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Swagger

By Carl Deuker



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Levi was simple, like a child. It was the best thing about him, and it was the worst, too.

When high school senior Jonas moves to Seattle, he is glad to meet Levi, a nice, soft-spoken guy and fellow basketball player. Suspense builds like a slow drumbeat as readers start to smell a rat in Ryan Hartwell, a charismatic basketball coach and sexual predator. When Levi reluctantly tells Jonas that Hartwell abused him, Jonas has to decide whether he should risk his future career to report the coach. Pitch-perfect basketball plays, well-developed characters, and fine storytelling make this psychological sports novel a slam dunk.



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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 7 Up—Jonas Dolan never thought he'd go to college—his parents can't afford it. But Coach thinks he has a real shot at a scholarship with a Division Two school. Sure enough, Monitor College wants his point guard skills if he can improve his academics. When his dad gets laid off, the family relocates to the Seattle area. Jonas keeps his basketball skills sharp through the summer, when he befriends Levi, and they are joined by 20-something Hartwell. As Jonas starts his senior year, it's evident that his new coach sees things differently from Coach Russell. Jonas is relegated to second string by Coach Knecht, who favors old-school basketball with no fancy handiwork. The guys are thrilled when Hartwell is hired on as the assistant coach, but even he cannot convince the elderly head coach to change his philosophy. Jonas sees his chances at a scholarship slipping away. When Knecht collapses at a game and Hartwell steps up to head the team, he allows them to play more assertively, leading to several victories. As Harding High's fortunes improve, Jonas notices that Levi is increasingly sullen and withdrawn. Eventually, Levi admits that Coach Hartwell has been sexually molesting him, but refuses to let Jonas tell anyone. Jonas confronts the assistant coach, but Hartwell threatens blackmail. Jonas must decide if he will protect himself and keep his scholarship secure, or protect potential victims. Deuker's ability to create fully realized characters who wrestle with moral dilemmas while incorporating plenty of game action raises his novel above typical sports fiction by several notches. This one will satisfy the author's longtime fans and win him many new ones.—Kim Dare, Fairfax County Public Schools, VAα(c) Copyright 2013. Library Journal. LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

From [Booklist](#)

Sports novelist Deuker has created an intense story in which excellent basketball action is tautly woven into a plot about teen-coach ethics. Jonas moves with his parents to a new state, just as he's about to enter his senior year in high school and with the promise of a possible college basketball scholarship hanging over his head—if he can keep his grades up and get enough varsity game time. Jonas makes a new friend, Levi, who appears to be both simple and steadfast but is ultimately far more complex than he had realized. Meanwhile, he acquires powerful leadership skills that help him make a difficult decision: stand up for the truth or preserve his own future. Deuker creates a textured cast of parents, coaches, and teens and deftly handles themes of personal ethics, teamwork, burgeoning friendships, and coping with an abusive adult. Without ever dragging or inserting unbelievable plot twists, Deuker elevates his sports novel to the level of a literary work, inviting readers to empathize with Jonas and use his experiences to consider their own values. Grades 7-10. --Francisca Goldsmith

Review

"Deuker creates a textured cast of parents, coaches, and teens and deftly handles themes of personal ethics, teamwork, burgeoning friendships, and coping with an abusive adult." --*Booklist*

"A largely well-executed exploration of team spirit, friendship and the devastating impact of untrustworthy adults." --*Kirkus*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Valerie Israel:

Nowadays reading books become more than want or need but also become a life style. This reading practice give you lot of advantages. Associate programs you got of course the knowledge the particular information inside the book that improve your knowledge and information. The info you get based on what kind of e-book you read, if you want get more knowledge just go with training books but if you want sense happy read one together with theme for entertaining such as comic or novel. The Swagger is kind of guide which is giving the reader unforeseen experience.

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Lisa Haight:

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