



Lockdown

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Interest level: grade 7 and up

Reading level: 2.9

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AR Quiz # 122457

Book Summary

Chase takes bullying one step too far when he torments Josh in science class about the class hamster and her newborn babies. Humiliated, Josh brings a gun to school to terrorize the students, forcing the school into lockdown. But Josh's only friend, Adam, thinks he knows Josh's destination and tries to head him off before Josh starts a killing spree. When Adam finds Josh, he tackles him to the ground and takes his gun just before the police open fire, though not soon enough to save Josh's life.

Prereading Idea

Discuss the title of the book with students and the possible implications. Ask students to explain the lockdown procedure for their school and the circumstances in which it is used. Be prepared to review the plan with students if they are not familiar with it. If there is no plan in place, be prepared to write one to propose to the principal.

Connecting to the World—Writing and Research Ideas

Unheard of until recent years, school shootings are now on the rise throughout American society. Divide students into small groups and ask each group to research a different consequence school shootings have imposed on our society: What laws have been put into place to protect students in schools? What types of education (bullying, school safety, gang awareness, etc.) have been implemented in schools for the safety of students, teachers and parents? What procedural changes have been made in schools for safer schools (security cameras, IDs, locked doors, metal detectors, etc.)? Do police officials have a profile for shooters? If so, how have they used that knowledge to increase school safety? Has the enrollment in private and home schools increased? Students can also brainstorm other questions that need to be researched. Ask each group to select a focus and research and prepare a presentation for the class using at least one visual aid.

Generally after a shooting tragedy occurs in a school, news reporters interview students, teachers, administrators, and parents who knew the shooter to try to determine what set him off. Ask the students to find a partner and to interview each other about what happened on the day of the shooting and the precipitating events that occurred just prior to the shooting. Students should develop two interviews by having one student assume the voice of a character in the book and the other student assume the voice of a reporter. The students should then switch roles to allow each student to participate as both a character and a reporter. Student interviewers may also include questions about Josh, how well the character knew him, and the character's reactions to his actions. Compile the interviews into a class booklet to share with other classes.

On page 98, Adam reflects on the changes in peoples' relationships after the shooting. Even though no one but Josh is killed, everyone realizes they could have died; it forces them to take a closer look at the people they love and not take them for granted. Ask students to think about a particular person in their lives they take for granted and do not appreciate. Then, ask them to write a letter to that person expressing what they feel for the person and how thankful they are for what that person has done for them. Each student's letters should be given to that person after the letters have been shared with the class.

Connecting to the Text—Elements of the Novel

Point of View

The reader never hears the reason Josh changes from a mild-mannered student into a raging shooter, who, according to the evidence and to his friend Adam, never intended to kill anyone. Based on the evidence and what students can glean from conversations about Josh, ask them to write a letter from Josh's point of view, explaining why he did what he did, including his desired outcome for his actions. Students can share their letters with the class.

Theme

Lockdown could happen in any school, and Josh could be the average student most of us know in our classes. As opposed to recent school shootings which have resulted in the tragic loss of life, no one actually died in *Lockdown*. Ask students to research other school shootings and to make a list of the lessons students, parents, and teachers learned from their experiences. From their list, ask students to write a thematic statement for *Lockdown*.

Plot

The conclusion to *Lockdown* is fitting for everyone but Josh. He has no funeral and, therefore, no closure for his life. While people in the community are upset about what he did, there seems to be little compassion shown to his parents and others who cared about Josh. Ask students to write an eulogy for Josh based on what they knew about him and then to write a new ending to the story which includes the eulogy—delivered or not—at a funeral. The new ending should also provide closure to Josh's parents and those who cared about him.

Connecting to the Students—Discussion Questions

1. Some could argue that every student in Josh's science class played a role in Josh's breakdown. Is this a true statement? Why or why not?
2. Adam is Josh's only friend, but Zoe shows more concern about him than Adam does. What does this show about Adam's character? Why is he a "fair weather friend" to Josh at this point in the story?
3. Once students start hearing gunfire, and Mr. Connor makes the announcement that this lockdown is not a drill, students panic and start trampling each other, climbing over each other to get into classrooms, and locking students in the hall. What do these actions tell the reader about human behavior? How do Adam and Zoe respond to this behavior?

4. When Josh finds Adam and the others in the bathroom, why doesn't he kill them? Was his shot at Natalie meant to hurt or kill her? Why?
5. When Adam decides to try to stop Josh, Zoe is furious. Both of them have valid reasons for their stand. How would you justify their decisions?
6. When Adam is looking for Josh, he fears for his life. He knows he could have stood up for Josh against Chase, but he didn't. Is Adam just as bad as Chase?
7. After Josh has been killed, Adam realizes that Josh never intended to kill anyone. How does Adam come to this conclusion (page 94)? Do you agree with him? Why or why not?
8. Why do Josh's parents decide not to hold a funeral? How do they handle their grief?

Writer's Craft

Metaphor

The author uses metaphors to illustrate ideas and paint pictures with words. For example, on page 59, she uses the camouflage in nature to illustrate how Josh could be hiding in a darkened theater. Adam is a rabbit, and Josh is a hunter. Ask students to define the term metaphor and then find other examples of metaphors in the novel as they read. Upon completion of the novel, ask students to look for another place in the novel where they could insert a metaphor. Students should write their original metaphor and share it with the class.

Author Biography

Award-winning author **Diane Tullson** has a BA in English Literature and has studied journalism, creative writing and editing. Writing professionally since 1996, Diane says rejection is the hardest aspect of her writing, but she doesn't let it stop her from creating works with irresistible characters for teens. Diane lives with her family just outside Vancouver, British Columbia.