



Gym Candy

Carl Deuker

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“Look, Mick,” he said, “you’re going to find out from somebody in the gym, so you might as well find out from me. Those supplements you’re taking? They might get you a little bigger, but just a little. If you’re after serious results, there’s other stuff that produces better results much faster, stuff that a lot of guys in the gym use.” “What other stuff?” “You know what I’m talking about—gym candy.”

Runningback Mick Johnson has dreams: dreams of cutting back, finding the hole, breaking into the open, and running free with nothing but green grass ahead. He has dreams of winning and of being the best. But football is a cruel sport. It requires power, grace, speed, quickness, and knowledge of the game. It takes luck, too. One crazy bounce can turn a likely victory into sudden defeat. What elite athlete wouldn’t look for an edge? A way to make him bigger, stronger, faster?

This novel explores the dark corners of the heart of a young football player as he struggles for success under the always glaring—and often unforgiving—stadium lights.

Gym Candy Details

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Author : Carl Deuker

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From Reader Review Gym Candy for online ebook

Bryce C says

Gym candy is a great book. This book starts with Mick Johnson (the main character) as a 4 year old playing football in the back yard with his Dad. He was trying to get pass his dad and score. After a few try's Mick got passed his dad and his dada was so happy. In Pop warner the league before middle school. Mick was going to be a running back, but there was a new player(Drew and a new coach. Drew was beating Mick in everything. The coach takes to him and asked if tat was all you got. Then Mick said no. Mick had a goal to do twice as more as Drew. Meaning if Drew did 7 push-ups Mick would do 14. Then the next practice Mick did what he was going to do. he was gonna go harder than Drew and do more than him. Drew and Mick started becoming good friends in middle school. Then in high school. In high school there was a guy named Drager. He was the running back. Mick had a big competition to beat. Read more the book to find out what happens next. This book is a great book and I recommend this to people who enjoy football. This book is better than the Mike Luciaps books, well I think. I still like the Mike Luciap books, but this is better.

Anderson says

Nick Anderson

Mrs. Baltz

Pre-AP English 10

5 December 2008

Gym Candy by Carl Deuker

All his life Mick Johnson has lived and breathed football. He has dreams of one day being like his dad and being the superstar. His dad has been workin with him since he was four, taking him to all the best camps, teaching him the best moves, and teaching him the most important thing; there is no crying in football.

Mick starts his career playing pop warner football when he is little. He goes through his early life dominating the field. It is not until he reaches Varsity level that he meets his match. Matt Drager is the starting running back for Shilsole high. He is big, mean, and cocky. He gives Mick a bad time his first year and finally the next year he beats Mick up just because he could. Let's just say they were not friends.

One day Mick's dad comes in and tells him that the radio station he works at bought a weight lifting gym called Popeye's. Mick had the speed and agility, but he lacked size and strength. His dad got him a personal trainer named Peter Volz. Peter notices that Mick could use a little "help." Peter offers Mick steroids. At first Mick refuses but in the end he decides to try them. What he doesn't realize is that he just bought a ticket for the wildest ride of his life that leads to pain, suffering, anger, and sadness.

This book in my opinion was one of the best books that I have read in a long time. It had everything that you could ask for in a book. Since it was about football, I could really relate to all that Mick was going through. I have had the same feelings of not being good enough and wanting that edge over the other player. It is

always nice to find a book that you can relate to.

I really like how intense the story gets at times. For example, one time Mick was walking down the hall and someone bumped into him. As soon as the person hit Mick, the steroids took over sending him into a “roid rage.” He grabbed the person and slammed him into the lockers. He scared the person so bad that he started crying. He then realizes what was going on and regained control of himself.

In addition, the story is somewhat sad at times. The steroids do make Mick stronger, but they have many bad side effects. For instance, Mick got bad zits and started growing breasts. For a while, he could not take his shirt off without being embarrassed. I felt bad for Mick because of all that. However, I felt somewhat glad because I did not think that he should have taken the steroids so at times I thought he deserved it.

