

Peachtree Pointers

📖 SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS AND LIBRARIANS 📖

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HEAD ABOVE WATER

By S. L. Rottman

ISBN: 1-56145-185-1 / Hardcover / \$14.95
6 x 8 1/2 / 208 pages / Young Adult Fiction



A Freestone Publication

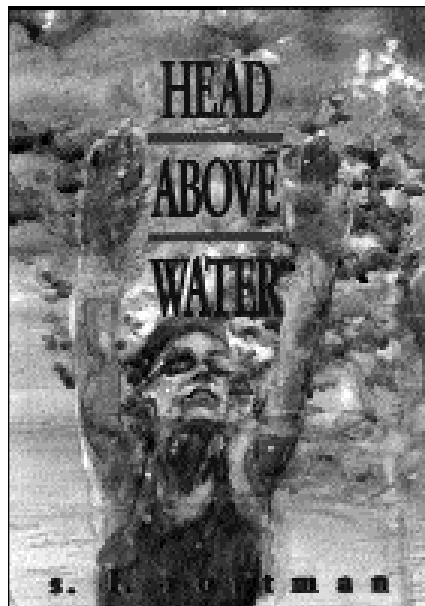
About the Book

Skye Johnson, a high-school junior, is training hard to qualify for state championships. She needs a swimming scholarship to go to college. Between her swimming and keeping up her grades, Skye doesn't have time for much else. But because her mother works two jobs to support the family, Skye must spend the rest of her time caring for her older brother, Sunny, who has Down syndrome. To find time for her new boyfriend, Skye chooses to break a trust, never dreaming of the complications that will follow. And when her boyfriend begins to make greater demands of her, Skye is faced with even more difficult decisions.

Praise and Awards for Head Above Water

"An involving and often suspenseful read."

—Paula Rohrlick, *KLIATT*



"...Skye remains a sympathetic, multidimensional character whose emotional growth is compelling and believable."

—Michael Cart, *Booklist*

- ★ 2000 Oklahoma Library Assoc/Sequoyah Book Award (finalist)
- ★ 2000 Colorado Book Award/Colorado Center for the Book (finalist)
- ★ 2000 Oklahoma Book Award/Oklahoma Center for the Book (finalist)
- ★ 2000 YALSA (ALA) Best Book for Young Adults
- ★ 2000 YALSA (ALA) Quick Pick for Reluctant Young Readers (nominee)
- ★ 2000-2001 TAYSHAS High School Reading List, Texas Library Association
- ★ 2001 Kentucky Bluegrass Awards (nominee)

Themes

- Trust
- Responsibility
- Family
- Dating violence
- Sibling rivalry

Before Reading

- What is your biggest talent? Your biggest weakness? How do these affect your everyday life?
- What is the most important goal you have in high school?
- What are your responsibilities? What are a typical teen's responsibilities?
- How does trust affect a relationship? How easily is trust repaired?
- Sibling rivalry is often part of growing up. Describe your most memorable moment with a sibling.

While Reading

- If you were Jenny, what advice would you give Skye?
- Skye uses visualization before her race. Have you ever used it? Is it a technique that works?
- Skye is often torn between what she wants to do and what she should do. Which of her decisions do you agree with and which would you have done differently?

- Skye is not always a nice person. Who in the novel might consider her mean? Shallow? Snobby?

After Reading

- Why did Sunny give Skye his medal?
- What will Sunny's life be like when Skye goes away to college?
- Was the punishment for Mike enough? What would you have done if you were Skye's mom? Mike's parents?
- How has Skye changed?

Interdisciplinary Connections

Science

- What are the causes and effects of Down syndrome?
- Is it possible to hear someone talking or yelling underwater? Why or why not?
- Swimmers do many things to make themselves more streamlined (caps, goggles, shaving, etc.) Do these efforts really affect the outcome of the race?

Math

- Swim meets are decided by fractions of a second. At Skye's first meet, how much time per length did she need to drop to qualify for state? When she does qualify, what was her average time per 50?

■ Most pools are 25 yards or meters long. How many lengths of the pool does it take to swim a mile? How long is a 500-yard freestyle in terms of miles?

Social Studies

■ How has public education changed and reformed education for those with different abilities?

■ All too often, rape is not reported. What are the current rape statistics? The estimated number of unreported rapes? The number of rapes committed by a stranger versus those committed by an acquaintance? How have laws changed to encourage rape victims to testify?

■ “Deadbeat parents” (parents who don’t pay child support) are subject to many different punishments. What are the laws in your state?

Activities

Skye’s college application includes two essay questions:

■ “What is the most important thing in your life?”

■ “What was the biggest turning point in your life?”

Choose one of the questions, and answer it for Skye.

■ Stephen Hawkins, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and Helen Keller are examples of

prominent people who overcame disabilities and became successful. Research someone who overcame physical obstacles.

■ There are many different ways students in Skye’s financial situation can go to college. What are some of the different loans, grants, and scholarships that students from your school are eligible for?

■ Many charities and nonprofit organizations exist to assist people with disabilities. Visit one of these organizations and write about your experience there.

Notes

About the Author

A graduate of Colorado State University, S.L. Rottman grew up in Colorado, and currently lives in North Dakota. Rottman wrote HERO at the age of twenty-four.

Also by S. L. Rottman:

HERO

- 1998 Oklahoma Book Award/Oklahoma Center for the Book-Winner
 - 1998 New York Public Library Books for the Teen Age
- 1999-00 South Carolina Association of School Librarians/Young Adult Book Award (nominee)
 - 1999 YALSA (ALA) Best Books for Young Adults
 - 1999 YALSA (ALA) Quick Picks for Reluctant YA Readers (nominee)
 - 1999-00 Black-Eyed Susan Book Award (Maryland) (nominee)
- 1999-00 Oklahoma Library Association/Sequoyah Book Award Young Adult (nominee)
 - 2000-01 TAYSHAS High School Reading List/Texas Library Association
 - 2001 Nevada Young Readers' Award -Winner/Young Adult Category

ROUGH WATERS

- 1999 YALSA (ALA) Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Readers
- 1999 Oklahoma Book Awards/Oklahoma Center for the Book (finalist)
 - 1999 New York Public Library/Books for the Teen-Age
 - 2000 Colorado Blue Spruce (nominee)
 - 2000 IRA Young Adult Choice
 - 2000-1 South Carolina Young Adult Book Award (nominee)
 - 2001 Children's Literature Association of Utah (nominee)

Questions? Comments?
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