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This "intense reading experience" is a Printz Honor Book. Shawn McDaniel's life is not what it may seem to anyone looking at him. He is glued to his wheelchair, unable to voluntarily move a musclehe can't even move his eyes. For all Shawn's father knows, his son may be suffering. Shawn may want a release. And as long as he is unable to communicate his true feelings to his father, Shawn's life is in danger. To the world, Shawn's senses seem dead. Within these pages, however, we meet a side of him that no one else has seena spirit that is rich beyond imagining, breathing life.\*Booklist starred review Table of Contents What is Stuck in Neutral about? This gripping novel tells the story of Shawn McDaniel, a teenager with cerebral palsy. His condition leaves him unable to communicate or move, trapped within his own body. Despite outward appearances, Shawns mind is sharp, and he struggles with dark thoughts about his fathers potential plans for him. Book Details Title: Stuck in Neutral Author: Terry Trueman Pages: 114 Published: June 30, 2000Genres: Young Adult, Fiction, DisabilityISBN: 0-06-447213-2Synopsis of Stuck in NeutralIntroduction to Shawn McDaniel is a fourteen-year-old boy with cerebral palsy. His condition leaves him unable to control his body or communicate effectively. While most see him as a severely disabled child, his mind is vibrant and fully aware. Within his silent prison, Shawn navigates life filled with frustration, humor, and introspection. His experiences challenge preconceptions about intelligence and disability. The narrative opens on a paradoxical note. Shawn humorously likens his life to the classic good news-bad news joke. He believes he has both. The good news? He cherishes the small joys life offers. The bad news is darker, centered around his fathers volatile emotions regarding his well-being. Shawns life completely shifted after he was born. His father abandoned the family, unable to cope with Shawns condition. Family Dynamics and Painful TruthsShawns relationship with his family shapes his perspective. His mother bears the brunt of caregiving, while his siblings try their best to connect with him. However, Shawn feels overshadowed by the stigma attached to his disability. He often hears his fathers ill-fated plans for him. Shawns father than Shawns strength. Tension builds as Shawn begins to suspect that his father is contemplating a merciful act of ending his life to relieve his perceived suffering. The narrative strikes at the heart of familial love intertwined with fear and sorrow. Shawns unique inner dialogue creates a compelling layer to his character. The stark realization that he is perceived as suffering contrasts sharply with his inner happiness. This friction becomes palpable when he muses about his fathers true feelings and intentions. He wonders if his father might see killing him as a solution to what he believes to be suffering. Seizures, Freedom, and a Disturbing RealityShawns life changes significantly during his seizures. He refers to them as his time of freedom, where he can escape the constraints of his body. During these episodes, he experiences an illumination the bursts of insight and sensations that have become his reprieve. However, his enjoyment of these moments contrasts sharply with his underlying fear. Every seizure raises a looming dread regarding his fathers mental state. Shawn questions whether his fathers love could turn fatal. The narrative builds intrigue as Shawns atmosphere grows tenser. Sharp and disconcerting, these moments highlight his desires and autonomy. Readers witness how the societal perception of disability leads to dangerous assumptions. The worry is particularly distressing when one considers the fathers philosophical musings on euthanasia. Far from a typical coming-of-age story, Shawns thoughts provoke serious discussions about the book, a vital theme manifests: the unconditional yet complicated nature of a fathers love. Shawn reveals his insight that could easily be overlooked. His fathers love comes with burdens that drive intense emotions, including despair. The writing forces readers to contemplate the complexities of care, compassion, and autonomy. As the story progresses, readers grapple with the reality of their circumstances. Shawns most intimate thoughts shine a harsh light on the decisions his father might make. The suspense resembles a slow unraveling of familial ties, characterized by fear and hope. Herein lies the crux of Stuck in Neutralthe challenge against assumptions about disabled individuals and the value of their lives. Conclusion and Themes of the Unforgettable JourneyStuck in Neutral leaves an indelible mark, successfully invoking tough discussions surrounding disability and life value. The story compels readers to consider the hidden depths and complexities of those deemed less than. Shawns rich inner life starkly contrasts the often bleak perceptions held by others. Amid laughter and tears, the book challenges societal views on mental and physical disabilities. The emotional turbulence faced by both Shawn and his father spurs deep contemplation. Are choices bestowed upon those who cannot articulate themselves genuinely compassionate? This thought-provoking narrative ultimately presents an authentic portrayal of a reality fraught with complexities. By showcasing Shawns extraordinary perspective, Terry Trueman offers a refreshing reminder of the intrinsic value present, regardless of circumstance. Stuck in Neutral is a novel filled with poignancy, insight, and empathy, prompting lasting conversations long after the last page is turned. From here you can jump to the Spoilers section right away. Below you can search for another book summary: Alternative Book CoverComing