



Plastic

Sarah N. Harvey

Reading level: 3.2

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AR Quiz # 136627

Book Summary

When Leah's mother agrees to give her a boob job for her sixteenth birthday, her best friend, Jack, puts his concern for her health in high gear. First, he researches plastic surgeons in the area by posing as a possible patient, and then he protests against the plastic surgeon that performs surgery on teenagers. Jack receives his share of media attention bringing pressure on the surgeon until he agrees to quit performing surgery on patients under the age of nineteen. Jack's protest is truly a success when he learns that Leah decides not to have the surgery.

Prereading Idea

Read the following article to the class:

www.familiesonlinemagazine.com/child-development/teens-plastic-surgery.html

Ask students to write a one-paragraph response to the article and then discuss as a class.

Connecting to the World—Writing and Research Ideas

- Despite the faltering economy, the number of teens having plastic surgery is increasing yearly. Ask students to investigate the statistics, the types of cosmetic surgery being performed on teenagers under the age of nineteen, and the reasons cited for the surgeries. Have students write a reaction paper to the proliferation of surgery performed on teenagers. Use the papers as a springboard to debates, Socratic seminars, panel discussions or calls to action.
- Jack's parents have been peaceful protesters for a variety of causes, so it is an obvious choice for Jack to protest what he perceives as wrong. Ask students to investigate the laws surrounding "peaceful protest" in the United States and Canada, citing an example of a particular protest as a case study. As a class, create a bulletin board display highlighting "PEACEFUL PROTESTS: SUCCESSES AND FAILURES."

Connecting to the Text—Elements of the Novel***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 occurs in each stage and what specifically occurs in each stage in the novel. Have students write a song, a narrative poem, a rap or other creative retelling of the story divided into four sections—one section for each stage. Have students present or share their creations with the class.

Theme

Theme is not the subject of the work, but, instead, is an insight about life or human nature. Based on this definition of theme, ask students to determine the theme of *Plastic*. List their ideas on the board, and from those ideas ask them, as a group, to write the most concise and appropriate theme for the novel. Have each student write a paragraph explaining a connection to the theme based on a personal experience or reference to another literary work. Post the theme and the connections in the classroom.

Conflict

Every story must have conflict, and most conflict falls into one of the following categories: man against man, man against nature, or man against self. *Plastic* has all three types of conflict. As a class, ask students to list events and situations from the book that represent 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 an enticing "invitation to read" the book focused on the conflict.

Connecting to the Students—Discussion Questions

1. Why is Leah so upset with Jack's response to her mother's birthday gift of a boob job? How does this situation strengthen and change Jack and Leah's relationship?
2. What is the motivation behind Jack's attempt to alter plastic surgeons' policy on operating on teenagers? How does Jack's protest prove to him and others that his motivation for the fight was pure? What is the ultimate outcome?
3. What role does Jack's brother Mike play in the protest? Why does he get involved? What does Jack learn about his brother?
4. How does Leah finally work through her decision about plastic surgery? Why does the situation with Jack make her angry?
5. What do Jack's parents do to help support him through the protest? How does their support encourage him?
6. What, if anything, does the information Jack gains from his blog sliceanddice.com add to Jack's fight?
7. What do the readers learn about Jack because of the way he handles the protest? What character traits does Jack possess?

Writer's Craft

Vocabulary Enrichment

Ask students to look at the list of words below and to find them in the book. Then, ask them to write definitions of the words based on the context clues in the sentence. Have students write humorous sentences on pneumonic devices to help them recall the memory of each word. Select one or two of the most creative to share with the class and post in the room.

Futile	(ch. 1)	Vain	(ch. 5)
Knack	(ch. 2)	Generic	(ch. 6)
Empathetic	(ch. 2)	Flustered	(ch. 9)
Dubious	(ch. 5)	Credibility	(ch. 10)

Author Biography

Sarah N. Harvey's life has been filled with books and a love for reading. Her mother was an avid reader; her father, a neurosurgeon; one brother, an English professor; and the other, a writer. So Sarah comes from a family that honors books and reading. It is no wonder that Sarah's first job was in a bookstore. After she earned her degree in English, she was the trade book buyer at the University of Victoria Bookstore for fifteen years. In 1988 she wrote review columns, and in 2001, she published her first essay. *Plastic* is her fourth book. Sarah lives in Victoria, British Columbia.