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Phil Truman

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Year in and year out the football powerhouse Hert City Trojans import a ringer to fuel their championship charge, but their luck is about to change. In the small backwater town of Tsalagee, first-year coach Donny Doyle knows the only way he can fulfill his promise to unseat the Hert City juggernaut, is to beat them at their own GAME. But in his own recruit, the mammoth and powerful, yet troubled and ominous Leotis McKinley, Doyle finds more than he bargained for. Truman's character-rich novel GAME spins an energetic tale around the intensity of small-town high school football in America. And yet, amid the fast-paced drive of the story, lies an account of the human spirit struggling through adversity and finding victory. Readers of any age or gender will feel the triumph, honor, and glory that comes from the...GAME.

"I couldn't put it down. [GAME] is really well written and the action kept me going until the end."
- Fred W. Hoster, Executive Director, Dallas Fellowship of Christian Athletes

"A masterly written tale of rural football. Each character is richly portrayed...you feel like you are on the sidelines with these kids. GAME goes way beyond the game of high school football."
- Brock Sawyer, Editor, Vype Magazine

"I thoroughly enjoyed [GAME]. I will tell other coaches about this book."
- Gary Sanchez, President, New Mexico High School Coaches Association

Game Details

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Colton Gockel says

“Game” is a very interesting book about a former U.S Marine Danny Doyle who took over the head coaching job of the Tsalagee Fighting Redmen. The book has a few flashbacks that tell about Doyle's experiences in the Vietnam War. Doyle doesn't have the best group of players until three troubled boys come rolling into town and join the team. But before they can compete for a state championship Doyle has to teach them what being a team really means and keep them out of trouble.

One of my favorite parts of the book is in the first flashback. Doyle was standing outside of his bunker he was assigned to and one of his buddies told him to help him deliver water to another bunker. About a minute later an enemy missile explodes his bunker and kills everyone except him and his buddy. I think that this is one of the main reason that Doyle is such a great leader. He tried to teach his players to stick up for each other the right way and help give them some good advice once in awhile.

One thing I did not like about this book is that the author did not make it very clear when a flashback had occurred. It was a very sudden transition sometimes it would abruptly end a paragraph and start a new chapter and leave what they were saying behind. The most exciting part of the book is at the end when the Redmen were up against Hert City in the state semi final. One of the main character gets injured and he risks his pro career for his team. At first he was a troubled kid and by the end of the book he understood what it meant to be a good teammate and a friend.

If you like sports books I think you would really enjoy reading this book. It has a great story line and is definitely worth the time reading this book. This book also gives some life lessons for athletes or competitors to be respectful and how not to act when something doesn't go your way. In the news you see a lot of people and teams be disrespectful after winning or losing a game and this book has both sides. I really enjoyed this book and i definitely think it's worth your time reading. Overall I give this book a nine out of ten. Thank you for reading my review.

Tori says

I would have given this book five stars, but it was in desperate need of an editor. There were so many typos and inconsistencies that I found myself almost annoyed, and it did detract somewhat from my enjoyment of the story.

With that said, I loved this book. The story is riveting and the characters are rich. You can actually hear their voices while reading, which is something I can say for few other books I've read. And you don't even need to be a football fan to enjoy it, though it would certainly help.

Guy says

A gotta read

I was introduced to small town football when I lived in Texas while in service. There is a lot of truth in this fantastic book and I really enjoyed reliving that experience. Thanks for a great stroll thru a memorable year.

Steve says

Well, I enjoyed the book. A fast-reading book. I liked the football stuff, the way the players responded to adversity, the story line was terrific. BUT...I would've liked a longer book with a few added items: There were three players brought in, but the author chose to follow, in detail, only one. He hints at the other two, but no development until the Epilogue. That was disappointing. The other two were even more going in the wrong direction but there was no telling of their turnarounds. Secondly, the coach was highlighted in the beginning but then dropped. No more looking into his thinking, doubts, fears, wonderings, relationship with his wife, the town....nothing. The one player took over the book. Now, regarding that one player, he had a literature/English teacher that took a interest in his abilities. Why was that not developed as well? That turned out to be big part of his life. See....include all those things and the book would've been longer, but, with all these parallel stories, it would've been more complete. (in my opinion of course).

Larry Kurlmel says

This yarn has it all!

Sometimes one needs a soul feeder to pick you up and, in a fundamental way, dustoff your perspective and refresh your view of things. This book does that. Well structured, fluid in narrative and credible.

Steve says

I would not have thought that this book about a small town high school coach bringing his football team into contention would be as entertaining and interesting as it is. The story line is well developed with a good appreciation of the how the history of all the main and secondary plays fit in the story. The achievements are to some extent inspiring and there is a satisfying ending for all. Well worth the read. I will look for other books by Phil Truman.

Jeffrey Miller says

This is an endearing and nostalgic story high school football. What I found most interesting, on a personal level, was that the story took place the same time my high school football team, the Lasalle-Peru Cavaliers had their Cinderella season, reaching the state playoffs. That alone made this a most enjoyable read.

I really liked the storyline about a coach, a Vietnam veteran, who resurrects the high school's football program, overcoming adversities, both personal and professional. It's as American a story you've ever read before. What didn't work for me were the ethnic stereotypes and the tendency for the author to approximate dialects which made the story drag at times. Don't get me wrong, I'm all for authenticity, especially when it comes to language, but the author had the tendency to overdo it which a got a bit tiresome after a while.

Nonetheless, this is a nice little story which will have you cheering the coach and his players.

