



Kicked Out

Beth Goobie

YALSA Quick Pick nominee
ALA Best Book nominee

Interest level: grade 7 and up
Reading level: 3.0
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AR Quiz # 62994

Book Summary

Dime loves riding on the back of Gabe's Kawasaki Ninja, knowing that because he likes her all the kids at school think she is something special—except Gabe's ex-girlfriend who wants to fight her. Nothing, however, including her relationship with Gabe, is right. She can't talk to her parents; they only yell and scream, and Dime feels no love for them or from them. But Darren, Dime's quadriplegic brother, understands, and he asks her to move in with him. It is with Darren's love and patience that Dime begins to accept the fact that she is a person of value, and this knowledge changes her life.

Prereading Idea

Ask students to look up the word rebellion in the dictionary and on the web. Ask them:

1. What are the reasons people rebel?
2. Why do so many teenagers rebel?
3. What role could parents play to minimize rebellion in their children?

After a healthy discussion, begin reading about Dime and her family.

Connecting to the World—Writing and Research Ideas

Darren is a quadriplegic because his neck was broken in a car wreck. The author has shared some information about Darren's abilities on pages 18, 19 and 50, but the picture is incomplete. In groups of three, have students investigate the possible causes of quadriplegia, and the abilities of a quadriplegic person. Have the small groups write a skit to perform for the class highlighting the research information and ways quadriplegics interact with their environments.

Dime thinks her parents should buy her a T-shirt with *Problem Child* printed on it, so they won't have to talk to her anymore. She says, "I could wear their opinion wherever I went," (page 7). Ask students, "If you were wearing a T-shirt with someone's opinion of you written on it, what would it say?" Have students choose an opinion of a person who is close to them and write it at the top of a piece of paper or on a T-shirt. Then, have students write a descriptive paragraph or poem explaining their relationship and why the other person would choose to describe them in that way. Ask students to share their T-shirts with the class.

Connecting to the Text—Elements of the Novel

Theme

Most teenagers identify with a particular group of people because they need to belong. On pages 40 and 46, Dime talks about the different clichés in her school, and because they are universal, students can probably identify with one or more of the clichés. Ask students to choose one of the clichés Dime mentions or come up with one of their own and define them by their clothes, beliefs and actions. Discuss ways that clichés can lead to a sense of belonging or a sense of alienation. Then have students brainstorm a list of the similarities all teens have in common and discuss stereotypes.

Character

Dime's destructive behavior stems from her fear that she is not good enough. She says it started when she was small and never went away (page 80), but the reasons for Dime's actions are not apparent to everyone. Ask students to make a list of the poor choices Dime makes and the consequences she suffers because of her actions. Have students select a character mentioned in the book that would have had reason to notice Dime's actions. Have students assume the voice of that character as they try to explain Dime's destructive behavior.

Conflict

Dime's internal conflict drives the plot of the story, but the reader sees the result of her conflict in her relationship with her parents. In pairs, ask students to choose a specific conflict; and to rewrite the conflict as a dialogue in which the conflict is amicably resolved. Have students share the rewrites with the class by performing the scenes; one student playing the role of Dime, the other student playing one of her parents.

Setting

Set in a high school in Canada, the plot and characters could have been in any high school because so much of what happens in a school happens because universally people are very much the same. Ask students to think about what would have been if the story had evolved at their high school. Then, have students set the story in the 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s or 90s, rewriting the scene using period-specific details.

Connecting to Students—Discussion Questions

1. Dime grinned at the thought of embarrassing her mother. Why would this idea please Dime? What does the fact that she refers to her parents as a Two-Headed Monster reveal about their relationship? (page 2)
2. Dime decided not to wear her nose ring around her parents to make it easier on herself (page 3). She gave a little to get a little. Do you think she is sacrificing too much personal freedom? Why or why not?
3. Why do Dime's parents assume she does drugs when she doesn't? What does this say about their parenting skills?
4. On page 14 Dime figures out that her parents and Darren had been making plans for her without her input. She wonders why they didn't include her in their chats about her life plans. What reasons do you think they would have given Dime if she would have asked them the question?
5. Dime gives herself her nickname because she has a low opinion of herself (page 16). On page 81, she says, "When you feel like nothing, you treat yourself like nothing. You let other people treat you like nothing too." How do Dime's feelings about herself affect the choices she makes?
6. Even though she knows breaking up with Gabe was the best decision for her, Dime understands, "You can make a decision with your head. It still takes your heart a while to catch up with it," (page 79). How does Dime stay strong in her resolve to forget Gabe? What other decisions does she make that her heart is not into?

Writer's Craft

Powerful Verbs

Verbs are the power in every sentence because they convey action, so using strong specific verbs makes writing more enjoyable to read. Beth Goobie models this in her writing. For example, “he crouched down,” (page 19); “the hallway stretched,” page 29; “I rounded the last corner,” (page 42); “Darren shrugged,” (page 67) and “they sure perked up,” (page 84). Challenge students to draw and then to write a description of a scene, activity, or person using no adjectives but only powerful verbs. Have students select their favorites and display all descriptions with accompanying illustrations.

Author Biography

In high school, **Beth Goobie** studied and taught piano to more than twenty people a week. She also wrote stories and received many academic and citizenship awards. After high school, she moved to Holland and became a nanny, and then moved to Winnipeg where she studied English literature at the University of Winnipeg. Her concern for physically and sexually abused children led her to work with them for a number of years, and her writing reflects the issues surrounding the anger and powerlessness of those too young to defend themselves. In 1987, she began writing again and is now a full-time author.

Other Books by Beth Goobie from Orca Book Publishers:

Before Wings
The Dream Where Losers Go
Fixed
Flux
Hello, Groin
The Lottery
Something Girl (Orca Soundings)
Sticks and Stones (Orca Soundings)
Who Owns Kelly Paddik? (Orca Soundings)