



Masked

Norah McClintock

Reading level: 3.2

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AR Quiz # 140884

Book Summary

Daniel, the Mystery Shopper, has been asked by a real-estate-developer friend of his uncle to do a little “spying” on Mr. Mirelli, a convenience-store owner who has refused the developer’s best offers. Daniel’s plan begins to unravel, however, when he and Mr. Mirelli find themselves face-to-face with an armed, masked bandit who appears to be confused, inexperienced, and yet even more dangerous. The next surprise—Mr. Mirelli’s daughter, Rosie, has chosen once and for all to rid herself of her overprotective father by running away with Corey, the cool, tough guy whom everyone seems to idolize. Discovered by the bandit in her father’s store before she can make her get-away, Rosie and Daniel both find that they are no stranger to the masked robber. In fact, the robber is no real thief at all; he’s just Leon, the boy that sees himself as Rosie’s rescuer. When Corey’s emotions get the best of him and he takes it out on Rosie, knocking her to the floor, Leon reacts by shooting Corey in the arm, insuring that they all will be forever changed by the violent events and the surprising confessions on this most complicated of nights.

Prereading Ideas

The masked man in the novel reflects on post-traumatic stress disorder in war veterans. Have students work in small groups to research post-traumatic stress disorder, including symptoms, length of time to onset, precipitating circumstances, and treatment. Have each group compile their findings into a poster or other visual product. Explore with students other situations that might lead to similar reactions in individuals who have not experienced the horror of war, but who have experienced other traumatic life situations. Brainstorm and display with the research students have gathered.

Connecting to the World—Writing and Research Ideas

- Leon rescued his mother and brothers from the abusive home where they lived with their alcoholic father. He also reacts to the violence he sees Corey carry out on Rosie. Divide students into groups to research family violence: the cyclical nature of family violence, statistics concerning family violence and deaths, legal and social alternatives to living in an abusive home, and the correlations with other social problems such as drug abuse, alcoholism and poverty. Have each group use their research to prepare a brochure that could be distributed through the school, churches or other community organizations.
- The events of the novel *Masked* are certainly newsworthy, especially the attempted robbery, violent interaction between Corey and Rosie, and the shooting and subsequent arrest of Leon. Have students write a newspaper account of the action focusing on the facts of the events, but also including interviews of the characters and bystanders. Have students share their stories in small groups of five or six.

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

Norah McClintock's novel *Masked* refers to the armed and masked man who attempts "to rob" Mr. Mirelli. On many levels, however, each of the following characters—Leon, Daniel, Rosie, Mr. Mirelli and Corey—could be considered to be "masked," ranging from temporarily hiding the truth to completely deceiving and manipulating others. Have students create a visual representation of the duality or masked nature of the characters using poster board or large art paper. Have students include visual elements as well as quotations from the text to support both the more noble side of their personalities—as well as the untruths and deceptions.

Setting

The events of the story flow naturally from the setting. In fact, moved to another setting, the events would likely not be believable. Have students brainstorm elements of the setting that make the chain of events seem logical. Have students draw a storyboard of the main plot events. Using the storyboard have students narrate the events of the story as told from the viewpoint of "the convenience store," allowing the store to impact the story as it interacts with the people and events.

Point of View

Norah McClintock tells the story of *Masked* from the viewpoints of Daniel, Rosie and Leon, the masked man. At the end of the novel, the reader knows that Rosie loses her baby, Corey loses the use of his arm and Mr. Mirelli wants to work on his relationship with Rosie. Yet, all of the characters have likely changed markedly as a result of the events of the “robbery.” Select one of the original viewpoints or Corey or Mr. Mirelli. Tell the character’s story from the shooting forward. Have students work to write authentic voices for the character and to include lessons the character has learned and how they will live their life differently as a result of the events. Have students share their “after the end” stories with the class and post them on the bulletin board.

Connecting to the Students—Discussion Questions

1. Daniel, the Mystery Shopper, is involved in the events of the story by sheer coincidence of “spying” on Mr. Mirelli’s store at the same time that the other events are unfolding. Why does the author give him a voice, along with the voices of Rosie and Leon? What can he contribute to the story that the others cannot?
2. In chapter 4, Leon contemplates all of the possible ways that the “robbery” attempt could go awry. What is the irony stemming from the actual events that occur in the store?
3. Rosie believes that she and tough-guy, Corey, have a real future together. However, there are hints along the way that Corey might not be the “man of her dreams.” What signs does Rosie miss that Corey is not the kind of person she would want to be the father of her baby?
4. Rosie is convinced that her father cares more for his store than for her. The neighborhood citizens also believe that Mr. Mirelli is a sour-puss with little kindness or compassion. How do Mr. Mirelli’s actions in the attempted robbery contradict both of these views?
5. In chapter 8, Rosie thinks “There’s only me and my dad now. If anything happens to him, I inherit everything. All the money he has tucked away will be mine.” What does this quote reveal about the true character of Rosie? What other evidence supports the selfish, manipulative nature of Rosie’s personality?
6. In chapter 9, when Daniel, Rosie and Mr. Mirelli realize that Leon is the masked robber, Leon comes to the startling conclusion that, though he is holding a gun, “no one seems to be afraid of (me) anymore.” Why are they no longer afraid? What do they believe about Leon? Why are their beliefs unjustified?
7. Leon attempted to rescue Rosie from what he believed to be an abusive father. What was wrong with his chosen plan? What would have been a better plan?

8. As a result of the shooting, Leon faces severe consequences. In addition, he faces charges for the attempted robbery, charges that Mr. Mirelli refuses to drop. What do you think are the real reasons that Mr. Mirelli refuses to drop the attempted robbery charges against Leon?
9. At the end of the story, Rosie tells Daniel that she and her father are going away for the summer—just the two of them. What has Mr. Mirelli forgiven of Rosie? What does this say about his true nature?

Writer's Craft

Figurative Language

Norah McClintock uses similes liberally throughout the novel to help her readers visualize the surroundings, the action and the characters. Have students work in partners to locate and categorize the similes found in the book into one of the three categories listed. Have each set of partners write three new similes—one each to describe the surroundings, the action and the characters in the book. Have students illustrate and post their similes.

Author Biography

Norah McClintock is a five-time winner of the Crime Writers of Canada's Arthur Ellis Award for Best Juvenile Crime Novel. She has written ten novels for reluctant readers for Orca Book Publishers since 2005. Norah was born and raised in Montreal, Quebec. She knew that she wanted to be a writer from the age of twelve and earned her degree in history from McGill University. Norah enjoys reading (she rarely watches television), hiking, biking, long walks and cross-country skiing. She lives with her family in Toronto, Ontario.