



Triggered

Vicki Grant

Reading level: 3.1

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Book Summary

Mick and Jade's relationship is not what it seems. After three years of dating, Mick wants to break off the relationship, knowing that it will be difficult for Jade and also for her younger brother, Gavin, who suffers from migraines. Jade refuses to accept the truth about Mick's feelings, and, even worse, she uses Gavin as a weapon against Mick. Gavin's migraines are triggered by MSG, a food additive. As Mick begins to date another girl, Jade begins putting MSG in Gavin's food so that when he has a severe headache, Jade can call on Mick to help her. Jade's mother, who works two jobs, is unaware of her daughter's behavior, but Gavin begins to suspect what Jade is doing. He tells Mick about the "magic sprinkles," and Mick begins to put everything together and to seek a way to end Jade's bizarre behavior.

Prereading Idea

Often times, people can be so close to a situation that they can't be objective about the events or people involved. However, a friend or family member—not involved in the situation—can observe behaviors that could be hurtful or even dangerous. For example, a mother may see a friend of her child's that could be a negative influence. Ask students to discuss possible scenarios where individuals one step removed can be more objective about a problem situation.

Connecting to the World—Writing and Research Ideas

- Jade's behavior is a known disease called Munchhausen Syndrome by proxy. With a partner, ask students to investigate this disease and to find other reported cases. Students should also identify the symptoms and the treatment. Ask each group of students to create a visual to share the particulars of the case they find and other facts about the disease or the cure. Post visuals around the classroom and have students participate in a gallery walk.
- In today's society, single parent families are common and the pressure and potential problems these families face are different than those faced by nuclear families. Ask students in small groups to investigate the statistics surrounding single parent families and the issues and challenges the single parent and the children of that parent face. Students should also research resources available to assist single parent families. Have each group create a brochure that could be used by parent-teacher organizations or other parenting groups to assist single parent families.
- With a partner, ask students to create a "poem for two voices" between any two of the characters in the book. Students can use a particular scene in the book or create a conversation that could have taken place. Have students practice and perform their poems for the class.

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

From the beginning, the reader can see that Jade might have a problem with reality, and Mick has issues setting and maintaining boundaries. Ask students to work with a partner to choose either Jade or Mick and to choose a word that describes their personality trait pattern. Student partners should create a time line of events that demonstrate the patterns that lead up to the climax and ultimate conclusion. Each event should include a short explanation of the behavior as it relates to the character trait. The timelines can be shared with the class and posted in the classroom.

Conflict

Jade and Mick both experience internal and external conflicts, and their reactions to the conflicts are what move the story forward. Ask students to select either Mick or Jade and to make a list of both the internal and external conflicts, explaining how the selected character resolves them. Working in small groups, have students write a skit depicting one of the conflicts Mick or Jade experiences. Students may incorporate drama, exaggeration, humor, sarcasm or other elements to highlight the conflict. Have students perform their skits for the class.

Theme

The theme is the main idea of the story; it is not the subject of the work, but, instead, it is an insight about life or human nature. Based on this definition of theme, ask students to write a one-sentence theme and to find a quote that exemplifies the theme. Students can go to one of the following websites for quotes:

www.quotationspage.com
www.brainyquote.com
<http://quotationsbook.com>

Have students write their one sentence theme and quote on 8 ½ x 11 poster board, include an illustration, and display the themes in the classroom

Connecting to the Students—Discussion Questions

1. Why does Mick stay with Jade for over three years when almost everything she does irritates him?
2. Why is Jade so willing to hurt her brother Gavin by her actions when Mick breaks up with her? How does she justify Mick's change of heart toward her?
3. Why does Mick avoid Jade at school? What is he afraid of? Does he have a valid reason to be fearful?
4. Why doesn't Jade accept what Mick says as truth? What does it gain her to pretend he is still interested in her?
5. What role does Gavin play in Jade's game to win Mick's heart and to keep him as a boyfriend?
6. How does Mick's relationship with Dalma increase Jade's tactics to win Mick back?
7. Why doesn't Mick listen to Quinn's advice about Jade? How could Quinn have handled the situation differently?
8. Why is Jade's mother so clueless about what is happening with Gavin? In what ways does Jade "play" her mother?
9. What is Mick's relationship with his parents? Why doesn't he discuss the situation with Jade and Gavin with them? How could they have helped Mick?
10. How does the title relate to the story? What characters are triggered and what are their triggers?

Writer's Craft*Verb Usage*

Powerful verbs can help create an image in the reader's mind. Ask students to find the examples below and then to find five other examples of powerful verbs in the novel. Then have students find five sentences in their own writing to rewrite using a powerful verb. Students can select their best revision and share their "before" and "after" versions of their writing with the class.

bolts	(ch. 1)	poke	(ch. 3)	slumps	(ch. 9)
bounces	(ch. 7)	ruffle	(ch. 7)	squeals	(ch. 3)
hoist	(ch. 7)	scurries	(ch. 5)		
plowed	(ch. 4)	shifted	(ch. 11)		

Author Biography

Vicki Grant always knew she wanted to be a writer, and after she graduated from college, she was hired as an advertising copywriter. She learned the characteristics of good writing and what it meant to meet deadlines and to take criticism. From advertising, she began writing for a children's television series, but after seven years, she took some time for herself to write her first novel. Vicki lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia, with her husband and three children.