Bleachers

by John Grisham

*Please answer on a separate sheet of paper. Use complete sentences.*

***Wednesday***

*pages 61-72*

Vocabulary:

1. nostalgia (65)
2. glib (67)
3. vindication (68)

Questions:

1. When he entered the local café, “Neely took a deep breath and told himself to smile, to be polite” (62). Why did he do this?
2. How did Coach Rake help “voluntarily” integrate Messina?
3. Describe Neely’s interaction with the locals. How do the locals treat Neely? How does Neely treat the locals?
4. Who is Screamer? What has her relationship with Neely been like? How does Paul feel about her?
5. On pages 63 and 70, Neely examines pictures of himself playing football. Describe what he sees when he looks at those pictures.
6. Why do you think Grisham includes the scene at the sandlot? How does this scene help with characterization?

pages72-85

Vocabulary:

1. lopsided (73)
2. autopsy (76)
3. heatstroke (76)
4. timber (77)
5. diehards (78)

Questions:

1. How was the 1992 team different from some other teams in the past? (For example Neely and Paul’s 1987 team) How did Coach Rake approach the season (74)?
2. Who was Scotty Reardon? What were the conditions and events that ultimately lead to his death?
3. Who fired Coach Rake? What was his relationship to Scotty Reardon?
4. How was the town split? Paul says “It got ugly” (78). Who got caught in the middle? What was the argument on each side?
5. Why wasn’t the boycott successful?
6. For a while, the town was united again with football. Why was this possible? What happened by the end of the season?
7. When Reardon was up for re-election, what was the outcome? What message was Messina sending?
8. Paul and Neely visit two other headstones. One was Marvin Rudd, a black kid who went missing in action in 1970. Neely remembers Rake talking about Rudd. Paul agrees that “Rake loved the kid. His parents still come to every game, and you wonder what they’re thinking” (85). What does Paul mean by that? What answer would you give Paul?

*pages 85-99*

Vocabulary:

1. bohemian (85)
2. impromptu (89)
3. yokels (91)
4. unruly (92)

Questions:

1. What kind of shop does Nat Sawyer own? Why is his shop so unique in Messina?
2. What was Nat’s Spartan Football claim to fame?
3. How did Coach Rake help Nat out when Nat returned to Messina after college? Why did Coach Rake seek out Nat’s store so often?
4. How did Rake and Nat’s relationship change once Nat was an adult? How was it still the same?
5. Who is Cameron? Why was Nat so upset with Neely for what he did in high school? Why do you think Neely asked about her?

*pages 99-104*

Vocabulary:

1. atrium (101)

Questions:

1. Neely says he is going to visit the basketball coach, but what is his real reason for visiting the high school?
2. What does his hypothetical conversation with one of the current football players reveal about Neely’s pain?

*pages 104-106*

Vocabulary:

1. pristine (104)

Questions:

1. What do we learn about Neely’s characterization? What do we learn about Coach Rake’s characterization?

*pages 106-138*

Vocabulary:

1. mauled (116)
2. haphazardly (123)
3. textbook (125)- adj
4. nonchalantly (132)
5. banter (138)

Questions:

1. As the fraternity assembles again in the bleachers, Nat has an audio tape of an old game. What game is it? At what point in the game do they begin listening? Why was this moment in Spartan history so legendary?
2. There are men listening in the bleachers who did not play in that game. What perspective do they provide to the players listening? How do their questions assist the reader in unfolding the story of this game?
3. “Hindu, I swear, was crying. He wanted to blitz from safety on every play just so he could be sure he hit someone” (114-115). There are several references to the players wanting to hit the opposing team and hit them hard, regardless of the rules or penalties. What is their motivation?
4. Describe the tone of the conversation as Silo, Nat, Neely and Paul interject into the broadcast of the game. How do they talk to each other? How do they talk to the announcer? Give an example.
5. What injury is Neely playing with in the second half? When asked about it on the bleachers, Silo answers for Neely (127). What is his answer? What can we infer about why Silo answered for Neely and the answer he gave?
6. Find a quote from the text that again lets the readers know that something happened between the players and coaches at halftime. Be sure to include the page #.
7. What news does Mal bring to the group on the bleachers? What does Rabbit do?

*pages 138-146*

Vocabulary:

1. vigil (138)
2. ferocious (141)
3. noncommittal (144)

Questions:

1. What did the team do after they won the game? What did they refuse to do? How do you believe this is connected to what Silo says on page 131?
2. What is Mal’s response when asked where the funeral is going to be?