



Riot Act

Diane Tullson

Reading Level: 2.6

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Book Summary

After the loss of a hockey game, fans break out in a riot, hurting innocent people, torching cars and destroying businesses. Nick and Daniel, best friends and good kids, participate in the riot while trying to escape. When Nick's picture is posted on social media sights and the news, he decides to turn himself in, but Daniel tries to save face and even accepts the role of "hero" for helping a young girl to safety. Daniel knows the truth, but will he have the courage to step up and face his consequences?

Prereading Idea

The novel was written after the Stanley Cup Riots in Vancouver. Show students this video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VzOUKODdZ4. After viewing the video, discuss with the class the possible reasons that the violence erupted.

Connecting to the World—Writing and Research Ideas

- Ask students to select a partner and to investigate “mob mentality.” In a presentation to the class, ask the pairs of students to define the term, to give a synonym of the term, and to find an example of an incident where mob mentality took control. Students should briefly explain the incident by stating its cause, the number of lives lost or hurt, and the aftermath of the incident. After all presentations, ask students to make a list of the common factors.
- Ask students to assume the voice of a news reporter and to write the story of what occurs in the pizza shop on the night of the riot. Students should include: a strong lead; interviews with participants, witnesses, injured individuals, and/or emergency personnel; and an illustration with caption of the event. Have students share their news stories in small groups of four to five students and post stories and illustrations around the room.

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

Family relationships play an important role in the characters' lives. As a whole class, ask students to list and examine Daniel's and Nick's familial relationships; together discuss common characteristics and relationships that help or hurt them. Ask each student to find a favorite or intriguing quote from the novel that pertains to the theme. On 5x8 index cards have students copy and explain their selected excerpt. Then in small groups have students share their connections to the theme and to develop a thematic statement based on their ideas and discussions. Have each group post its thematic statement and textual connections to the theme.

Irony

Nick and Daniel both come from loving homes and know better than to be involved in a riot. What is ironic about their involvement? For example, Nick leaves money on the counter of the trashed-out store for the hot dog buns he takes, and Daniel's father is a policeman. Ask students to make a list of other examples of irony and to select one of the above or another example to illustrate in a cartoon panel. Have students post panels on a classroom bulletin board.

Conflict

The most obvious external conflict taking place in *Riot Act* is man vs. man and man vs. society. Yet, it is within the context of the external conflicts that the reader sees both Daniel's and Nick's internal conflicts. Ask students to select either Daniel or Nick and to write a self-reflection from first person point of view. Students should detail the selected character's actions and give reasons for the choices he made, including how he felt about what he did. Have students get in a large whole class circle to share the character reflections as a share-aloud.

Plot

Ask students to diagram the plot of the novel using the following terms: *exposition*, *rising action*, *climax*, *falling action*, and *resolution*. Students should define the terms, draw a plot diagram including the points in the story at each segment, and write a brief paragraph explaining why they chose the event at each plot point. Have students share their plot diagrams and explanations in small groups.

Connecting to the Students—Discussion Questions

1. What warnings does Mia give Nick and Daniel? Why is Mia concerned for their safety? How do Nick and Daniel respond to Mia's warnings?
2. What starts the riot after the loss of the game? How could it have been avoided? How does Nick contribute to the riot?
3. Why does the police car get torched? What could the policeman have done to prevent the fire?
4. When Daniel sees Abbi huddled and hurt in the corner of the pizza shop, what does he do? Why does Daniel help Abbi and leave Nick in the shop? How does Daniel justify his actions?
5. Daniel rushes in to put out the fire without a thought for his safety. Why is it so important for him to save the pizza shop? Who saves him from being beaten?
6. Nick and Daniel are good kids from good families, so why do they participate in the riot? Why do they make such a bad decision? How could they have escaped the riot? Why didn't they?
7. How are Mia's and Daniel's fathers' reactions to the riot similar? What do they say to Nick and Daniel?
8. Why does Nick turn himself into the police? Why doesn't Daniel turn himself in with Nick? What prompts Daniel to finally turn himself in and to tell the truth about what happened?
9. Daniel's father gives him a policeman's perspective on how they were treated during the riot. Why was the mob so intent on hurting the policemen? How do the policemen finally break up the riot?
10. How does the riot change Nick and Daniel's relationship? How do their actions affect their families?

Writer's Craft***Simile***

The author uses similes to help the reader visualize particular scenes. Read the following similes and ask students to illustrate them. Students can also look for other similes to illustrate. Collect the drawings and bind them in a book.

The line acts like a giant squeegee, forcing people toward us. (ch. 6)

Mia has been texting like a crazy woman. (ch. 7)

Vocabulary

Ask students to find the following words in the book and then define them. Then ask students to write a short paragraph using as many of the words as possible. Students can read their paragraphs to the class.

clamor	(ch. 4)	priority	(ch. 5)
debris	(ch. 13)	recoils	(ch. 5)
heralded	(ch. 11)	ricochets	(ch. 7)
incriminating	(ch. 9)	sodden	(ch. 8)
miniscule	(ch. 9)	vigilante	(ch. 11)

Author Biography

Award-winning author **Diane Tullson** has published several novels for young adults and has written for *Canadian Living Magazine*, *Westworld Magazine* and *Chicken Soup*. She has a BA in English Literature and has studied journalism, creative writing and editing. Writing professionally since 1996, Ms. Tullson says rejection is the hardest aspect of her writing, but she doesn't let it deter her from crafting works with irresistible characters for teens. She enjoys creating characters who are young adults because their stories are filled with "first times"—nothing is off-limits. Diane Tullson lives with her family just outside Vancouver, BC.