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Stuck in neutral plot summary

The book follows Shawn McDaniel's first-person point of view. He is a 14-year-old boy with cerebral palsy, a neurological disorder, affecting motor control. In Shawn's case, his entire body is affected; he has absolutely no control over any of his bodily functions. Shawn's condition is a major part of the story. In the first few chapters, Shawn McDaniel explains to the reader his condition. He includes what he feels to be positive sides of his condition, such as his perfect memory. Shawn remembers every experience, every sensation, and everything he's ever learned from school or television. Shawn introduces his family to the reader. His mother is his main caretaker and his father is a writer who has won a Pulitzer Prize for a poem about Shawn. The main story is about euthanasia. Shawn feels that his father Sydney McDaniel is trying to kill him. Sydney constantly talks about euthanasia. On an interview during a Jerry Springer-style show Sydney interviews a man who killed his son with a similar condition, who reveals that he just wanted to end his son's pain. In the end, the reader is left to wonder if Sydney follows the other man's example, or allowed Shawn to continue his life. Shawn frequently expresses that he dislikes being talked down to as if he were a baby. He stresses throughout the novel that he is just as intelligent, or more intelligent, than others around him. We are also introduced to his school life in the middle of the novel. Book by Terry Trueman This article needs additional citations for verification. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed.Find sources: "Stuck In Neutral" - news - newspapers - books - scholar - JSTOR (September 2009) (Learn how and when to remove this template message) Stuck in Neutral AuthorTerry TruemanLanguageEnglishPublisherHarperTeenPublication dateOctober 9, 2001Pages114ISBN978-0-06-447213-5OCLC48164952 Stuck in Neutral is a young adult novel by Terry Trueman. It focuses deeply on the subject of cerebral palsy, quality of life, and euthanasia. The main character is Shawn McDaniel, a fourteen-year-old who has cerebral palsy. The story, told from Shawn's perspective, also focuses on how his family copes with the condition. Shawn's mother, brother, sister, and father are all talked about in the book. Stuck in Neutral received recognition as an Honor Book for the Michael L. Printz Award in 2001.[1] Trueman wrote the novel because his own son has been diagnosed with cerebral palsy,[2] and he wanted to educate young readers both about the condition and about showing tolerance for those with severe disabilities. Plot summary The book follows Shawn McDaniel's first-person point of view. He is a 14-year-old boy and has lived in Seattle his entire life. He suffers from cerebral palsy, a neurological disorder that affects motor control. In Shawn's case, his entire body is affected; he has absolutely no control over any of his bodily functions. Shawn's condition is a major part of the story, for it affects how everyone looks at him and their opinions on him. In the first few chapters, Shawn McDaniel explains his condition to the reader. He includes what he feels to be positive sides of his condition, such as his perfect memory. Shawn remembers every experience, every sensation, and everything he's ever learned from school or television. Unfortunately due to his complete lack of motor control, Shawn is unable to talk or make contact with his family in any way; it is believed by those around him that Shawn's mind has no higher functional skills. A running theme throughout the book is Shawn's desire to be truly known by someone. Shawn introduces his family to the reader. His mother is his main caretaker and his father is a writer who has won a Pulitzer Prize for a poem about Shawn. The main story is about euthanasia. Shawn feels that his father Sydney McDaniel is trying to kill him. Sydney constantly talks about euthanasia. In an interview during a Jerry Springer-style show Sydney interviews a man who killed his son with a similar condition, who reveals that he just wanted to end his son's pain. In the end, the reader is left to wonder if Sydney follows the other man's example, or allowed Shawn to continue his life. Shawn frequently expresses that he dislikes being talked down to as if he were a baby. He stresses throughout the novel that he is just as intelligent, or more intelligent, than others around him. We are also introduced to his school life in the middle of the novel. "Either way, whatever he does, I'll be soaring." Reception Stuck in Neutral caused some controversy at a school in Evansville, Wisconsin, where the book was required reading. Parents felt the subject matter was too sad and violent. Trueman strongly defended his book and school officials in Wisconsin eventually agreed. Stuck in Neutral remains required reading for students.