



Slam Dunk

Kate Jaimet

Reading level: 4.2

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AR Quiz # 129569

Book Summary

Salvador “Slam” Amaro is the assistant coach of the girls’ basketball team. Sounds like an easy gig for the talented sixteen-year-old. Show up, run a few drills and pad his resumé so he can win a spot on the Ontario Under 17 men’s team. But Slam hasn’t bargained on the girls’ head coach and the star point guard going missing. With the girls facing playoff elimination, Slam has to solve the mystery of their disappearance and take over as head coach of the team, while battling some tough competitors for his own place on the Ontario squad.

Prereading Ideas

- We often think that good deeds are rewarded, but are there times when doing the right thing leads to a punishment or a setback? Is it always necessary to do “the right thing,” or are there times when it’s acceptable to do something else—or just to do nothing—in order to avoid negative consequences? Does someone who always does the right thing come out ahead in the long run?
- Some athletes are brilliant individual players. Others are “team players” who don’t rack up a lot of points, but are critical to helping the team win. Which is better? Discuss the pros and cons of each type of player.

Connecting to the Students—Discussion Questions

1. At the beginning of the tryouts for the provincial team, Slam thinks he knows more about basketball than Coach Donovan does. What experiences make Slam more humble and help him realize that he still has a lot to learn about the game?
2. Inez and her mother leave Inez's father after he hits them during an argument one night. Are there any clues about what caused Inez's father to become abusive? Is he a completely unsympathetic character, or does he have a "good side" as well as a "bad side"?
3. After finding out about the abuse, Slam decides to confront Inez's dad. Is this a smart decision or a foolish one?
4. Inez and Slam share a common background: their parents are both immigrants from Chile. But their parents were on opposite sides of the conflict in Chile. Inez's father was one of Pinochet's men, while Slam's parents opposed Pinochet's rule. Will this make it more difficult for Slam and Inez to have a relationship, or are the historical conflicts of their parents irrelevant to young people's lives?
5. Describe Slam's character at the beginning and at the end of the book. Has he changed? If so, what experiences changed him? What do you like best about Slam? What do you like least?

Resources***Chilean History***

www.geographia.com/chile/chilehistory.htm
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augusto_Pinochet

Domestic Violence

www.helpguide.org/mental/domestic_violence_abuse_types_signs_causes_effects.htm
www.womensweb.ca/violence/dv/effects.php

Teamwork

<http://echeblahblah.blogspot.com/2006/05/how-to-win-basketball-game-team-work.html>
www.youtube.com/watch?v=wcD7MkgUbMk

Author's Note

Mystery novels, especially of the “whodunit” variety, usually feature intelligent criminals with complex motives, who use great cunning and subterfuge to plot their crimes and cover up their tracks. The reality I’ve seen as a daily news reporter is quite different. A lot of the criminals turn out to be underachievers, often with substance-abuse problems. In the case of women who are the victims of violent crime, the perpetrator is most often (sadly) a husband or boyfriend. I wanted my book to reflect this reality. However, I did not want to leave the impression that all men are bad, abusive or violent. I tried to balance Mr. Ramirez’s violence toward his wife and daughter with Slam’s gallantry and basic human decency.

A short note on Chilean history: General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte became the dictator of Chile on September 11, 1973, when a military coup ousted the socialist government of President Salvador Allende. Over the course of his rule, which lasted until March 11, 1990, thousands of people were killed, imprisoned, tortured or mysteriously “disappeared” as a result of Pinochet’s crusade to crush all socialist, communist and left-wing opposition. In 1998, Pinochet was charged with human-rights abuses before a Spanish court, but he avoided facing the charges on the grounds that he was medically unfit to stand trial. He died on December 10, 2006, at age 91.

Author Biography

Kate Jaimet was born in Ottawa, Ontario, on June 30, 1969. In high school, her life outside of the classroom revolved around the basketball, volleyball and soccer seasons. She played on all three teams, until a torn knee ligament in grade 12 quashed her competitive sporting ambitions.

After high school, she studied literature at the University of Toronto and went on to complete a degree in journalism at Ryerson University. For over a decade, she has worked as a newspaper reporter, first at the *Edmonton Journal*, then at the *New Brunswick Telegraph-Journal*, and finally at the *Ottawa Citizen*.

Kate lives in Ottawa with her husband and two beautiful daughters. She enjoys canoeing, kayaking, biking and yoga, and recently took up hockey, which she plays in a women’s recreational league.

Author Website

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