



Coming Clean

Jeff Ross

Reading Level: 2.9

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Book Summary

Rob desperately wants to be a DJ, so when his brother Adam lines up a gig for him, Rob jumps at the chance. On the night of the gig, one of Rob's friends dies from an overdose of Ecstasy, setting the police hot on the trail of the drug dealer. Adam admits that he sold the drug to the young girl, but he reveals that his supplier is DJ Sly, another DJ who works in the club. But when questioned by the police, Sly tells them that Rob is also involved. To help his brother, Adam must force Sly to tell the truth about Rob, even though Adam knows that also means he will take the fall and land in jail.

Prereading Idea

Ask students to investigate the laws surrounding teen clubs. As a class discuss both the positive and negative aspects of their existence.

Connecting to the World—Writing and Research Ideas

- Ask students to investigate the history and evolution of the career of disc jockey, including the impact of advances in technology on the career. If possible, ask students to interview a DJ, or have a DJ speak to the class. Then have students make predictions for the future of the career based on recent technology and/or society changes. Have students chart their research and predictions in a visual format to display.
- Divide students into groups of three and ask them to investigate the drug Ecstasy: the manufacturing process, the effects of the drug, the cost of the drug, the laws surrounding it and news reports about its abuse. Have students create an informational brochure that targets youth as its audience. Post brochures throughout the school and make them available in the counseling office to parents and students.

Connecting to the Text—Elements of the Novel***Characterization***

Although Adam and Sly both sell drugs, their characters and ideas of right and wrong differ greatly. Ask students in small groups to create an analogy to show their understanding of the difference between the two men who both broke the law. Then ask students to complete a Venn diagram as prewriting for a compare/contrast paper on the two characters. Students should incorporate their analogy throughout the Venn diagram and their paper. Have students share their papers using a jigsaw grouping.

Conflict

Well-written stories have well-developed conflicts, most of which fall into one of the following categories: man against man, man against nature, or man against self. *Coming Clean* has all three of these types of conflict. As a class, ask students to create a chart of events and situations from the book representing each of these three types of conflict. Then ask students to choose one specific conflict from the book and prepare a book jacket with a drawing of the conflict and a short paragraph describing the conflict.

Theme

Ask students to think about the title of the novel. What could the title mean in relationship to a theme? What could be the irony of the title? Ask students to write a thematic statement based on the title and then to write a paragraph justifying the theme they have chosen. Ask students to read their thematic statements and paragraphs to the class.

Connecting to the Students—Discussion Questions

1. Why is DJ Sly so angry about Rob filling in for him? How does DJ Sly treat Rob? How does Adam smooth things over?
2. Why does Adam want Rob's permission to leave town? Why is Rob so intent on Adam facing his crime?

3. How does Sly use Adam? What is the advantage for Sly to work behind the scenes and to make Adam the front for his drug business?
4. Why don't any of the girls with Mary Jane tell someone that she passed out? Why is her body found behind the DJ booth?
5. Mary Jane's death serves as a wake-up call to the community of the dangers of drug use by its teenagers. Throughout the investigation what is Detective Weir's focus? How does he determine the identity of the dealer?
6. How does Rob and Adam's relationship evolve through the story? What does Adam realize about himself that enables him to show more love for Rob?
7. What role, if any, do Rob and Adam's parents play in the boys' lives throughout the story?
8. How does Matt prove himself to be a loyal friend? What risks does he take to help Rob and Adam?

Writer's Craft

Denotation & Connotation

Have students work in small groups to look in the dictionary for the denotative meaning of the following words. Then have students discuss the connotative meaning of each in its original context. What are the implied associations with each word? How would the meaning be changed with similar, but different word selections? Have each student write a paragraph about the author's choice of one of the words and post their paragraphs on a bulletin board.

bellow (ch. 5)	burly (ch. 7)	dubbed (ch. 11)	encased (ch. 4)
encounter (ch. 3)	expanse (ch. 5)	hoisted (ch. 8)	integral (ch. 7)
proficient (ch. 7)	secluded (ch. 11)		

Author Biography

After graduating from high school, **Jeff Ross** worked as a DJ and as tech support for an Internet company and a video gaming company. In his spare time he loves to skateboard and snowboard. Jeff Ross currently teaches Scriptwriting for TV, Animation and Game Development, as well as Communications courses for students in the School of Media and Design at Algonquin College in Ottawa, Ontario. He is married, has two sons and is living his dream of teaching and writing novels.

Author Website

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