[3][4] Play In 2013 Allison Cameron Gray and Matt Corpenning adapted the novel into the play Stuck in Neutral. The show ran from May 10, 2013 - June 10, 2013 at the Secret Rose Theatre in North Hollywood, CA. Directed by David P. Johnson with positive reviews. The cast included Jonathan D. Black as Shawn McDaniel, Mary Carrig as Lindy McDaniel, Tommy Cramer as Paul McDanie], Amy Greenspan as Cindy McDaniel, Swati Kapila & Breana Tomey as Ally, Leslie Thurston as Alice Ponds, David Michael Trevino as Cyd McDaniel and John Walcutt as Earl Detruax respectively.[5][6][7] References ^ American Library Association (2010). "Michael L. Printz Winners and Honor Books". Archived from the original on 2011-02-08. Retrieved 2011-02-03. ^ [1][dead link] ^ Forward; "Stuck in Neutral" ISBN 0-7362-3179-X ^ Letter to Author ^ [2][dead link] ^ Marchessi, Lorenzo. "Theatre Review >> Stuck in Neutral - NoHo Arts District". nohoartsdistrict.com. ^ [3][dead link] External links Stuck in Neutral on Amazon [4] Retrieved from " First-time novelist Trueman raises ethical issues about euthanasia through the relationship between 14-year-old Shawn McDaniel, who suffers from cerebral palsy, and his father. In a conversational tone, narrator Shawn explains that when he was born, a tiny blood vessel burst in his brain, leaving him unable to control any of his muscles. What no one knows is that Shawn is a "'secret genius'" who, while unable to communicate, remembers everything he has ever heard. His condition, which includes violent seizures, overwhelmed his father, who moved out when Shawn was three years old; the man later won a Pulitzer Prize for a poem based on his experiences as parent to a victim of C.P. Weaving together memories with present-day accounts, Shawn describes the highs and lows of his day-to-day life as well as his father's increasing fascination with euthanasia and evidence that the man is working up the courage to personally "'end [Shawn's] pain.'" The strength of the novel lies in the father-son dynamic; the delicate scenes between them carefully illustrate their mutual quest to understand each other. The other characters (Shawn's brother and sister, mother, teachers) lack this complexity. As a result, many of the scenes feel more contrived than heartfelt ("I always feel so guilty complaining about it at all!" says his sister). All in all, the book's concepts are more compelling than the story line itself. Ages 10-up. (June) by Terry Trueman A teenager with profound cerebral palsy, who is utterly unable to give even those who know him best the faintest sign that he is sentient, narrates this devastating family portrait-cum-moral conundrum. Inside Shawn's twitching, drooling, seizure-racked body is a sane, intelligent teenager with an eidetic memory. A sympathetic observer of the effect his presence has on everyone around him, he leads a relatively rich, if vicarious, inner life. It is fueled by dreams (or perhaps more than dreams) of flight, total recall of everything he has ever seen or heard, and feelings as intense as anyone's: love, amusement, bemusement, frustration—and anxiety. He overhears comments about "ending his pain," from his doting, tormented father Sydney—who has begun research for a biography of a man convicted of smothering a profoundly disabled child. Trueman has a son with CP, and has obviously drawn in part from that experience, both for the story's events and for the issues he raises involving the social and emotional costs of caring for the physically helpless. Thematically, the story is built around Sydney's dilemma as he desperately searches for reasons not to end his son's life, and finds many seductive, compelling arguments otherwise; the abrupt, ambiguous ending leaves him on the verge of killing Shawn, or not, and so transmits his inner debate to readers. Though character is not the author's strongest concern here, like the similarly lucid brain-damaged teen in Joan Leslie Woodruff's The Shiloh Renewal (1999), Shawn will stay with readers, not for what he does, but for what he is and has made of himself. Page 2 Cindy and Linda leave for the b-ball competition. Vonda, Shawn's consideration supplier, keeps an eye on when they leave. Shawn likes Vonda, in spite of the fact that she is somewhat less patient with him, and fundamentally disregards him simply like every other person. She paints her ideal nails, and the day flies by. Shawn has his first seizure and visits Seattle: "I feel loose.... Read more 361

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