Although it tied into the story well, I did not like that the main character tried to cheat his way to the top. If he would have played fair and by the rules, I think that he could have got the same results. The only downside to that is it would have taken longer. I believe though that no good thing comes easy.

No matter what you should never, try to cheat your way to the top. It does not make a fair playing field for everyone else. However, if you want to find out what happens to Mick or if he ever gets caught, you will just have to read the book yourself.

Page Count: 313

Genre: Realistic fiction/Sports

Caitlin says

There is a kid named Mick he was born with football in his blood. He was tall, has brown hair, and is one of those kids that was considered to be a jock. Mick lived in Colorado. He was always waiting for the next season and the next touchdown that he was going to make. The only thing that he didn't have was the strength and all of his coaches told him that. He kept working really hard and his coaches gave him the chance to play at the last game, and if they won his team would be named the champions. At the last quarter they were down by a couple of points and if Mick made the goal they would win, but if he didn't get the goal his team would go home with nothing. Mick gets the ball and runs to the goal but all of the sudden, the defense guy comes racing after him, Mick just needed to get further, but he could feel himself falling. Their team lost the game and Mick was so disappointed.

The next season came by and Mick's dad told him that his work now owned this new gym, so he could go there and workout and get stronger. So the next day Mick shows up there and he meets his trainer Peter. Peter talked about what Mick would be doing and what days he would be there. Mick wasn't sure that he liked Peter so he didn't show up until a week later. Peter said that they should go next door and talk, so they went to the other store and they got to know each other. Mick told Peter how the last game ended, and he told him that he thought the guys on the other team were on steroids. Weeks had gone by and Mick was trying to get stronger, but he wasn't. Peter told him about these pills that you could take to get stronger, but they were steroids. Mick gets stronger while he was taking the pills, but they were making his body do weird

things. So Mick asked if there were anything else that wouldn't make his body do that and Peter told him that there were these shots that you would take, Mick didn't know if he should take them but then he decided if it would help him with football, he would do it. The team was at the final game and Mick kept scoring touchdowns and their team was up. The last seconds of the game the other team didn't score so that meant that Mick and his team won. But at the last quarter Mick had to take the steroids so he would be ready and his best friend asked him what he was doing. Well his friend found the steroids and Mick shot himself, then he had to go to rehab. I thought that the book was very good and it told a life lesson that people should know. I would recommend this book to a kid that likes football, or a person that likes a story that you can learn something from. The conflict in the book was that Mick was taking steroids to get better at football. And at the end Mick's friend, had him go to rehab. That was the resolution of the conflict.

Harry Costea says

I really enjoyed this book because it started off as a football player who was just trying to make the team his freshman year. Then after his freshman year he starts to talk about how he's not doing enough in football so he gets on the steroids and his team goes undefeated but someone found his steroids. Then he tries to shoot himself but is saved by a friend. He ends the book in rehab debating whether to take them again.

Dale says

As you can tell I basically only read sports books. Mainly by Carl Deuker.

This book is the best book I have ever read. Mick Johnson started kindergarten late so he is a year older than everyone. His dad was a great running back in college but then screws everything up in the NFL. Mick's dad tells him that he didn't play in the NFL because of some ankle injury. Mick decides to look on the internet to see if his dad is telling the truth. Mick finds out he wasn't. There is a gym called Popeye's and Mick's dad owns it. Mick starts working with a personal trainer named Peter Volz. Mick is on protein shakes and pills, when Peter tells him about gym candy (steroids). Mick starts taking them and everything is going fine, life and football. Mick stops taking the first kind of steroids which are D-bol when he starts growing breast. Peter tells him about the injection, then Mick decides to take that. Just steroids take over his life. Mick wants to be the best football player he can. When he is a sophomore there is this 8th grader Dave Kane who Mick thinks is better than he is. So Mick quits taking steroids until he is so concerned about losing his starting job he takes the most powerful steroids there are. When he takes them he feels so strong, but then comes the emotional roller coaster. One minute he will be fine the next he wants to kill someone (that is actually a true fact). Mick's best friend finds out that Mick is on steroids and Drew confronts Mick about it. They met at this lake and Mick has a gun. Drew says he is going to tell coach, that is when Mick threatens that he will shoot Drew. Drew just keeps on walking, then Mick shoots himself. Mick doesn't kill himself though because he twitched right before he pulled the trigger. That is all I am going to say but **READ THIS BOOK!**