Jeffrey Miller,

Bureau 39

James Currin says

This was a well written book, I thought. The author covers the game of football and all its aspects - the players, coaches, supporters, spectators - and makes a very interesting story out of it. I was in the spectator category and always looked forward to our Friday night games. I particularly enjoyed the lesson on not giving up. The characters are all well developed and real, including the heroes.

Pat Hale says

I liked the book a lot. It reminded me of Friday Night Lights and Texas football in the 50s. There is more play by play than I thought necessary, but for guys that played the game in high school, I can see the appeal. It is a quick read, but the author gives you sympathetic characters that the reader can identify with. I look forward to reading more books by this author.

Rick says

Many reviews have said 'you don't have to like football to enjoy this book' and I suppose that's true. But loving HS football, and understanding the plays being called and positions in the game make Truman's novel richer and a joy to read.

With all respect to the real-life characters involved in "The Blind Side", "GAME" is the fictional, action filled, non-chick-lit alternative. Uplifting, inspiring without being maudlin.

The synopsis is available, so I won't repeat the storyline...but the characters in GAME are what pull you in and keep you there, wrapped in small town Oklahoma high school football. From Coach Doyle to his young team members and especially his "recruits" with troubled lives, I found myself not only believing the characters but truly caring about them.

I recommended this book to a friend remarking that, during the first few chapters, Truman does skip back and forth in time--but instead of finding it distracting-- I learned the depth of each young man in the novel. Eventually and inevitably, GAME ends up on a high school football field, circa 1970s Oklahoma.

This is an important note to some readers: I was nearly halfway through GAME before I recognized the absence of something; PROFANITY. Truman has written a book about HS football without finding a need to have anyone cursing. I'm no prude, but I found it remarkable that Truman has gathered all these men and boys in a sports setting and made it VERY realistic sans vulgarity. I mention it here, because it surely IS a book men and boys will enjoy, and you can feel safe in giving it as a gift to anyone from young adult on up.

I LOVED "Game". It IS about football, but it's even more about heart, fellowship and deciding to control your own destiny.

GAME is a touching, realistic sports oriented novel. An excellent, inexpensive Kindle book that I heartily recommend. This would be a great gift not for the sports lovers in your family, but to those who enjoy a

heartwarming tale of growth and spirit.

Srempfer says

When a reader has never been to a location in person but can "feel" the setting, vividly picture the places the author takes them, something incredible has been accomplished. This book does just this that and more.

For those who love competition, especially football, this is a must. Yet, the greatness is the accessibility of the read for those outside the chalked lines. People root for people, identify with others, and give their hearts to incredible characters. Leotis McKinley is that character, we as readers long for. His story line, alone, is well worth the ride, but there is so much more. The town 'locals' have big personalities and they feel authentic.

Well done, sir. Well done.

Ken Orton says

Not a bad book but probably only appeals to those who love high school football and further that like small-town mania over same. Not in the class with "Friday Night Lights" at all but still interesting light reading about the subject in Oklahoma this time. Some character development and background but it comes at spotty times.

Wulfwyn says

This book is really a departure from norm for me. As such I thought it was going to be a difficult book for me to read let alone review. It is one that I would really consider to be a "guy" book. So I was pretty much thinking what am I going to say? Imagine my surprise when I liked this book. This was an amazing book for me. Going in not expecting to like it and coming out loving it shows what an excellent job Phil Truman did writing this. The book is filled with action so it moves along quickly. But not so quick that you cannot get to know the characters. You will know and care for them deeply. This is an inspiring book. There is no adult themes, (aside from war and violence), in it so it is perfect for high school football fans. It is a great book for either sex and one that mothers and sons can share and talk about. This book would make an awesome gift for football fans. It is small town football at its best.

I received this book from the author for review. No compensation was received. All opinions are mine.
A full review can be found at www.alaskanbookcafe.com

Terri says

I am not, nor have I ever been a football fan. I am a sucker for football movies like Friday Night Lights and The Blind Side, and for this book. a lot of the plays described I skimmed, because frankly, they all look the same to me, but the story itself, beyond the football game was a heartwarmer, rife with tears and laughter and hope for the characters. if you like football, you would love it, but even if you don't like football, you can still enjoy it.

Thom Swennes says

Football isn't just a game; it is a way of life. Organized school sports are a large part of a total learning curriculum. Not just the social aspects are important but the ability to work as a team, have pride in your school, endeavor and self. The never say die, never give up attitude is one of the most important lessons of life and the one constant that makes anyone a success at life. Donny Doyle can attest to these aforementioned truths. They served him well in Vietnam as a marine lance-corporal and after in college and life as a teacher and high school coach. He plays a crucial role in, not only the lives of his students, but indeed the entire town of Tsalagee, Oklahoma. High school sports and the athletes that participate in them are of major interest to these small town citizens. From Oregon to Florida and California to Maine these Friday night warriors are the pride of their communities and their most valued asset; as they represent and embody the future. This is a story of American small town life, customs and values. The readers are introduced to characters such as Danny Doyle, "Chunky" Bill Mundis, Willis "Blade" Cross, Jorge Estavez and Leotis McKinley (not to mention a supporting cast of characters clearly spawned by kissing cousins or closer) and how this group of social misfits create a thing of beauty; a football team that operates at a well oiled, disciplined and talented unit that do more than win games but give a backwash town a reason for being. An obscure rural hamlet can establish its existence on a state map by winning a district or state championship. Anyone that has watched and enjoyed the TV series Friday Night Lights is sure to enjoy this book. Football is America. More than Chevy's at levees and apple pie, football defines America in a way no other sport can define another country because it surpasses the realm of sport and defines life. In my opinion there are far too few books written about this great American institution and its countless number of participants that epitomize Americans and their way of life.