soon QuotesA big seizure just kind of grabs the inside out. Have you ever heard a washing machine suddenly flip into that bang-bang sound when it gets out of balance, or a chain saw when the chain breaks and gets caught up in the gears, or an animal like a cat, screeching in pain? Those are what seizures felt like when I was little. Terry Trueman, Stuck in NeutralThink about it: Why should we care whether what makes us happy is just an electrical impulse in our brain or something funny that we see some fool do on TV? Does it matter what makes you smile? Wouldn't you rather be happy for no reason than unhappy for good reasons? Terry Trueman, Stuck in Neutralmy dad left my mom because of my condition, im a retard knot retard Terry Trueman, Stuck in Neutralmy dad left my mom because of my condition, im a retard knot retard Terry Trueman, Stuck in Neutralmy dad left my mom because of my condition, im a retard knot retard Terry Trueman, Stuck in Neutralmy dad left my mom because of my condition, im a retard knot retard Terry Trueman, Stuck in Neutralmy dad left my mom because of my condition, im a retard knot retard Terry Trueman, Stuck in Neutralmy dad left my mom because of my condition, im a retard knot retard Terry Trueman, Stuck in Neutralmy dad left my mom because of my condition, im a retard knot retard Terry Trueman, Stuck in Neutralmy dad left my mom because of my condition, im a retard knot retard Terry Trueman, Stuck in Neutralmy dad left my mom because of my condition, im a retard knot retard Terry Trueman, Stuck in Neutralmy dad left my mom because of my condition, im a retard knot retard Terry Trueman, Stuck in Neutralmy dad left my mom because of my condition, im a retard knot retard Terry Trueman, Stuck in Neutralmy dad left my mom because of my condition, im a retard knot retard Terry Trueman, Stuck in Neutralmy dad left my mom because of my condition, im a retard knot retard Terry Trueman, Stuck in Neutralmy dad left my mom because of my condition, im a retard knot retard Terry Trueman, Stuck in Neutralmy dad left my mom because of my condition, im a retard knot retard Terry Trueman, Stuck in Neutralmy dad left my mom because of my condition, im a retard knot retard Terry Trueman, Stuck in Neutralmy dad left my mom because of my condition, im a retard knot retard Terry Trueman, Stuck in Neutralmy dad left my mom because of my condition, in a retard knot retard Terry Trueman, Stuck in Neutralmy dad left my mom because of my condition, in a retard knot retard Terry Trueman, Stuck in Neutralmy dad left my mom because of m go!CharactersShawn McDaniel: A 14-year-old with cerebral palsy who cannot speak or move, but has a keen and insightful mind trapped within. Sydney E. McDaniel: Shawns father, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author who grapples with his love for Shawn and dark thoughts about euthanasia. Shawns Mother: The primary caregiver who strives to support Shawn, yet is often overshadowed by Sydneys actions and thoughts. Cindy McDaniel: Shawns sister who, like the rest of the family, struggles to understand Shawns true experience. Paul: Shawns brother, who shows occasional moments of kindness despite the family, struggles to understand Shawns true experience. adding depth to his experiences. Controversial Themes: Addresses topics like euthanasia and the assumptions about disability and worthiness of life. Thought-Provoking: Challenges readers perceptions of disability and what it means to live a fulfilled life. Dark Humor: Shawns humor lightens heavy themes amidst serious contemplation. Spoiler Alert! If you want to read the book, dont click Show more and spoil your experience. Here is a link for you to get the book, Shawns Insight: Readers discover that Shawn is acutely aware of his surroundings and understands conversations involving him. Fathers Contemplation: Sydney struggles with the notion of euthanizing Shawn believing it to be an act of love. Emotional Climax: The book ends with uncertainty, leaving readers wondering about the fathers true intentions. Seizures as Escape: Shawn finds solace and freedom during his seizures, viewing them as moments of escape. Parental Conflict: Much of the narrative centers around the conflict between Sydneys love and his terrifying thoughts. Let us know what you think about this book and the summary in the communicate. The exploration of disability, familial love, and the assumptions about lifes quality. The book leaves readers with unresolved questions about Shawns fate. Yes, despite the heavy themes, Shawns wit shines through. A deeper understanding of the complexities of disabled lives and the misconceptions about them. Reviews This book has sparked polarized opinions. Many appreciate its exploration of taboo subjects, while others criticize its treatment of disability and ableism. For a full review, visit our in-depth analysis. Are you looking for a nice read that perfectly fits your current mood? Here is a free book suggestion tool. It gives you suggestions based on your taste. Also a likelihood rating for each recommended book. Would you like to find the book you will love later or now? Terry Trueman is a noted author with personal connections to the subject. He is the father of a son with cerebral palsy, which heavily influences his writing. Are you looking for a nice read that perfectly fits your current mood? Here is a free book suggestion tool. It gives you suggestions based on your taste. Also a likelihood rating for each recommended book. Would you like to find the book you will love later or now? Conclusion We hope you found this synopsis of Stuck in Neutral engaging. This book tackles heavy topics and provokes thought, making it a vital read. If intrigued, dive into the full story for a deeper experience of Shawns unique world. DISCLAIMER: This book summary serves as an analysis and not a replacement for the original work. If you are the original author of any book on our website and want us to remove it, please contact us. Share copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license terms. Attribution You must give appropriate credit a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. ShareAlike If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original. No additional restrictions You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits. You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material McDaniel is an enigma and a miracle except no one knows it, least of all his father. His life is not what it may seem to anyone looking at him. Not even those who love him best have any idea what he is truly like. In this extraordinary and powerful first novel, the reader learns to look beyond the obvious and finds a character whose spirit is rich beyond imagining and whose story is unforgettable. My life is like one of those "good news-bad news" jokes. Like, "I've got some good news for hours, but you probably want to hear the punch line, my bad news, right? Well, there isn't that much, really, but what's here is pretty wild. First off, my parents got divorced ten years ago because of me. My being born changed everything for all of us, in every way. My dad didn't divorce my mom, or my sister, Cindy, or my brother, Paulhe divorced me. He couldn't handle my condition, so he had to leave. My condition? Well, that brings us to the guts of my bad news. 311 people are currently reading Displaying 1 - 30 of 1,375 reviews August 18, 2007 This book is a frightening little package of really intense ableism, and of course it's been heaped with accolades. The author's life very closely parallels that of his characters--he has a "severely disabled" son with cerebral palsy and has won acclaim/prizes for writing about it, and draws much of the material from his own personal experience as detailed in the afterward. Most disturbing in light of that is that it's unclear whether or not the disabled character is killed by his father because of a supposed diminished "guality of life," and the book sympathetically portrays a parent who DOES kill their disabled child. I'd hate to be Trueman's real son. Watch your back kid. I'm sick of literature/movies that project non-disabled people's fears, hatred and insecurities on disabled people's ideas about how our lives "should be." This book sympathetically argues about killing disabled people, and got lots of prizes. Ick. Ack. Blllllpt. Argh. Eeeek. Hate. It. booksihate disabilitystudies fantasy March 24, 2008Stuck in Neutral, by Terry Trueman, ISBN 0-06-447213-2, 114 pg. \$6.99This book, Stuck in Neutral, by Terry Trueman is one of the best books that I have ever read. Its about a teenage boy named Shawn McDaniel. He has cerebral palsy; a condition where you cant move a muscle in your body and cant see him suffering, so he is planning to kill him, but Shawn wishes that he could talk so that he can tell his father that he doesnt want to die. Hopefully, Shawn's father doesnt will him. Sad and worried, Shawn is between a life and death experience. The story has a bunch of twist and turns, that will glue your eyes to the book over and over again until you memorize each page, each word, and each punctuation mark. It is an excellent book. October 19, 2012I have to think for a while about how to rate this book. I am definitely adding it to my "most disturbing" list. The plot of this book involves a boy who can remember everything he's ever heard. He's clever and mostly happy and loving, but he's trapped inside his body, unable to exercise control over anything is painful to read a book, knowing what Shawn is thinking, knowing no one else has any clue. It is scary and sad and I'm not sure if I liked this book is one of the creepiest I've ever read, no question. Stuck in Neutral is about an intelligent partake in the world. His father, however, sees his child in pain. Shawn's dad left the family home when Shawn was a child because he couldn't deal with his son's cerebral palsy. He also wrote a Pulitzer Prize-winning poem about Shawn was a child because he couldn't deal with his son's cerebral palsy. He also wrote a Pulitzer Prize-winning poem about Shawn's birth and early years and still gets lauded for doing so. (I am not usually into "fake award-winning writing within novels" and I wasn't into this poem) The creepy factor came into play when the narrator, Shawn, informs the reader that he believes his father is going to murder him. This short book explores what it might be like for a child inside an immovable body, what it might be like as a father who is always wondering what is going on in the mind of his son I can't guarantee this book won't make you feel awkward but it will certainly widen your perspective a bit. 3.5/5 starsThis mini-review was part of a series of 7 mini-reviews of short YA books I wrote for a post over at our blog, The Readventurer.gr-most-disturbing-read kcls read-in-2012 February 12, 2023I am so glad I came across this book while browsing and browsing for books. This is a short middle grade book dealing with disability with parents struggling and really having it hard while trying to look after every need of their kids who are differently abled. Now did I rate this book a perfect five stars? No, of course not. But I would want another reader to pick up this book, think about it, feel bad and feel provoked, speak about the parents who seem so wrong and who seem helpless in whatever they decide to do about their kids. I know people will absolutely hate this book regarding the parents and feel what I felt while reading this book!Theres absolutely one thing we should all not really like this