



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Upper primary
(ages 9–12)

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Extra Time Morris Gleitzman

PLOT SUMMARY

Bridie and her family live in a country town. Her only surviving brother, Matt, is a talented soccer player, but his chances of the career he hoped for are dashed when he is injured in a car accident that killed his two older brothers. Matt has pins in his legs which make him vulnerable to further injury. The loss of two sons understandably makes his parents anxious about their remaining son's health, and his little sister takes on the role of caretaker. Life changes dramatically for this humble, loving family when Matt's talents are spotted by visiting English soccer celebrities who are after an angle to market their new sport stores in Australia.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Morris Gleitzman grew up in England and came to Australia when he was sixteen. After university he worked for ten years as a screenwriter. Then he had a wonderful experience. He wrote a novel for young people. Now, after 38 books, he's one of Australia's most popular children's authors.

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

Survey the class to find out which of Morris Gleitzman's books they have already read. Collate this into a class list.

1. How would you describe Gleitzman's writing style? Can you categorise Gleitzman's style? Consider aspects such as characters, plots, themes, genre, literary style.
2. This may lead on to a more comprehensive author study (see: After Reading the Novel – Author Study).
3. What do you expect from the title? Why do you think Gleitzman has used such a title?

At the heart of this story are various moral dilemmas, and hence moments of uncertainty about where events might be heading. It is an ideal text to read progressively – to debate possible courses of action and reasons for them. Some are indicated below.

Questions

1. This is a first person narration by a ten year old, so it is valuable to ask how reliable is Bridie?
2. Why did the author choose Bridie to tell the story and not Matt himself. Who is the central character? This limited view allows readers rich opportunities to imagine what others are thinking and how they are feeling, as the other characters only come to us in terms of how they behave, what they say, and what we observe.

CLOSE READING

Section 1 – Warm up

The story opens in a country town, with a game of soccer among local kids of both genders. When the ball goes into a cattle yard and Matt leaps in to retrieve it, he must use all his soccer skills to outmanoeuvre surging cattle. This dramatic event appears on the television news and Matt is spotted by Franco Di Rafaela (soccer fans might like to guess whether this is referring to a real a player – or is a composite of some famous names) a visiting Italian soccer star. Bridie gets the phone

number of the television station – what is she up to?

While apparently Matt has the wrong body shape to be an elite soccer player, the family provides a marketing and media opportunity and are invited to visit the Premier League club in England. And so Bridie and Matt accompanied by Uncle Cliff set off.

Section 2 – First half

In England, they stay with Mrs Jarvis, and memorably, visit – for a media opportunity – the palatial home of a star footballer, Gazz and beautiful wife, Terrine, a house complete with an indoor waterfall and a full size soccer pitch. All seems glamour and riches, and it is clear that Matt wants to provide this for his parents. Matt is offered the chance to train with under fifteens for the week they are in England at one of the biggest clubs in the world. However, it becomes apparent just how tense, competitive and physically aggressive the training is even for the under fifteens. The young players are encouraged to play aggressively out of the view of the referees, and there is little team spirit or friendly behaviour.

Bridie and Uncle Cliff decide to change this culture in the Australian manner – a team barbecue and a fun kick-around, but this unauthorised event leads to Uncle Cliff being banned from the ground. The good news is that Matt has been picked to play in the under fifteen team to play Manchester United, and Bridie is to be a mascot for the game against Liverpool.

This section is worth pursuing in detail so chapter events have been highlighted below.

Questions

Chapter 23

- Bridie is a mascot and sees the game close up. Read and discuss what she observes. Are readers surprised, or is Bridie naïve not to have expected what she sees?

Chapter 24

- Bridie's big mistake. Pause the reading and ask what will happen to her.

Chapter 26

- Bridie and Matt's parents reveal that Matt's legs are stronger with the pins. Do you understand the reasons for their lie? How do you feel about it? How would you feel if you were Matt?
- Bridie is worried that Matt will become 'as violent and unfriendly as he wants'. Do readers agree with her?

