



Comeback

Vicki Grant

Reading level: 3.2

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AR Quiz # 136622

Book Summary

Ria's perfect world falls apart when her parents divorce and her mother sells their luxurious home to move to a smaller apartment across town from all of her friends. Both Ria and all her friends view her father as a great guy, so Ria is convinced that her mother is just being mean and selfish to leave him and upset their lives. When Ria's father's shady business dealings lead him to commit suicide in a deadly plane crash, the news is more than she can handle. The choice she makes to run away with her little brother, Elliot, climaxes in disaster.

Prereading Idea

Ask students to brainstorm a list of positive quotes about life in general. For example: "When the going gets tough, the tough get going." Then ask students to make a list of character traits that a person who believes these quotes will possess.

Connecting to the World—Writing and Research Ideas

- After Ria's parents divorce, she realizes she didn't appreciate her family until it was gone. In chapter 1, she reflects, "I didn't even know my life was perfect until suddenly it just wasn't anymore." Ask students to write a personal narrative about the riches in their lives. Have them write the narrative in the form of a thank-you letter to a person(s) responsible for providing them with the blessings they count most precious. After students share their narratives in small groups or with the class, brainstorm with students what they can do to give back to those less fortunate. Some examples might include volunteering time at a local food bank, or collecting food or clothes for a homeless shelter.
- Reports of investment fraud are in the news daily, and students are inundated with compelling stories of people and businesses that lose everything. Ask students to pick a partner and to investigate one particular case of fraud. Then ask students to develop a visual presentation to share with the class, detailing how the fraud was accomplished.

Connecting to the Text—Elements of the Novel

Theme

The theme is the lesson or universal truth of the story. In pairs, ask students to write a one-sentence theme and then to find a famous quote that exemplifies the theme. Students can go to the following websites for quotes:

www.quotationspage.com
www.bartleby.com/100
www.brainyquote.com

Have students write their quote and illustrate the thematic statement with visuals from the story. Have students display them on the walls of the classroom.

Conflict

All of the major characters in *Comeback* face conflict, but the reader sees and feels Ria's conflict. With a partner, ask students to brainstorm a list of conflicts faced by the characters and to separate them into two columns, *internal* and *external*. Ask students to respond to the following questions:

- How do the characters resolve their conflicts?
- Are the resolutions what is expected?
- How would you have handled the situation?

Afterward, have students role play the conflicts, exploring the actual and alternative resolutions to the conflicts.

Plot

The sequence of events in a story is called the plot, and it is generally built around the conflict. The story's plot includes four stages: exposition, rising action, climax and falling action. In groups of three, ask students to identify what occur in each stage. Have students complete a storyboard of twelve sections on an 8 ½ x 14 piece of paper. For each section, have students draw a visual to represent major events and include a caption identifying the stage of the plot and explaining the action. Use the storyboard as a tool for students to pre-write their own individual narratives, focusing on the plot stages.

Connecting to the Students—Discussion Questions

1. What reasons could Ria's mother have for not wanting to accept money from Ria's father? How could she have refused the money without impacting Ria and Elliot?
2. What is Ria's perception of her father? Why is it "too good to be true"? Why is her perception of her mother so miscalculated?
3. Why do Colin and Ria break up? What, if anything, could Colin have done to prevent it?
4. Why is Ria's initial denial of her father's death a natural reaction? What emotions does she feel when she reads the news of his deception and theft of millions of dollars?
5. How does Ria deal with the immediate upheaval in her life? Why is she so shocked by Colin's and her friends' betrayal?
6. Ria's father always said, "Crisis is just another word for opportunity." How does this idea help Ria when she runs away with Elliot? What other philosophies of her father's help Ria? How is what her father said ironic?
7. What traits do Ria and her father have in common? In what ways do they handle adversity?

Writer's Craft**Vocabulary**

Ask students to look at the list of words below and find them in the book. Ask them to write definitions of the words based on the context clues in the sentence. Students can then write an original sentence using the words. Competing in teams, have students read their original sentences and have a teammate guess the correct vocabulary word. Extend the competition to include vocabulary words from other novels.

Tweak	(ch. 2)	Impoverished	(ch. 9)
Sinewy	(ch. 2)	Corniest	(ch. 12)
Indignant	(ch. 3)	Dawns	(ch. 12)
Agitated	(ch. 5)	Rickety	(ch. 18)
Condolences	(ch. 7)	Crouch	(ch. 20)

Author Biography

Though **Vicki Grant** always knew she wanted to be a writer, when she graduated from college, she was first hired as an advertising copywriter. She quickly learned the characteristics of writing and what it meant to meet deadlines and to take criticism. From advertising, Vicki began writing for a children's television series, and after seven years, she took some time for herself to write her first novel. Vicki lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia, with her husband and three children.