



Ages 12 and up

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A note from the author

What makes your book real?

“What makes our book real is that our characters are struggling with real dilemmas and real issues. The question of head injury in sports, especially in football, is a controversy being worried about and argued at every level from the NFL to Pop Warner. Our characters are smart and thoughtful and talented—he’s a star high school quarterback, she’s an articulate high school journalist—but they are up against tough problems, without easy answers. In our book, you’ll hear their very real voices describing real-life dilemmas—what happens when the sport you love may damage you forever? What will you do to save a friend—even a friend who doesn’t want to be saved? What happens to someone who tells an unpopular truth?”

—DAVID KLASS & PERRI KLASS

A note from the editor

What made you acquire this book?

“When David Klass and his sister Perri Klass proposed a football novel about head injuries, I knew they would make a dream team, bringing not only experience but also top credentials to the work. David is a seasoned YA novelist and screenwriter; Perri is an MD who writes fiction and nonfiction, as well as a regular column on medical issues for the *New York Times*. With the seriousness of concussions from sports injuries—especially football—finally being recognized, it didn’t take a literary quarterback to see that this was an opportunity not to be missed.”

—FRANCES FOSTER

A Discussion Guide for
SECOND IMPACT by David Klass & Perri Klass

START A CONVERSATION ABOUT . . . **. . . tough choices**

Discussion Questions

- Most of us participate in sports with the intent to win. Football is a team sport, and the entire team is going for the championship. Should one team member’s well-being be placed above the group’s?
- Does a school principal have legitimate authority to limit free speech in the interest of the school? Can you think of other ways Carla could have gotten around the principal’s order to postpone making her report on concussions public? Could she have enlisted Ms. Edison’s help? What would you have done?
- Do you think gender played a part in the principal’s treatment of Carla? Would he have been more tolerant if she were a boy?
- Jerry was shunned for taking Danny out of the game and blamed for losing the title for Kendall High. Would it have made a more satisfying end to the book if someone in authority, like the coach, had publicly praised him for his action? Would it be credible?
- The authors purposely kept Carla and Jerry from falling in love. In their place, would you have made the same decision?
- Winning a game is celebrated, losing is no fun. What do you think it will take to change the culture and make contact sports safer? Do you think they should be banned?
- What role does Jerry’s past mistake—the accident caused by drinking and driving that got him suspended from the team and in trouble with the law—play in the unfolding story of the current season?
- Can football be made safe, or is the game doomed—especially on the high school level—because it exposes young brains to repeated trauma with the risk of irreparable damage?
- How does a town come to care so much about a high school sport?
- If a seventeen-year-old wants to play on his high school football team, but his parents think it’s too risky, who should have the right to decide?
- If a high school football player gets badly hurt, should his parents be able to sue the school, the way that former professional players are now suing the NFL?
- Are Carla and Jerry going to regret any of the things they’ve posted on the Internet? What could come back to haunt them, and how?
- How do you think your school would treat a star athlete who got into the kind of accident that Jerry got into? How do you think your school would treat a student who wrote the kind of story that Carla writes, criticizing a winning sports team?
- Does the information that we’re all learning about head trauma in football change the feeling we get as spectators watching a hard-fought game?