Chapter 27



- Describes the match, and despite Matt kicking a goal neither he nor his teammates look happy at half-time. They are winning but it is not enough for Matt. Talk about why.
- Mrs Jarvis says 'I think he is disappointed with what's happened to top-level professional football in the first part of the twenty-first century.' Ask readers if they agree. What do they know about the Premier League?
- Matt begins to play by the 'new' rules. How do readers react to this?
- Bridie is fearful for Matt's 'gentle loving heart'. Has she got it right, or is Matt simply doing what is required to compete at the highest level?

Section 3 – Half-time

Questions

- Matt tells Bridie he is doing it for all of them. He wants a better material life for his parents. Surely that is a worthwhile aim. Invite readers to discuss where they stand.
- He sacks Bridie as manager. Has he done the right thing?

Section 4 – Second half

In this section, Bridie plots to remind Matt about what football is really all about.

Questions

- Bridie's plot goes awry when Matt refuses to play a kick-around. Do readers understand his position? Understand hers?
- Desperate measures are called for so Bridie hides in Ayo's locker and he agrees to be part of the plan.
- The kick-around and Ayo is taken away by Mr Nkrumo and then Gazz arrives and plays to the delight of the kids.
- Terrine says 'Why would anyone give all this up...for a measly two hundred thousand pounds a week?' Is she being serious? Invite readers to consider how humour is used to highlight important ideas in this story.
- Bridie gets a consultancy at the club and Matt is going to play for the first team against Chelsea. How is Bridie able to persuade such high level staff to her point of view?
- Not all is good as Ayo is being sent home. Another moral dilemma for Bridie and Matt.

Section 5 – Climax

Questions

- The day of the match. Matt plays but uses his soccer skills to make his point about Ayo. Is this more powerful than words or off-the-field actions?
- Did Bridie doubt Matt?
- Matt's actions have potential consequences he hasn't seen: changing his family's way of life.
- Matt wins the battle over Ayo and the two teenagers play scintillating football.
- Write the next chapter in this story. What happens to Matt and Ayo and their families?

CHARACTERS

All the central players are large as life. Invite readers to present character profiles of the major players, as much is revealed through dialogue rather than description.

Bridie

- Bridie is a ten-year-old, asthmatic, bossy girl who likes to 'manage' her brother, and who has a strong sense of the rightness of things. Consider why she has been chosen to tell the story – her gender, her age, the valuable limitations of her world view.
- She has her own way of looking at world, which often means making analogies with her and her family's experiences, such as her dad's removal encounters, events in her life, and Uncle Cliff's. These add much of the humour and are worth highlighting to readers.
- Ayo says to her 'You a maniac or what?' What do readers think of Bridie? Describe her in five words. Then do a class Wordle for her to see what the major consensual descriptors are. This could be done for each major character in a font and design that characterises each of them individually.

Matt

- Matt is fourteen and a very talented soccer player. He has pins in his legs after an accident that killed his two older brothers, which severely limits his capacity to play serious soccer for fear of further injury, or so we believe initially. He constantly practises his kicking with whatever is at hand.
- On these pages (3-4) we are first introduced to him and learn that he doesn't want sympathy for his injuries and won't run away from a challenge. 'People who run away, next thing they know, they're living under their bed'.



- Do we get much of a sense of him beyond his football skills? As a player he is unselfish – allows a team mate to goal.
- He always keeps a promise.
- He wants to achieve for his parents' sake.

Parents

- Father is a furniture removalist and Bridie makes much of analogies to his work experiences (eg p6) .
- Mother is over anxious understandably, about her two surviving children and their health.

The parents only play minor roles as they remain in Australia when the children and Uncle Cliff go to England. However, there are motivating factors for Matt and Bridie

Uncle Cliff

- Uncle Cliff has lost his job and is unhappy because his wife left him.
- A big Rolling Stones fan with a Keith Richards look-alike hairstyle.
- Provides humour especially when he falls for Mrs Jarvis.

Mrs Jarvis

- Bridie, Matt and Uncle Cliff stay with Mrs Jarvis in London.
- She is no nonsense woman who sees the world in a practical, even scientific manner.
- She understands Bridie's concerns about Matt losing his joy of playing.

Ayo and his manager Mr Nkrumo

- Ayo's role in the story becomes pivotal to Matt's moral heart.
- Ayo says to Bridie 'Help someone in this place...and you kill them.' (p73)
- Bridie says of him that he is 'a good person who's under too much pressure.' (p150)

Gazz and Terrine

- These two provide a cameo role of what success at the highest level might look like.
- Terrine reveals that Gazz is miserable playing under the pressure of constant scrutiny, despite the wealth.