father. But also I feel the opinion expressed in the plot is valid for discussion. However, I still feel its a bit heartless and hurtful to even think about it. I want to rate this book no lesser than three stars to four stars thinking about all these issues. Theres a lot of bullying as well. And thereous think about it. I want to rate this book no lesser than three stars to four stars thinking about all these issues. There is a lot of bullying as well. And there is a lot of bullying as well. arent any character to like. They are just as real as they are. But I like this book as the representation of the main character is done well and their personality is quite understandable. Its a well written book told from the perspective of a differently abled younger person. If I need to write a proper essay I would do so. January 27, 2022This is a short book, but I still didn't finish it. I was too disturbed by the thought that. Also, and this is kind of strange, the first few chapters reminded me of Bud, Not Buddy because the narrators in both are kids in a terrible situation who are just so darn upbeat about everything. And by "upbeat" I don't mean optimistic, I mean they use a lot of whimsical expression punctuated with exclamation points like "Golly!" and "Gee whiz!" Trigger warning: the main character calls himself a "retardate" and says he's a "real retard" and a "total retard" and a "total retard" and a "total retard" and a "total retardate" and says he's a "real retard" and a "total retard and a "total retard" and a " to-finish people-with-disabilities printz June 4, 2008Stuck in Neutral is the story of a young, disabled boy who suspects his family how he really feels. Although he is brilliant and smarter than most, his family thinks he has no idea what is going on. He feels trapped in his own body, stuck in neutral. His father struggles with the thought that his son could be suffering, and contemplates killing him in order to end that suffering. I loved this book. I grew up with a brother who has cerebral palsey. Even though he is able to communicate, I always did wonder about the things he had to go through to deal with his disability. This book made me think alot about him, and made me realize how much I look up to him. I wouldn't be able to deal with the things he has been because of the fact that he has that disease, and how complicated it can make things. Stuck in Neutral is not a book about disabilities or murder, but about how far you would go to help the ones you love. It will also get you thinking about how much you were sure of. I recommend it to everyone. December 11, 2020Context: I'm a 20-something chronically ill person who works as a special education assistant at a school for children with all range of disabilities. I don't usually write book reviews, but I've been writing about disability-related content so this is my first official post on GR.I just gave up on Stuck in Neutral by Terry Trueman after about 50 pages (for context, the book is only about 110 pages). I hate it. I hate it more than I have ever hated a book Ive read before. I usually donate books I dont like, but this one is going directly in the garbage bin because I dont want to pass it on to another reader. Let me tell you a little about this Pulitzer Prize (?!?!?!) winning book. It was published in 2000 but that is recent enough that it doesn't get a pass on ableism. The book is narrated by fictional 14-year-old Shawn, a boy with cerebral palsy who is unable to control his movements, speech, etc., and therefore the people around him think he is essentially a vegetable and r-slur (a word frequently used throughout the book, and apparently okay with the narrator and his family, though the author does denounce it in his afterword). Shawns father is a famous writing a poem about how Shawns birth and consequent disabilities effectively ruined his life and marriage. Shawn believes his father is planning to kill him, which his father thinks will put him out of his misery. Shawns thoughts / narrations in the book range from descriptions of his life and family, which Ive mentioned above, to juvenile mentions of staring at womens breasts when theyre near him, to boasting about his perfect memory that no one can know of, to describing how he is transported out of his body during seizures (which he enjoys??) and has these lucid visions in which he can walk, talk, etc. Like, Im sorry, but from what orifice is this author spewing this bullshit from and why did people think it so groundbreaking as to win a literary award? How interesting, you might think he would use this to his advantage and access resources about disability education and advocacy in writing this book, but nowhere in his acknowledgements or afterword does he mention anyone of the sort. To put the icing on the cake, the first people he thanks in the acknowledgements are his family, who I couldn't write this without: [wifes name] and [abled sons name]. No mention of the disabled son who inspired the entire book. None. That alone makes me angry - who cares if your son wont read the book? You cant even mention him in your dedication that includes your family and dozens of other friends and colleagues? Call this a book review, call it a rant, call it whatever you want. But as an advocate 1, 2016I didnt know that this book was so controversial until I Googled it. People actually believe that the author wants to murder his disabled son. Im sorry, but that seems idiotic. If authors were as twisted as their characters, Stephen King would have been in prison 30 years ago. Books cant be written in a vacuum. All authors are inspired by real life. Just because there are similarities between this book and the authors life doesnt mean that somebodys going to get murdered. Be reasonable, people. Okay. Stuck