Mitchell W. says

One of the Best Books I've Ever Read

Gym Candy, by Carl Deuker was one of the best books that I have ever read. I grabbed this book because of its cover and how the book related to football, but after I read it, I realized that this book is more about just a football game.

The story starts out where a football player, Mick Johnson, was a star running back for all of his teams he played on. In any game he played, he scored a touchdown. On any play in his games, he ran the ball. Mick Johnson was an all-star and wanted to become just like his dad, who became pro after playing for the Washington Huskies. Mick's dad's career was cut short after a broken ankle, early in his career in the NFL. After a little research on his computer, Mick soon realized that his dad was a complete fraud, and that his dad got cut from his NFL team and was a lazy football player. Mick would do anything to be more than his dad, so he did. After becoming the starting running back for his varsity team, Mick came up one yard short of scoring the game winning touchdown for his team. He did not have what it takes to get the extra yard. He wanted to become stronger and fast. One day, one of his teammates introduced him into something that would make him faster, stronger, and a better football player, but the price Mick would be willing to take might affect the rest of his career as a football player. Does Mick agree with his decision and face extreme consequences, or does he play it safe and become a better man than his dad? Read the book to find out. This book is very entertaining and action-packed in every chapter, and the book gets better and more suspenseful as you read deeper into the book. This book is based on the choices a young man has to make in order to become a better football player, and this book would be recommended to mostly teens, but also some adults as well. This book would be a perfect read to any middle or high schooler that loves the game of football or any other sport, but this book would not be for anyone that does not like sports or face-paced books because this book is very face-paced and this book is directed towards sports players, especially football players. This book would also not appeal to younger audiences, because of the continuous talk and use of drugs throughout the book. The action throughout the book gave me a better understanding of some ideas and events throughout the book, but the author did speed ahead of some important events. He also did not include lots of writer's craft and some parts of the story was just word for word and boring. I sometimes lost track of where I was in the book too because of the lack of good writing in some parts of the story. He also did not use that much dialogue too to go along with the rest of the book. The plot of the story does twist and turn in certain spots, and the plot is also very easy to understand and compelling in the least. You could read this book in a day and still know everything about the story and the plot. The way the author described Mick's football games and the drama Mick was involved in could have had more description and detail, but the book was still a good read. The plot did lack some tone and mood to the book, but the plot still draws you into the book. In conclusion, this book is a very good read for any teenager who loves football and any sport, but also for any adult who loves football too. This book did not have lots of writer's craft or a good tone and mood, but the life lesson this story leaves you definitely will make you want to read Gym Candy, by Carl Deuker.

Levi Erdmann says

My personal response to this book is that it was amazing! I really liked this book because I could put myself in his shoes somewhat. The author really made me feel a connection with this book and I felt he did a very good job describing almost every detail. He told the story in a way that you felt you were there right alongside Mick.

The plot of this story is simple. Mick was an 8th grader who got asked to play some spring football with the high school team. His friends Drew and Deshawn were also asked. He went to it and impressed the coach but a lot of the upperclassmen hated him. Drager was the starting running back and Mick had Drager scared he was going to lose his starting spot. Then the regular season started and Drager got suspended which meant Mick was now the starter. Mick did pretty well until the conference championship game. He was stopped a

yard short on his attempt to win the game. So all through the winter and summer he started lifting weights at a gym. His personal trainer, Peter, got Mick to buy steroids. Mick was very impressed with the results and kept taking them. His best friend Drew eventually found out and Drew planned to tell the coaches. Mick couldn't let that happen because then his chances of going pro were over. He threatened to shoot Drew but ended up shooting himself. He missed his brain and just grazed his head. He went to a rehabilitation center and just wants to get out now.

