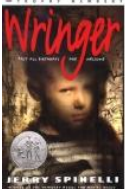


Passages

Reading Level 5



Title: Wringer

Author: Jerry Spinelli

Sample From The Book

He did not want to be a wringer.

This was of the first things he had learned about himself. He could not have said exactly when he learned it, but it was very early. And more than early, it was deep inside. In the stomach, like hunger.

But different from hunger, different and worse. Because it was always there. Hunger came only sometimes, such as just before dinner or on long rides in the car. Then, quickly, it was gone the moment it was fed. But this thing, there was no way to feed it. Well, one way perhaps, but that was unthinkable. So it was never gone.

In fact, gone was something it could not be, for he could not escape it any more than he could escape himself. The best he could do was forget it. Sometimes he did so, for minutes, hours, maybe even for a day or two.

But this thing did not like to be forgotten. Like air escaping a punctured tire, it would spread out from his stomach and be everywhere. Inside and outside, up and down, day and night, just beyond the foot of his bed, in his sock drawer, on the porch steps, at the edges of the lips of other boys, in the sudden flutter from a bush that he had come too close to. Everywhere.



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