in Neutral is the story of fourteen-year-old Shawn, a boy with cerebral palsy. Shawn has no control over his body. He cant move or speak. Since he has no way to communicate, hes trapped inside his own head. Shawns father worries that Shawns condition is causing him pain that hes unable to express. As Shawns father becomes more obsessed with his sons possible pain, Shawn starts to wonder if his father is planning on killing him. The summary makes this book sound intenseand it is but its also surprisingly hilarious. The novel is written in first-person, so the reader gets to hear all of the thoughts that Shawn is unable to say. Hes very blunt about his situation: There is one final bad-news punch line to my life. This bad news is complicated, difficult to explain. In a nutshell, its that I am pretty sure that my dad is planning to kill me. The good news is that hed be doing this out of his love for me. The bad news is that whatever the wonderfulness of his motives, Ill be dead. Stuck in NeutralShawns life is not completely miserable. He acknowledges that his medical problem has some benefits. For example, he gets to see his sisters friends change clothes at a sleepover because they don't think he can understand whats going on. Additionally, his seizures cause a dreamlike, floating feeling that makes him calm and happy. Hes taught himself to enjoy the little things in life. Think about it: Why should we care whether what makes us happy is just an electrical impulse in our brain or something funny that we see some fool do on TV? Does it matter what makes you smile? Wouldn't you rather be happy for no reason than unhappy for good reasons? - Stuck in NeutralShawns sense of humor and positive attitude help tone down the intensity of the book. I actually had a lot of fun reading it. My only big criticism is that this novel is very short. My copy is only about 115 pages. I think it could have benefitted from being longer. Shawn doesnt have an action-packed existence, but I wondered about the other people in his life. Shawns mother is his full-time caregiver, but we barely see her. He has a brother and sister who we don't learn much about. I also had mixed feelings about Shawns acceptance of his fathers (possible) murder plan. Realistically, Shawn has no choice but to accept it. He cant communicate, and he cant fight. If his father decides to murder him, hes going to die, but I think that Shawns suspicion of the murder plot should have caused more anget. Stuck in Neutral was first published in 2001 and was a major influence in the teen problem novel genre. It won awards not caused more anget. Stuck in Neutral was first published in 2001 and was a major influence in the teen problem novel genre. It won awards not caused more anget. and got a lot of people talking. Its a brave and thought-provoking book. It confronts taboo subjects that make some readers uncomfortable, such as euthanasia and the rights of severely disabled children and their parents. Even though these topics are unpleasant to discuss, theyre important. This book made me think about how able-bodied people project their feelings onto the severely disabled. I dont know any severely disabled people in real life, so Ive never thought about this before. Shawns father sees Shawns seizures and assumes that theyre painful. He assumes that theyre painful. He assumes that theyre painful. developed a unique way of connecting to the world. This book shows that you cant make assumptions about a person. Just because someone is disabled doesnt mean that he/she is suffering. This is a quick and powerful read with an exceptional protagonist. I need to find more books like this one. August 14, 2021I was forced to read this in my high school curriculum, and it was honestly scarring to hear the adult in the room praising the actions of a dad killing his son. My classmate was a boy who had cerebral palsy and he was so upset he didn't even want to talk about it, in class or in private. This concept that able-bodied lives are good lives and disabled lives are miserable lives not worth living is a fallacy pushed by ableist fucks. I recently became disabled, and despite my struggles, I want to live, and continue living. I deal with daily pain that the average person could not imagine functioning with. I feel like I was hit with a car on most days, and you know what? I still have fun. I have a life worth living. I haven't met a disabled person who wants to die because of their disability. What this main character needed was a loving family and loving friends, who don't look down on him or infantilize him. He needed people who don't project their able-bodied ideas onto him of what they think he must be going through, or their ideas of his life being a life not worth living. And while well I'm aware that some people do choose euthanasia for themselves when they're suffering immensely, it's a smaller number than you would think, and those individuals are usually terminally ill. You can't decide for someone else that they should die, especially if you don't have any ways to communicate with them, and you know they have their own thoughts and feelings. I've known people with cerebral palsy. It's not the same thing as terminal cancer. He also needed better care, there ARE systems to help non-verbal disabled individuals with communication. I've even seen a man communicate by pointing his eyes at the words he wants to speak on a portable board his wife holds up to talk to him. Does he struggle? Yeah! But his life isn't miserable. He has a loving wife and loving buddies who help him work out at the gym, since fitness is his passion. His life wasn't worth living. Do you see a pattern yet? The fact that people would defend this book is just proof that ableism, not disabled people med to kill ableism, not