Ken

- Marketing Manager for an English Premier League club. Instrumental getting Matt to the UK.

Lola

- Girl at the council estate waste ground in England– 'tough and kind' – what Bridie wants to be.

MORAL DILEMMAS

This story, while narratively is about playing football, has at its heart moral and ethical issues worth pursuing with readers. Some are outlined below.

- Bridie and Matt's parents have been telling lies to Matt about the strength of his legs. And Ayo's manager tells a lie in which Ayo was complicit. He is from a slum in Nairobi not a village suffering from drought. Eventually, Ayo tells the club the truth. Why do readers think he does this at this time? Are these two lies the same? Can one be 'right' and the other 'wrong', or is a lie a lie?
- 'Breaking rules is like breaking wind. You don't do it all the time, but occasionally you have to.' (p158) This is a good issue for discussion. Do readers agree that there are occasions which justify breaking the rules? Start with school context. Is there a difference between lying and breaking the rules?
- Bridie's makes Matt say that he won't play unless Ayo is in the team too. Does she have the right to ask Matt to do this? What is the cost to him and to her? What is the benefit to him and to her? What is the 'right' decision? Is there one for everyone? How important is solidarity? Have readers imagine they are Matt. What is going on inside your head? What sort of arguments might you be having with yourself?
- Matt says this is his only chance. (Consider that he will be 'the most famous boy in the world' (p176)). How hard would it be to give up such an opportunity?
- 'Friends are a luxury... friends make you soft' (p183) if you want to achieve at the highest level in sport. Have students discuss this concept and look for examples in society which endorse/contest this.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

General

- What is success? On page 73 we are given some markers of success – conspicuous wealth. Is this the most important indicator of success do readers think? This could be talked about in relation to students' lives and to the wider society.



- Is a ten-year-old girl the best judge for others? Events are told in the first person so we don't get alternative views, do we? Mostly we are given opinions that agree with Bridie, such as Mrs Jarvis and Terrine – again neither of whom is a player. This is an opportunity for readers to consider counter positions and evaluate both.
- Is it fair that Matt is the one taking all the risks and responsibilities, not Bridie? Does it really have much of an impact on her? Why is she the moral police?
- Why is Bridie not seduced by wealth and possessions? Isn't what money can buy what everyone would like?
- How likely is the scenario presented in the book? Do you think Morris Gleitzman believes this could happen in real life? What is the role of fiction? To imagine a better way? To make us think? To make us ask questions?

The game

- For Matt and Bridie and friends the game is all about fun, which is why they swap sides after someone has scored to make it fairer, and play blindfold penalties (p10).
- This is in contrast to the professional sport. For example, pages 50 to 51 tells us the amount that players get paid. Why are their salaries so high? Do you think they deserve that amount of money?
- What do readers know about professional football and how it is run? Is it a sport or a business? Invite readers to do some research.
- Bridie says research shows that it takes ten thousand hours of practice to become good at anything. Is that true? Do some research to find out.

Language

While the story has a serious heart, there is much fun to be had looking at the way it is told, especially in terms of playing with language. Some examples are below, but readers will find their own favourites to inspire and enrich their own stories and writing.

- Think about the hairdressing salon called Curl up and Dye. Think of some other good names for businesses. For instance, there is a hairdresser in Melbourne called Chainsaw Massacre.
- Mrs Jarvis takes Uncle Cliff's sayings literally. Eg pages 166; 182; 201. Invite readers to write accurate depictions of other common sayings.

- Consider the iPad holders that look like books. Think up some other contradictory examples.
- Have students consider the word '*immediament*, which is French for pronto.' Have some fun with some other mixed language definitions.

Music

The music of the Rolling Stones provides the soundtrack to the book. Listen to some and decide why the author might have chosen this group. Even the choice of music can provide irony: some 'really relaxing' Grateful Dead' (p157).

Debate

'Professional football in the first part of the twenty-first century is about winning at all costs.'

Have students hold a debate. Divide participants into Affirmative and Negative and use the book for evidence. Or prepare an investigative journalism report (written or live) on the issue below. Players mentioned in the book, such as Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo could be researched and mock-interviewed.



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