



Paralyzed

Jeff Rud

Reading level: 4.0
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AR Quiz # 126188

Book Summary

Reggie Scott is a hard-hitting senior linebacker for the Lincoln High School football team—a standout defender who prides himself on his toughness. But after an accident on the field results in the temporary paralysis of an opponent, his world is shaken.

Even though the accident is not Reggie's fault, the player's mother and the opposing team blame Reggie for the injury. Worse yet, he starts to second guess and blame himself, resulting in difficulties on the football field and at home.

Reggie's coaches and parents force him to sit out the biggest game of the year and want him to see a sports psychologist to help him overcome the problems that have resulted from the accident. Reggie is resistant and afraid of what people might think of him seeing a psychologist until his father confides that he has needed counseling himself to overcome some much more serious mental health issues.

Reggie eventually comes to realize that the accident was not his fault but rather the result of poor tackling technique by the injured boy. But along the way he learns a lot about himself, and his attitudes toward mental health are changed forever.



Prereading Ideas

- If somebody breaks an arm or a leg, they automatically go to the hospital for treatment. But if someone has a mental illness, it's a different story. Often, the person who is suffering is resistant to seeking treatment because of the stigma involved. What can be done to change the misconceptions about mental illness?
- Like any contact sport, football can be dangerous if proper technique is not used. Find out what the sport is doing to reduce the number of spinal injuries on the football field.

Connecting to the Text

Character

Choose a character from *Paralyzed* and list five character traits (positive or negative). Then find examples in the text that show these traits. For instance, Reggie is physically tough and emotionally vulnerable.

Point of View

- *Paralyzed* is written from Reggie's point of view. Have students pick another character and rewrite the first chapter from that person's point of view.
- Writing in the first person (using I) can be very effective, but it can also be quite limiting. Ask students to think of what those limitations are and whether the book might be told better from an omniscient (all-seeing) point of view.

Connecting to the Curriculum

Writing

Reggie sees a therapist after he is involved in the accident that injures another player. Journaling is one of the techniques that therapists use with clients. Ask students to write a few journal entries as Reggie, then a few as Nate.

Journalism

- Reggie gets written about in the paper a few times. The first article (ch.3) is fairly factual, but the second article (ch.9) upsets Reggie a lot. His father says it's a "terrible piece of journalism." Why does he think this? Ask students to write an accurate news story about what happened to Reggie and Nate.

- Tabloids often use misleading headlines to get people to buy their papers. Find an example of this in *Paralyzed* and get students to write a sensational headline for a routine event. For example, Headline: *High School Principal Takes Drugs. Story: Fearing that he will have a stroke, Principal Jones has started to take medication for his high blood pressure.*
- Discuss the difference between ethical journalism and tabloid journalism.

Psychology

- Reggie's mother says, "Sometimes stress does strange things to people." Have students research the effects of stress on humans. Is there such a thing as good stress?
- Anxiety disorders can be crippling. Reggie's dad gets treatment that helps him cope. Are anxiety disorders rare or common? What are some of the treatments used to help people with anxiety?
- When Reggie sees his therapist, he finds out that the therapist used to play football. This makes Reggie trust him. Ask students to consider how a therapist gains a client's trust when they have nothing in common.

Connecting to the Students—Discussion Questions

1. How does it feel when you are blamed for something you didn't do? What is the best way to react?
2. Many homeless people are also mentally ill. Ask students to discuss the connections between mental illness and homelessness and what can be done to help. Why are people with mental illnesses often resistant to seeking treatment?
3. Coach Clark benches Reggie for an important game. Did he make the right decision or was it completely unfair?

Resources

Point of View

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narrative_mode

www.dummies.com/how-to/content/understanding-point-of-view-in-literature.html

Journaling

www.ehow.com/how_2240063_journal-therapy.html



Journalism

www.stinkyjournalism.org

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Journalism_ethics_and_standards

Psychology

www.medicinenet.com/stress/article.htm

www.cmha.ca/bins/content_page.asp?cid=2-28

www.cmha.ca/bins/content_page.asp?cid=3-94

Author's Note

I wrote about this subject because I believe that mental illness is widely misunderstood and that it can strike anybody at any time. Although Reggie doesn't have a serious mental illness himself, through this incident he discovers his father has suffered from severe anxiety disorder. The incident helps change his mind about mental illness.

I think it is important to let young readers know that the stigma attached to mental illness must be broken down if people are to receive treatment and live healthier, happier lives.

Author Biography

Jeff Rud is the author of ten sports-related books, including five books for Orca Book Publishers. *Crossover* was his first book in the popular Orca Sports series.

Jeff was a journalist in Western Canada for nearly thirty years, working for a variety of newspapers. For the first twenty-three years, he was a sports writer, covering a wide range of sports, including the NHL, CFL and NBA. Aside from his fiction, he has written two biographies of Canadian basketball star Steve Nash, and a history of the Vancouver Canucks.

For the final six years of his newspaper career, Jeff was a political journalist, covering politics in the British Columbia Legislature. He now works in communications for the BC government.

He is married to Lana, a middle school teacher. The couple lives in Victoria with their two children, Maggie and Matthew, and their two black Lab-crosses, Otis and Joker. Jeff coaches youth basketball and baseball and is the manager of his son's hockey team.