disabled people med support and love. Disabled people med groper medical care and assistance, and to be seen as equals. We are not sob stories for your ableist inspiration porn. From what I remember, this book also has some rape culture esque the meaning of this book is very strong, this book is very strong, this book can be read by adults, teenagers and children, this book is about a young boy named Shawn who has cerebral palsy, although many people think that he can't do anything or think for himself they are wrong. Shawn is actually a very smart boy but because of his condition many people don't see it. His father doesn't like to see shawn this way and many times he thinks about killing him but never does. Shawn knows that his father wants to kill him but can't do anything about it. on the last page of the book we have shawn and his father alone and in the fathers hand there is a pillow, it osn't clear wether the father kills shawn or if he doesn't, i liked this book because it made me care more about people may think that just because it made me care more about people may think that just because they suffer of this condition, many people may think that just because it made me care more about people that have this condition. not act or look the same these people are still humans and have the same feelings and may have more emotions than we do. so for all you readers if you want to read something short read Stuck in Neutral because it will leave you a valuable lesson in life to appriciate what you have and me kind to others. February 15, 2018I thought this book was amazing when I first read it, and am so utterly horrified at myself now. October 26, 2020ok i am bothered by this book, i dont actually remember the reason why i wanted to read it.. i thought long and hard about this book, and obviously the rating drastically dropped to a one star because i have so many problems with this story. first of all, was this book, and obviously the rating drastically dropped to a one star because i have so many problems with this story. supposed to be a controversial book with a topic that is open for debate? because i dont think so. its just shit. the father had no right killing him. its still murder. beside the fact that we know the kid was happy and didnt want to die, you absolutely have no right to end someones misery because simply you dont know. youre not god to decide. im actually more furious because the father actually more exploited him than took care of him... he fucking left them???? and then he has the nerve to come back and kill him because he cannot bare to see him suffer. bro get the FUCK out. what is this shit? i want my two hours back. October 3, 2008Stuck in Neutral takes an uncomfortable subject and tries to shed some light on what might be happening. It is about a boy who is so severely retarded that all he seems to be able to do is have seizures. And yet he loves his seizures because they are his chance to get out of his body and visit other places. He also is upset with his father for winning an award for writing about dealing with a severely retarded son, yet not really wanting to have the son. It allowed me to see life from a very different perspective. August 14, 2008A fantastic book that really makes you think! Shawn has cerebral palsy and can't communicate with anyone. Told from his viewpoint, the reader learns about Shawn's feelings, dreams, and also his fear that his father wants to kill him. I couldn't put it down and read it in one sitting. I will be recommending this one to any and all. September 1, 2016This book definitely makes you think. It's for young adults, yes, but I imagine adults will be able to connect to the father in entirely different ways than teenagers can. I've used this novel for book clubs before and it always sparks too. September 6, 2007This book can have a profound impact on you if you have any emotional connection to someone with a disability. I really liked the first person narration from a teenage boy whose disability has left him mute and due to the "possible" outcome of the end I would reccommend a dialogue and discussion if teenagers are reading it. February 19, 2023I will be withholding a review until the Harper Collins union receives a fair contract. But wowie will I have some things to say on this one. UPDATE: I can finally review this! Let's do it. 2.5 stars. Stuck In Neutral is the story of a teenage boy named Shawn who has cerebral palsy and figures out that his father wants to end his life as an act of compassion. Shawn was born with cerebral palsy and has no control over the muscles in his body -- he can't even control the focus of his eyes and swallowing. Because of this, he is unable to communicate to the the world and his caregivers that he has a rich inner world and understands everything going on around him. His mom, dad, and teachers are unsure of whether or not he understands things, but they have been assure by doctors that it is unlikely. Shawn is very perceptive, emotionally intelligent, and has a very good memory, so he has learned a lot of about the world from hearing conversations, TV, and even reading. So he very guickly picks up on the fact that he's pretty sure his father is wrestling with the idea of ending Shawn's mother is Shawn's mother in jail for killing his two-year-old son to "do what he had to do" to "end his son's suffering" from a "terrible, terminal, inoperable seizure disorder, and irreversible medical condition, couple with profound mental retardation that made his existence insufferable." Sydney defends Earl's act as one of deep love, compassion, and personal sacrifice on behalf of his child. But Shawn can see the gears turning in Sydney's head and knows that Sydney is planning to do the same to him. This is a very short book