Mick started off as a young innocent kid that lived and breathed football. As he got older he went to camps and really excelled in his position. One day he was beaten up in the weight room while his "friends" just watched. Nobody tried to stop the brutality and he then learned that those people weren't really his friends. Then there came a day where he realized it's not about fun but about winning. He thought he was too small to win so he needed something to give him an edge. He wasn't thinking thoroughly and made a bad decision by using steroids. He ended up facing his consequence which is not being able to play football anymore.

I would recommend this book to anybody who loves sports. I would also recommend this to people who want to know about the consequences of using steroids. I believe anybody in high school could read this and it is a fairly short book because of how addicting it is to read.

Cathy says

I wanted to read this book because it was recommended to me by a student. I could have done without the football game play-by-plays (and I did eventually just skim over those), but the actual story of the young man and his struggle to live up to his dad's legacy was a good one. I'll be recommending this one to my sport-fanatic reluctant readers.

Cody says

I read Gym Candy and the main character in the book is all about football, he loves it. It was inherited by his dad who played pro football. Mick is the main character and he has to face lots of challenges with new coaching, finding more information on his dad, and being pressured to take steroids.

I loved the start of the book because right away the story was on. It talked about the first time he scored a touchdown with his dad. I loved how when he took steroids it went to a personal standpoint, like how he went to go swimming with a girl he liked but she freaked out because he had zits all over his back and he had puffed up nipples.

I disliked that they didn't have more about the book, like if he recovered and if he got back on the football field. I wish it was longer and had a happy ending. I wish that after all of his therapy that he went back and got into college for football and made the pros. That was his dream.

People who would like this book would be people who like the suspense, the "oh no don't do that" type of readers. People who love football, mostly teens because they can relate so much to this book.

Debby says

This book intrigued me and I anticipated being drawn in to a high-interest and provocative plot (high school

athlete takes steroids to remain competitive). That plot point was there, but was not well developed. The bulk of the book is detailed play-by-play recounting of the athlete's football practices (!) and games. Even a sports fan like me cannot maintain a high level of interest in the minutiae of practices. So much more could have been done with developing the relationship between father and son, with the struggles of the friendship between two teammates, and with the seductive attraction of the promise of benefits from steroid use.

Cameron Casey says

Gym Candy by Carl Dueker is a Realistic fiction novel about a high schooler named Mick who has a problem with steroid use. Mick has been the star of the football team from when he was a pee-wee. But he wanted to keep on getting better. His freshman year he was on the varsity team. He only played a little but, he did see the field unlike some of his teammates. But he wasn't satisfied with just a little playing time, so he started going to a gym called popeyes, there he worked out super hard with his personal trainer named Peter. Mick and Peter got to know each other pretty well. Peter told him that the key to success in super athletes is steroids. At first Mick was a little shaky on the idea but then he decided to trust peter and start buying from him. I can personally relate to this in a way because I have developed relationships with coaches and trainers before and you look up to them as a role model. When a role model tells you that if you want to play in college you need to do steroids, it's hard to say no because you trust that person. You would always think that the coaches and the trainers want what's best for you and that's what Mick thought also. Although I have never been offered steroids before I can see how Mick felt pressured into doing it. Along with the fact that he wanted to be very dominate next year and be a starter. Finally, I would recommend this book to anyone who plays sports or has enjoyed sports books in the past, it is very well written and is a page turner!

Michael McCarty says

This book was about a boy whose dad was a superstar in his high school and college years in football. He always wanted to be that good to. However he was stopped short of scoring a touchdown in the last game of the season. Then to become the best he then started taking steroids. As he started taking them he started to lose relationships and the steroids started to take over his entire life.

