



No Problem

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Reading level: 2.2

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AR Quiz # 67485

Book Summary

As a high school junior, Curt has it all—a supportive family, a position as star pitcher for the varsity baseball team, an abundance of friends and the perfect girlfriend. So when he becomes involved with an older woman who introduces him to drugs, his family and friends are shocked at the change in his attitude and behavior. It is only when he walks off the baseball field and quits the team that they realize just how close they are to losing Curt. His friends and family rally around him to help him overcome his addiction.

Prereading Idea

Ask each student to find a newspaper article about a teenager in trouble as a result of drugs and bring them to class. Put students in groups and have them read each others' articles and make a list of the common factors in each group of stories. As each group shares their list, make a list of the top five results. Keep this list as a reference to Curt and what happens to him in *No Problem*.

Connecting to the World—Writing and Research Ideas

In chapter 13, Curt's mother says, "I have done some research. Curt, you have all the symptoms of having a drug addiction." Have students choose a drug and research what the symptoms of addiction to that drug would be and make a list. Put the lists together in a book for parents, counselors and teachers to help make them aware of the facts. Students can post the list in the halls around school and/or include the list as an informative link on the school's website.

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

Think about the title of the novel—*No Problem*. What could the title mean in relationship to a theme? Ask students to write a thematic statement based on the title, and then write a paragraph justifying the theme they have chosen. Ask students to read their thematic statements and paragraphs to the class. Discuss with students how denying and/or admitting that a problem exists affects the outcome of the problem. Why do substance-abuse programs emphasize the importance of admitting a problem?

Character

Ask students to draw a positive/negative line graph of the events in Curt's life and review what happens to him. Ask students to determine whether or not he changed during the novel because of the people he befriended. If so, how did he change? What did he learn about life? Ask students to draw a positive/negative line graph of their own personal decisions in the last year. Have they allowed peers to steer them in the wrong direction? Have they experienced positive peer pressure?

Conflict

Every story must have conflict to move the plot forward. Make a list of the conflicts Curt must confront, and determine if he resolves them or if he must live with the consequences. How were other characters affected by the conflicts in Curt's life? Have students draw a diagram or web to include all individuals affected by Curt's conflicts.

Plot

A story's plot, or sequence of events, usually includes four stages: exposition establishes setting and introduces characters and the conflict; rising action moves the plot along by expanding the conflict; climax signals the turning point; and falling action resolves the conflict. In small groups, outline the events in this novel that fall into each stage, and then, as a class, make a large wall poster depicting each stage.

Connecting to the Students—Discussion Questions

1. In chapter 1, Curt says, "...between baseball, school and my part-time job I didn't have time for much else." However, Curt does find time to get into trouble and lose all that he valued. How does the old adage, "Idle hands are the Devil's workshop," apply to Curt's life? Have you or has anyone you know ever been in a similar situation? What was the outcome?
2. Jumping to conclusions and making assumptions based on appearances often creates problems. For example, Curt assumed the good-looking guy with Leah at the grocery store was her boyfriend, when, in actuality, he was her brother. What assumptions do the characters make about Curt? How do those assumptions affect Curt's life? What assumptions have you made that have negatively affected your life?
3. When an individual makes a life-altering decision, it also affects those people close to the individual. For example, Curt's decision to quit baseball affected him as well as the team and his family. Discuss the decisions made by the characters and the overall affect those decisions had on others. Whose decisions affect your life? How do the decisions you make affect others?
4. Leah was scared about going to a new school on the first day and was glad to meet Curt before school started, so she would know someone there. Discuss ways new students could be made to feel comfortable on the first day of school. Ask students to share experiences they have had either with being a new student or with becoming acquainted with one.
5. Discuss the ethical issue of the coach giving Curt muscle relaxers without a prescription. How do you think Curt's father would have reacted if he had known? Could the coach have lost his job for giving unprescribed medication to his players? Do you think this could have marked the beginning of Curt's drug addiction? How could Curt have handled the situation differently?

Writer's Craft***Foreshadowing***

The author begins to build a sense of foreboding about Leah's home life by using foreshadowing, hints about future plot twists, to make the reader aware a problem exists. The first example is in chapter 2 when Curt asks Leah why she is always in a rush to get home. Look for other examples, and then discuss what situations other than alcoholism could have been the problem. What clues does the author give about Rachel to lead the reader to believe that something could go wrong?

Allusion

An allusion is an indirect reference to another literary work, a famous person or an event. For example, when Leah constantly has to get home early, Curt asks her, “What are you, Cinderella?” (ch. 2). This brings to the reader’s mind the story of Cinderella. Pair up students and ask them to find another situation in the story where an allusion would give the reader greater understanding. Students should rewrite the section, adding the allusion. Read the rewrites to the class.

Author Biography

Dayle Campbell Gaetz loves to read and works as a freelance writer and author at her home on Stories Beach, near Campbell River, British Columbia. She enjoys skiing and kayaking and taking pleasure in nature.