



Maverick Mania

Sigmund Brouwer

Reading level: 4.1

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AR Quiz # 40654

Book Summary

If the Mavericks win just a few more games, they'll make it to the national soccer championships. There's only one problem: their star player, Caleb Riggins, has disappeared. With the championship on the line, sixteen-year-old sweeper Matt Carr is determined to solve the mystery of Caleb's disappearance. What he doesn't realize is that playing detective will involve vicious attack dogs, a mysterious golden bridge, stolen identities, attempted murder and a long swim in a cold, dark lake.

Prereading Ideas

- How easy/hard is it to assume someone else's identity? Has technology made this more difficult or easier?
- Is it ever a good idea to take the law into your own hands?

Connecting to the Text

Plot

- A mystery novel is about discovering the answers to questions. What are the main questions Matt is trying to answer in *Maverick Mania*?
- A good mystery usually involves two stories—what appeared to happen (the surface story), and what did happen (the real story). Get students to write a brief description of the surface story and the real story. Then ask them to examine if and when the stories overlap.
- Mysteries usually focus on the crime, the criminal and the victim. Ask students if they think this is true of *Maverick Mania*.
- At the end of chapter 24, Matt is in the water, crying. Chapter 25 opens at a soccer game and goes on to explain what happened. Have students write an alternate explanation of what happened in between the chapters.

Vocabulary

On page 66, Matt says that *fine* is the one word that means just the opposite. Is it the word that means the opposite or is it the way it's used? Have students suggest other words that can be used to mean their opposite. For example, *sick* or *bad*.

Theme

- One of the themes in *Maverick Mania* is the importance of family. Matt is embarrassed by his family's behavior, but he eventually learns to appreciate their eccentricities. Ask students whether Matt would be different if he had a more "normal" family.
- Have students write a journal entry listing five things they don't like about their family and five things they think are great.

Connecting to the Curriculum

Science

- Matt knows that sound travels very clearly over water. Why does this happen?
- Lake Havasu City, Arizona, is on the shores of a man-made lake. Get students to research the dams, the lakes they created and the effects on the surrounding ecosystems.
- Matt's dad has a classroom zoo. Larry the boa constrictor is one of his pets. Petey the Parrot is another. Have students debate the pros and cons of keeping exotic animals and birds as pets.

Business

- Lake Havasu City was developed as a planned community in 1964 by Robert P. McCulloch. Have students research McCulloch's business history and his influence on the city.
- What are some other examples of planned communities? How are they different from the communities the students live in? Are all planned communities company towns?
- Robert McCulloch bought London Bridge in 1968 and had it disassembled in London and reassembled in Lake Havasu City. Why? How much did it cost? How long did it take?

Law

- Matt wonders why parents can get away with doing whatever they like to their children. Do children have any legal rights? Should they? Have students stage a mock jury trial where a child accuses a parent of physical abuse.
- Matt's mother wants to be a detective. What is the difference in education and training between a police detective and a private detective? What are the pros and cons of each position?
- If someone realizes that a child is being abused, do they have to go to the police? Should they?
- Some children emancipate themselves legally from their parents. Find out if/how this can be done in your community.
- Matt's mother is a police dispatcher who has someone in the police run a license plate for her and do a credit check. Is this an abuse of her position? Is she breaking privacy laws? Should criminals have a right to privacy?
- What are the consequences when private citizens take the law into their own hands? Which adults in *Maverick Mania* cross the line into illegal behavior?

Connecting to the Students—Discussion Questions

1. At what point does parental strictness become parental abuse? Do parents have the right to do anything they want with their children? Who should intervene? Friends? School? Social service?
2. Matt's goal in life is to be normal. What does he mean by that? Ask students to discuss whether there is any such thing as "normal."
3. Matt's dad is a teacher who thinks that "the world is a lot less innocent now." Ask students if they think more kids get abused now or do abused kids feel safer telling someone what's happening?

Resources

Vocabulary

www.fun-with-words.com/nym_autoantonyms.html

Plot

www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=d20modern/fb/20031118a

Science

www.school-for-champions.com/science/sound_over_water.htm

<http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/reptiles/boa-constrictor.html>

<http://yesmagazine.org/issues/whose-water/864>

www.internationalrivers.org/en/node/1636

Business

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_Havasu_City,_Arizona

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_town

Law

www.wisegeek.com/how-can-a-child-become-emancipated-from-her-parents.htm

www.peoples-law.org/children/emancipation/emancipation%20home.htm

www.amnesty.ca/themes/children_overview.php

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Children%27s_rights

www.bls.gov/oco/ocos160.htm

www.bls.gov/oco/ocos157.htm

Author Biography

Sigmund Brouwer is the bestselling author of many books for children and teens. He has contributed numerous titles to the Orca Currents series, the Orca Echoes series and the Orca Sports series. He and his family live in Red Deer, Alberta, and Eagleville, Tennessee.

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