

Resource Kit for use in schools

My Dad, the All Black by Sandy McKay

'People don't like it when you're too good though, do they?'

Will McCann, 12 years old, is a top notch rugby player. Everybody says he gets his talent from his famous All Black father, but Will never knew his dad.

After a game goes wrong, Will wonders if he plays rugby because he loves the game, or because everybody says he should?

When Will's grandad dies, Will meets Jim, his reclusive uncle with a troubled past. Why has Uncle Jim stayed away from Will and his mum for so many years? What really happened the night Will's dad died?

While, on the other side of the world, the All Blacks battle for the 1999 Rugby World Cup, Will battles to discover the truth about the past. He eventually unlocks a secret that helps him decide things for himself.

Anyone who ever wanted to be an All Black should read this book!

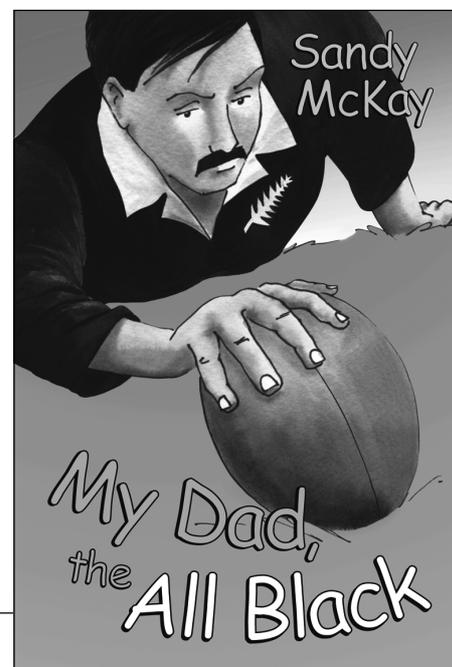
Following her first waggish novel, *Recycled*, Sandy McKay writes another eventful, tender and humorous story from a child's-eye view.



This resource kit contains:

- Comprehension Questions
- Group Discussion
- Drama/Theatre
- Creative
- Word Work and Word Play
- General Activities

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SPECIFICATIONS

Imprint: Longacre Press
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Comprehension Questions

p. 18: Will says the way you become an All Black is different from the way you become something like a lawyer. What does he mean?

pp 26–27: Why doesn't Will make the try on these pages?

p. 42 and pp 44–46: Why is Will watching a video about smoking at school? Why do you think he has chosen this topic?

p. 43: Why is Eric's dad in a bad mood?

pp 50–53: What is the big family secret that Will learns?

p. 65: Why does Will say he's not going to panic when his mum walks out of Uncle Jim's house?

p. 79: What characteristics make a good rugby prop, according to Uncle Jim?

p. 80: Why doesn't Uncle Jim drive a car any more?

p. 90: What facts does Will learn about fish from Kate?

p. 91: What are some other ways of saying "too corny"?

pp 99–100: What does Will learn about his dad's personality here?

pp 114–115: What does Kate tell Will about how it felt when her dad died? Why does Will want to know?

p. 124: What upsets Will so much about Uncle Jim when he finds him after his emergency run?

pp 146–147: Why does Uncle Jim worry about the All Blacks?

p. 150: What does Kate's near-death experience make Will think about life?

p. 152: Why is Will's mum dressed all in black on this page?

p. 153: What has learning the new information about his dad taught Will? How does he look at things differently now? And how does it affect his approach to rugby at the end of the novel?

Overall: Was there anything in the book that really surprised you? Explain and describe.

Group Discussion

Use these when everyone in the class has finished reading the book.

1. Are there any rugby terms on page 18 that you don't understand? As a group, discuss and find out what they mean.
2. Will says that being good at rugby has been passed down in his blood. What skills or interests run in your family?
3. Do you do any form of exercise or play any sport? Explain why you've chosen that particular sport or exercise and describe what you like about it.
4. Why do people get so excited about national teams playing overseas games?
5. Do people have the right to show national teams that they are angry or upset when the team loses?
6. If you have a gift or a talent for something (like Will does for rugby) do you think you should have to use it?

8. Will's father Dennis drove his car after he'd been drinking. Why is this a dangerous thing to do?
9. List the pros and cons of being an All Black or some other famous sports person.
10. Pretend that you are the son or daughter of someone famous. Write about what your life is like.
11. At the beginning of the book Will feels reluctant about playing rugby. Why? How does he feel at the end of the book?
12. Do your parents ever embarrass you? In what ways?
13. On page 93 the book says "*Maori legend says the boulders are the cargo of the great canoe Te Araiteuru. The canoe that brought the kumara.*" Think about the differences between the scientific and the Maori explanation for the boulders. Do you know any other Maori legends?
14. Will felt closer to his dad when he started writing letters to him. Letters can be a good way to express feelings. Is there anyone you would like to write to?

Drama/Theatre

Turn one or two of the scenes between Uncle Jim and Will into a two person play. Perform this for the class.

EITHER write a monologue from Will's point of view describing the most important run of his life, OR write a monologue from Kate's point of view describing what it was like to be left stranded and trapped by the rock. Perform this for the class.

In pairs, in front of the class, do a role play where Uncle Jim gets a chance to explain to Grandad Neville what really happened on the night of the car crash that killed Will's dad.

Creative

Write your own rugby (or other sport) chant/cheer-leading rhyme.

Invent a slogan for an international sports team.

Write a story about a visit to a doctor or the hospital (fact or fiction).

Write an ad (for TV, the paper, or the radio) encouraging people to keep fit and play sport.

Word Work and Word Play

DEFINITIONS:

Keep a notebook of words you don't know the meaning of as you read the book. Look these words up in the dictionary and write down your own definitions of these in the notebook. With a partner, test each other on these words.

CROSSWORD:

Make a crossword, inventing your own clues where the following words are the answers:

hysterical
 Scotland
 conservative
 cyclone
 Monopoly
 conversion
 higgledy piggledy
 mollymawks
 intoxicating
 morbid
 neurotic
 mussel
 muscle

SCRAMBLE:

Untangle the following mixed up words (it's okay if you find more than one answer for some of them!)

signiucr

ctxio

eevrl

noiisllco

ilaaaurst

eelophnc

siarcoorkb

auiaeaqcntc

inottrca

General Activities

1. Find out ten more interesting facts about rugby
OR your own favourite sport.
2. Rugby is sometimes called New Zealand's national sport. (a) What else is New Zealand known for overseas? (b) Choose three other countries and find out three or four things that they are known for.
3. If you aren't all that familiar with rugby, find out what all the playing positions are in a team, and give a brief description of what the player in that position has to do. (Or, see question two under Group Discussion above.)
4. Write your own version of a back cover blurb for the book.
5. Design your own cover for the book.
6. Imagine *My Dad, the All Black* is going to be turned into a movie. Design the advertising poster for the film.
7. Write a review of the novel (saying whether or not you would recommend it to other readers) for a newspaper.
8. Write a review of *My Dad, the All Black* for your school magazine or your favourite book review website.
9. Have you read any other novels or seen any films based around a sport? Give a report of this book or movie.
10. Play a game of rugby! (Or the sport that is most popular in your class right now.)