that packs a LOT of punch. There are a lot of difficult and triggering scenes, from the death of a dog to acts of violence against Shawn, in addition to examinations of the ableism and challenges Shawn reviewing it. HOWEVER, most of these reviews and positive accolades come from people outside of the disabled community. And let it be known that I also fall into this camp. But this book just didn't sit right with me -- it's literally about giving us empathy for why a father would want to end his son's life. So when I sought some perspectives from the Disability Studies community, I found the criticisms that seemed to echo some of my own concerns about this story. I think it was a strange choices for Terry Trueman to write this book, considering the he himself is the father of a son with cerebral palsy. Thought he says in the end notes that he has not contemplated killing his son, it is clear that the real purpose of this book is to work out his own feelings and experiences (and struggles) being a father to his son. So the fact that he chose to write a YA book from the perspective of his son feels like an artificial way for Trueman to give himself forgiveness for feelings he's had. He's literally making up his own dialogue with his child in a way that feels far too speculative, even for fiction. Trueman is trying really hard to advocate for people with disabilities here and change perspectives, and I do think he is somewhat successful at that. He uses the R-word a lot throughout this story and Shawn goes into a discussion of how and why he uses that word. And Trueman shows things like Shawn's experiences at school, with his family at home, with respite caregivers and with the narratives that people have about it. I think Trueman gives Shawn in this story is rational, compassionate, and understanding of his father's potential choices as an act of deep love. But it feels icky to read that rationalization coming from a fictional boy talking about his fictional father written by a real father for his own selfish purposes. In short, I don't think this book would be published in 2023. It certainly speaks to a specific moment in YA literature -- a moment when the only way we saw "representation" of some marginalized voices was through stories written by the parents, siblings, children, teachers, and friends of individuals with those experiences, but rarely from those people themselves. That was a stepping stone, but in 2023 I expect more. So I'm glad I read this book as a cultural artifact and it was certainly thought-provoking (though I don't think it was particularly well-written...just shocking and "innovative" for the era). But I wouldn't recommend this book in the modern day. Note: I'm on the fence about my own 2.5 star review. I am not one to shoot a book down to 1 stars just because of problematic representation -- there are other elements that contribute to storytelling that I'm also looking at here, too. February 1, 2024 Shawn McDaniel is a boy with cerebral palsy who experience issues that affect his movements while living with his family. Shawns mother and sisters live with his condition while taking take of him the best they can while his father begins to act strangely towards him, causing Shawn to believe that he might be trying to kill him. SIN is a very surreal and deep story of someone living with a condition. Despite its horror-like cover, Shawns story has a strangely calm tone with a few humorous moments with the last handful of chapters feeling more emotional. A story that also show how parents will do anything to help their children. B+ (83%/Very Good)borrowed-from-library read-with-audiobook ya-fiction-reviewsSeptember 4, 2023A truly heartbreaking and eye opening story about a boy with cerebral palsy. The story follows his life and thoughts as he fears his father is going to kill him. Its a harsh reminder for those who need it that just because you have a disability, it doesn't mean you aren't comprehending the world around you August 13, 20203.5 stars. A fast paced and easy read that taught me more about the importance of perspectives and thinking/speaking for others. I would recommend this book to others more for the conversation that would spark based on the concepts of the book as opposed to the storyline. February 23, 2020From the off color jokes and borderline sexist and ableist content to the frightening tones that the author might literally want to kill his disabled son I was uncomfortable with almost every minute of reading this book. There were so many parts that felt wrong and disgusting that I don't even want to talk about them. What I will talk about is some of the things I did enjoy about this book. I loved that Shawn had great memories with his family and that we as readers were able to experience some of them with him. I do wish that the author had included more day-to-day experience some of them with him his mom feeding him or his brother sneaking him food. I appreciated the one off important memories like his dad holding him in the VR simulator and his brother beating up those dudes, but not enough was said to really make them impactful. For the most part, if I ignore some of the seriously concerning parts of the book, it's biggest flaw was that it wasn't enough. The book is only 100 pages, so there wasn't enough space to include indepth discussions about everything it's trying to cover, but I do wish the focus would have been on something more than just a big argument on whether it's ok to kill your son. I do think that is this book were rewritten by someone who actually focused on the details and intricacies of living with and taking care of someone like Shawn it could have been great. I liked the story from Shawn's point of view, but it does create ambiguity over what is actually realistic