



Snitch

Norah McClintock

Reading level: 2.1

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AR Quiz # 102522

Book Summary

Josh moves out of a group home and into his brother's place. His brother's wife, Miranda, does not want Josh in their home. Frustrated by the situation he faces, Josh directs his anger at Scott, his one-time best friend who ratted him out for robbery. The judge orders Josh to participate in a program designed to help him deal with his anger. Unfortunately, when he shows up for class, he discovers an old enemy, who does his best to get Josh kicked out of the program and back in trouble with the law. Although Josh is framed for a crime he did not commit, he struggles to maintain his new straight-and-narrow lifestyle and his freedom.

Prereading Idea

Discuss with students the connotations surrounding the word "snitch" and how they might relate to the book. Ask students to share their experiences with being "snitched" on or "snitching" on someone else.

Connecting to the World—Writing and Research Ideas

- News, television shows and movies all regularly feature or discuss anger management classes and programs. Assign students to groups of three and ask them to investigate the availability of such programs in their community, who is responsible for assigning the participants to these programs, and the duration of the programs. Each group should make a brochure to be displayed in the school counselor's office highlighting one of the community programs they have researched.
- At one time Josh and Scott were best friends, but when Scott chose to snitch on Josh, they severed their ties to one another. Ask students to pair up with a partner, and have one of them assume the role of Scott and the other assume the role of Josh. Ask each former friend to write a letter to the other expressing their feelings about the situation that destroyed their relationship. In their letters, students should offer a solution to the problem. Have students share and post their responses in the classroom.

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

A symbol is an object that generally represents a more abstract idea or truth, and it may have more than one meaning. Josh's fish basher, given to him by his abusive father and named "the priest," plays a key role in Josh's trouble with the police. Ask students to reread the sections in which the fish basher is mentioned and determine why it is symbolic to the story (see chapters 3, 11 and 13). Ask students to write one or two brief paragraphs explaining the symbolism attached to the fish basher.

Point of View

Snitch is told from Josh's point of view, so readers know only what he tells us and how he feels about people and situations. Ask students to choose an incident that involves another character and to rewrite that incident from the other character's point of view. For example, when Josh and Travis get into a fight because Travis was being mean to the dog, both Travis and Amy are there. How would Amy or Travis tell the story?

Plot

The plot of this story would be effective as a movie screenplay. As a class, determine which famous actor would play each part. Then, divide the class into thirteen groups, and assign each group a chapter to rewrite as a movie script. When completed, combine the chapters to make one script, and have students perform the screenplay.

Connecting to the Students—Discussion Questions

1. Miranda makes it clear that she does not like Josh and does not want him to live in her home. Why is she willing to comply with her husband's request? What could she have done to make the situation better for both her and Josh? What could Josh have done? How does respect play a role in their relationship?
2. Amy hears and sees Travis threaten Josh, but she never says anything to Mr. Weller or Josh about it. How does she help Josh come to grips with the threats? What role does she play in helping Josh make peace with Scott?
3. Josh tells Miranda and Andrew, "Mr. Weller says that 'but' turns an apology into a justification for being wrong." Does Josh accept this belief? Does Miranda? Why or why not?
4. The reader does not know much about Josh's father and even less about his mother. Based on what is revealed about his dad, how did his dad impact Josh's life?
5. The author draws many comparisons between dogs and people. Brainstorm a list of the similarities, and discuss why they might or might not be true.
6. Much has changed in Josh's relationships by the time he finishes the anger management program. What are the keys to his success?

Writer's Craft

Paradox

A paradox is a statement that includes two parts, both of which are true but which seem to contradict each other. For example, Josh says, "I wanted to tell him to get lost, but I didn't want to get stuck alone with the dog." Ask students to find other examples of a paradox in the book and to share them with the class. Then ask students to write a paradox about their lives to share with the class.

Vocabulary Enrichment

Use the following words in a complete sentence providing context clues so that the reader will be able to determine the meaning of the word.

Barbaric	Rambunctious	Yowled
Slouched	Reinforce	Jazzed

Ask students to read their sentences to the class, and then have students write some of the best sentences on sentence strips to post around the room.

Author Biography

Norah McClintock was born and raised in Montreal, Quebec, and earned a degree in history from McGill University. A five-time winner of the Crime Writers of Canada's Arthur Ellis Award for Best Juvenile Crime Novel, she began writing mysteries because she personally loves reading them. The initial ideas for her books usually stem from news stories to which she adds her own imagination and creativity. Norah lives with her family in Toronto, Ontario.