

Teacher's Rationale

School: Arrowhead

Teacher: Balistreri/Budzein/Freeberg/Judd

Title: The Snapper

Grade or Course: Modern Lit

Approximate date(s) a book will be used:

Semester 1

Semester 2

This book will be (check one or more):

studied by the whole class. (But students are allowed to read an alternative.)

studied by small groups.

placed on a reading list.

placed in a classroom library.

recommended to individual students.

part of a larger study of (explain):

other (explain):

Ways in which the book is especially appropriate for student in this class :

The Snapper is the story of a 19-year-old Irish girl, Sharon, who finds herself pregnant out of wedlock. She had gotten drunk at a party and was taken advantage of. She chooses to have the child despite local scandal and goes through a difficult pregnancy. Her family goes through tough times, but in the end rallies around her and becomes stronger and closer.

The book is especially appropriate for 16-19-year-olds since it deals with the issues of binge drinking, date rape, unwanted pregnancy, gossip, vulgarity, and reputation – all of which are things we hope our kids can avoid, but which they are surrounded by. The book is cautionary without being preachy. Also, Sharon's father learns a lot about love and parenting as he chooses to stand by his daughter throughout the ordeal. Our kids need to see the difficulties of parenting to know what they are getting into!

Ways in which the book is especially pertinent to the objectives of this course or unit:

The book is written by an award-winning, best-selling novelist and screenwriter. Its characters are alive, complex, and memorable. Its issues are morally complex. (Complexity is the keystone of any great literature.) It is set in another country. It is written in a minimalist style which requires the reader to participate in creating meaning. Many kids love the book.

All of the above contribute to the course objectives of encouraging our students to read daily, connecting school learning to real life, exposing the class to the viewpoints of other cultures, social classes, races, religions or even the other gender, and generating meaningful writing opportunities.

Special problems that might arise in relation to the book and some planned activities that handle this problem:

The father in this book sprinkles vulgarities in nearly every sentence he speaks, yet he ultimately is a good and loving parent and husband. This might put off some people, especially if they aren't used to Irish working class speech. In class, we discuss the

effect of working class vulgar speech, and what it reveals about character. Also, the book is nearly clinical in its description of the physical side of pregnancy. For a few kids, these descriptions are a little nauseating. However, we can easily move the conversation into reason's why one shouldn't get pregnant. Finally, there are a few instances of frank talk about sexuality, although none of them are graphic. Again, this easily leads into a discussion of the emotional, physical, social, economic and moral problems engendered by binge drinking and promiscuity.

Some other appropriate books an individual student might read in place of this book:

A Walk to Remember – Nicholas Sparks

Summary of the book:

See below

Reviews and/or awards of the book or author:

The Snapper – Roddy Doyle

Twenty-year-old Sharon Rabbitte is pregnant. She is also unmarried, living at home, working in a supermarket, and keeping the identity of the father a secret. Her own father, Jimmy senior is shocked by the news. Her mother says little. Her friends and neighbors all want to know whose “snapper” Sharon is carrying. In his sparkling second novel, Roddy Doyle observes the progression of Sharon's pregnancy and its impact on the Rabbitte family – especially on Jimmy Sr – with wit, candor, and surprising authenticity. Roddy Doyle is the winner of the Booker prize for *Paddy Clarke, Ha, Ha, Ha*

Reviews:

Library Journal (7/1/92)

New York Time Book Review (10/11/92)