and what isn't. I think this is a very difficult and touchy story to write at the best of times, and this was just an example of how things can go poorly even when the author is as authentic as they are. Overall, I wouldn't recommend this to anyone, though I would love to read more books that cover similar topics to find something that does what this book tries but in a more successful and appropriate way. January 2, 2013 My Name is Shawn McDaniel. I'm 14 years old. I think my father is planning to kill me.In a phenomenally personal story Terry Trueman takes us into the mind of a profoundly, developmentally disabled cerebral palsy sufferer who's also a quirky, insightful, vibrantly alive 14 year old. However this kid is pretty much input only. Who can tell what goes on in the mind of a child who cannot even control his own eye blinks? While the protagonist in this story is unable to communicate with anyone in his world, this book gives us an inner monologue that shows us a unique individual who's glad to be alive and who is relishing each and every new life experience with the reader on a level that books seldom do. Written by the father of just such a boy, this book may even afflict the reader a bit too, only the body parts that the sympathetic reader will be unable to control are the tear ducts. And yet for the most part this is NOT a sad, maudlin, tear-jerker of a book. One really needs to read this oneself to experience the full effect but even the visceral dread that one experiences as the kid describes his fear that his father may end his life in order to spare him continued suffering is only accentuated by the feel of having so few pages remaining unread in the book. I've rated Terry Trueman's other book Inside Out as being an unsung work of genius, this, his first book, is perhaps even better. If you ever wanted to really fulfill that old adage about understanding someone by walking a mile in his moccasins, pick up one of these books. all-5-star-reads all-time-favorites broken-winged-birds April 21, 2013Stuck in neutral by Terry Trueman is about a 14 year old boy that can't move any part of his body. His father loves him but wants to kill him because he thinks that his son that can't move is suffering and in pain but he can't show it. What his dad doesn't know is that he is not suffering. His life isn't the greatest life in the world but he still likes his life. His senses are dead but he sees the world in another way, he enjoys it very much. In the book Shawn Mcdaniel's learns that his dad may not show it but he loves him. I would not recommend this book to anyone. One reason is that I didn't like the ending at all we never find out what happens to him. Third reason is that I don't like how the book starts because it starts with telling you about how he feels about what he is and you don't get to the good part for 30 more pages. Last reason is that the book was to short it should never ever read this book please. September 17, 2019People, especially children, really are murdered by those supposed to care for them. For more information on the Disability Day of Mourning, please visit (groans in frustration) This book was super dark and edgy to me when I was ten and read it the first time. I was so freaked out and didn't speak to my dad for days. Twenty years and a really good physical therapist and a major advocate in my mom, later, people act really surprised when I finally tell them I have the same thing Shawn does, only much milder. I walk unassisted, and hear, see, speak and sing clearly. Still, I was delighted to read a fiction book with someone who knew how to spell my medical condition correctly. So, twenty years later, I reread this as an e-book. The author and people who like this desperately need to start following disabled people on Twitter. They might learn that we're people, and deserve to be here. This book is ableist trash told in an incredibly boring and cliche way, and I shivered a little when I read that the able-bodied author has a son with palsy. I hope the kid is okay. June 27, 2017 Disturbing and sad at the end. I guess I was viewing it through the lens of "Out of my Mind" by Sharon Draper and instead of a feel good book, I was shocked into a silent world of Cerebral Palsy and has no way to communicate with anyone. he can't control his muscles nor can he talk or gesture in any way. I was frustrated by the fact there was no attempt by any of the characters to communicate with him. Really? I just feel this was a big hole in the story and detracted from it. His dad was thinking about killing Shawn out of a profound Love for him. Shawn like Melody in Out of My Mind was brilliant and he loved his life. He was a realist and matter of factly related his day to day existence and his out of body experiences when he had seizures. I don't know, I think the author missed a home run with this one. September 19, 2018 Shawn is trapped within his own body. As a severely disabled teen who is unable to communicate in any way, most people assume that Shawn is an idiot incapable of learning; yet this is far from the truth. Shawn remembers everything that anyone has ever said to or around him. And now he is beginning to fear that his father is planning to kill him. This was truly an interesting look into what might be the life of someone like Shawn. It is easy to assume that we know or understand someone simply because of their ability (or inability) to communicate with us. Who knows how many incredibly intelligent people are trapped behind disability. This is one of the books that will be discussed is the book group I am running for the American Library Associations Great Stories Club with the theme Empathy: The Cost of Switching Sides. Displaying 1 - 30 of 1,375 reviews Get help and learn more about the design.