Sophia says

Finally! I finished this book. Finally!

I have so much to say about this book. At first, I thought the plot was interesting. I wanted to see how a football player goes through their up's and down's. How he wants to go to the extremes for his love for football. But as the book progressed, the story bored me. The plot was really slow when coming to the climax. And there was not much hype throughout the book. Not only that, there was a lot of football talk. And if you know me, I don't have a clue about sports. I know nothing. But the author thinks that the reader knows a lot about football, so he never even bothered explaining it. So for half of the book, I sat there clueless.

Those two things really did bother me, which is why this book lost 2 stars. But on the other hand, this book

struck my heart. The whole time I was reading this book, I thought that this was the book that you learn a short, easy lesson on. Totally wrong. Yes, the book showed me a lesson. But it was a big lesson. It was about a heavy topic, about drugs. Of course, I know drugs are wrong. However, I never realized why people actually take drugs. Not only that, but the extreme consequences it has on that person and their whole life.

This book helped me look at life in a whole different perspective. It really showed me the traits of a true human being. However, I would not recommend this book to everyone. It was a hard read, and it is a heavy topic to take in.

Javier G. says

Personal Response

This book has taught me many dangers in lifting and many struggles I can relate to. As a lifter and football player, it is easy for me to relate to many of the things Mick has faced. I want to get big fast, but I have to watch out for many people selling me stuff, and I think it is completely wrong for a person to use steroids.

Plot

The main problem in this book is that Mick has been pushed all his life to play football by his dad. His dad was a football athlete back in the day, but he was kicked off of teams because of many wrong choices he has done. Mick has always been a year older than his grade, and that is because his parents started school late for him. At the school he was playing the head coach stepped down. The new coach was mean to Mick, because he knew his dad and Mick's dad had ruined the new coach's career back in the day. Another person from another school was watching Mick and some other players in a game. Mick got invited to that school and he started playing football there with a couple of other friends. Mick wanted to be starting, but they didn't let him because he was just a freshman. Mick got mad at that, so he wanted to get stronger faster. His dad told him to start training at a gym called Popeyes, so Mick went there and trained there all the time. His personal trainer, Peter Volz, found out Mick wanted to get stronger and faster. In that case he asked Mick if he wanted to try steroids but pill ones. Mick thought about it and decided yes, but there were side effects to the pills. Mick didn't like the side effects, so Peter introduced him to another type of steroids, but you had to inject them. Mick got caught using them by his friend, and Mick tried to commit suicide, but failed at it, and he got stuck in rehab.

Recommendation

I recommend this book to many athletes, especially football players. I say this, because many football players want to be the strongest on the team or the starting player. I, as a football player, wanted to be starting defense, but I never got a play in defense in any game we had. I was always starting offense. I wanted to get stronger faster, but then I realized I could lift a lot in the off season and work my way there. I have heard of many good players using steroids because they wanted to be the strongest team out there, and end up ruining their career as a professional football player. I also recommend this book to athletes because it shows what would happen if they decided to use steroids or any type of drugs like that. It's better to go natural, and not use any type of harmful drug.

Characterization

Mick was pushed as a little kid to play football. He started to learn the game and was a really good running back. He was always older than his grade, and that made him better at the game of football. He has been confident that he would always be a starter on the football team. When he started to play football in his new

school he had been told that freshman never start, but he tried to start but never got to. Once the new coach, Carlson, came he said he makes who ever is the best players starters including freshman. Mick got worried, and started to use steroids so a freshman did not win his place. After steroids he was worried he would get caught. When he got caught he decided to try to kill himself and failed. Now he realizes he should have never used steroids

Noah Carpenter says

This book is very good, as at the very end of the book i liked how the author used very described evidence on how the character felt. "When he was sitting in a strangers room and he heard screaming down the hall he wanted to scream too. "
