yet they seem to feed off the attention. Ask students to imagine that they are followed by photographers every time they leave home, and get them to write a paragraph on how it makes them feel to have no privacy.

Connecting to the Students—Discussion Questions

1. Lauren is discriminated against because she is female. Sexism in sports is well documented. Have students research the history of their favorite sport in terms of gender differences. Then ask them to write a brief report on a famous woman athlete in the sport they have chosen.
2. Lauren says, "It's horrible to be blamed for something you didn't do." Joseph agrees. Being convicted of a crime you didn't commit is an extreme example of this. Get students to research wrongful conviction and its consequences.
3. Lauren argues with Joseph and he says, "Don't get married. You'll be doing your future husband a favor." Lauren apologizes for arguing, even though Joseph has insulted her. Should Lauren have apologized? Or should she have stood up for herself? Ask students to reverse the roles and act out a scene where Lauren insults

Joseph and he responds. Does he apologize? What does his response say about gender roles?

Resources

Theme

www.theforgivenessproject.com/stories/katy-hutchison-ryan-aldridge

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forgiveness>

www.guidetopsychology.com/forgive.htm

Women in Sports

www.megaphonemagazine.com/images/sexism_sports_women_continue_be_treated_secondclass_athletes.html

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_sports

Science

www.syringo.org

www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/syringomyelia/detail_syringomyelia.htm

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syringomyelia>

www.thephysicsofhockey.com

www.exploratorium.edu/hockey

Wrongful conviction

www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2009/08/06/f-wrongfully-convicted.html

www.law.northwestern.edu/wrongfulconvictions

Author Biography

Sigmund Brouwer is the bestselling author of many books for children and teens. He has contributed numerous titles to the Orca Currents series, the Orca Echoes series and the Orca Sports series. He and his family live in Red Deer, Alberta, and Eagleville, Tennessee.

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