



Tagged

Eric Walters

Reading level: 4.5

978-1-4598-0167-7 PB

978-1-4598-0168-4 LIB

Book Summary

When tagged wall art begins showing up all over town, best friends Oswald, Ian and Julie admire the talent of the graffiti artist, Wiz, as do others in the community. However, Mayor Dumfrey is enraged at the “defacement of public property” and the person who is violating the law. Mayor Dumfrey has the art painted over as soon as it is discovered, and he bases his election campaign on “cleaning up the city.” When the identity of Wiz is discovered, the school and community choose to support the artist and the course of events changes for the Mayor.

Prereading Idea

Ask students to define tagging and to find an example online that they can share with the class. Ask students to investigate the laws surrounding tagging and graffiti in their city and to discover if the law and punishment are enforced.

Connecting to the World—Writing and Research Ideas

- Mrs. Johnson, the art teacher, points out to students that art has always been used to make political statements. In chapter 7, she asks her students to discover modern examples of art as protest or comment. Ask students to find examples in the 21st Century and to share them with the class using technology in their presentation. Students should include information that conveys the political statements being made. As a class, discuss the effectiveness of the various examples in reaching and persuading their audiences.
- Videos “going viral” on the Internet through YouTube is a common phenomenon in today’s society. Most likely, the people in those videos have had life-changing experiences from the fall out—much like Mayor Dumfrey. Ask students to find a class appropriate YouTube video that has gone viral. Then have students investigate the impact of the video on the people who made and posted it. Students can write a one-page explanation of their findings including one or more generalizations regarding this type of “sudden celebrity” status. Have students share their explanations, generalizations and the videos with the class.
- When Oswald takes Julia to the art gallery, he shows her some guerilla art painted by the Wiz. Ask students to define guerilla art and to research where it has been discovered and how the discovery was handled. Create a classroom bulletin board of student findings.

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

- An external conflict erupts between Mayor Dumfrey and some community members about the need to paint over the art that the Wiz painted. While the Mayor feels it is “an epic battle to reclaim the city” (ch. 6), others feel the Wiz’s art can beautify the city. Ask students to take a stand on one side or the other of the conflict and to write a well-supported, factual letter to the editor of the “local newspaper” stating the reasons for their opinion. Have students read their letters in small groups of five to six students.
- In small groups ask students to define point of view and to discuss how the author’s choice of point of view impacts the novel. Then have each student select one character from the novel and retell a portion of the novel from that character’s point of view. Have students share their creations with the class. Then as a class discuss how the story is impacted by the different points of view.

Connecting to the Students—Discussion Questions

1. What clues does the author give to lead the reader to infer that Oswald is the tagger?
2. Oswald, Ian and Julia are best friends. What are the characteristics of their friendship? How do they prove themselves loyal to one another?
3. What role do Oswald's teachers play in his desire to be the Wiz and to take a stand against what he believes is wrong?
4. How does Mayor Dumfrey inspire Oswald's art? What is the symbolic meaning of the sheep?
5. Why is Julia so reluctant to accept street art as "real" art? What attempts does Oswald make to convince Julia that tagging is art? How is Julia finally convinced?
6. In what ways does Julia help have Oswald's charges for defacing public property dismissed? How does Ian help?
7. How do the police react to Mayor Dumfrey? What does this say about the leadership qualities of the Mayor?

Writer's Craft*Dialogue*

The author uses dialogue to convey information, develop character, build story background, give readers information, and move the plot forward. Ask students working in small groups to select four sections of dialogue and to identify the information the dialogue conveys in each. Then have each group evaluate the effectiveness of the dialogue in each selection choosing one section to discuss and share with the whole class.

Author Biography

Since this first novel in 1993, **Eric Walters** has published over seventy novels with more scheduled for the coming years. Eric's novels have won more than 100 awards including eleven separate children's choice awards. When he is not writing, Eric is coaching his children's soccer and basketball teams. In addition, he plays the saxophone and enjoys music. He enjoys presenting to children—blending drama, storytelling and audience participation. Eric strives to motivate his audience members, not only about his books, but also about their own personal writing process.

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