



# Knights of the Hill Country

*Tim Tharp*

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## **Knights of the Hill Country** Tim Tharp

In a small Oklahoma town, one star linebacker must decide what kind of man he wants to be--both on and off the field.

Welcome to Kennisaw--where Friday night high school football ranks right up there with God and country, and sometimes even comes in first. This year, the Kennisaw Knights are going for their fifth straight undefeated season, and if they succeed, they'll be more than the best high school team in the eastern Oklahoma hill country--they'll be legends.

But the Knights' legacy is a heavy weight to carry for Hampton, linebacker and star of the team. On the field, he's so in control you'd think he was able to stop time. But his life off the field is a different story. His father walked out on him and his mom years ago, and now his mom has a new boyfriend every week. He's drawn to a smart, quirky girl at school--the type a star athlete just isn't supposed to associate with. And meanwhile, his best friend and teammate Blaine--the true friend who first introduced Hampton to football back when he had nothing else--is becoming uncomfortably competitive, and he's demanding Hampton's loyalty even as Hampton thinks he's going too far.

This unforgettable novel is the story of a boy whose choices will decide the kind of man he becomes, and raises powerful questions about sportsmanship, loyalty, and the deceptiveness of legends.

## **Knights of the Hill Country Details**

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Author : Tim Tharp

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# From Reader Review *Knights of the Hill Country* for online ebook

## **BRANDON SCHEER** says

### PERSONAL RESPONSE:

I thought this was a great book. It is mainly about a star linebacker from a legendary high school team. They are trying to set the record for five undefeated seasons. Along with the best linebacker in the area, Hampton, and a very good running back, Blaine, they had many other athletes. I feel like this book relates to me, because I am very passionate about football and winning and so is this team.

### PLOT:

This story takes place just a few years ago in Kennisaw, Oklahoma. The main character is Hampton along with his best friend Blaine. They are going on their fifth undefeated season. If they do it this year they will tie to have the most undefeated seasons in a row. The team is very passionate about this, and they will do anything to win. They do a great job all season, and they win every game until the last game. They lose 6-0 in that game. After that, Blaine goes a little crazy and wants to hurt Corey from the other team, because he is so upset about not getting any scholarships for football. He tries to shoot Corey, but there was no shell in the gun. Hampton stops Blaine from beating up Corey with his gun and Corey leaves.

### CHARACTERIZATION:

Hampton is a star linebacker. Oklahoma University might be offering him a scholarship for football and, they are one of the best schools for football. He is very soft hearted and doesn't talk very much. Blaine is Hampton's best friend. Even though they are best friends, they don't have much in common besides loving football. He is mean, cocky and is a leader. He is a good talker and always wins arguments.

**SETTING:** This book takes place a few years ago in Kennisaw, Oklahoma. It is important to the story, because they are trying to beat the old record of undefeated seasons at their school. Also, Hampton and Blaine are trying to get into the local Division one college, Oklahoma University.

### RECOMMENDATION:

I would recommend this book to high school boys because that is the time of life it takes place in. It is about a group of guys who play football. Girls are also in the book, but aren't important to the plot.

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## **Louis Knecht** says

### Personal Response:

I read the book *Knights of the Hill Country* by Tim Tharp. I thoroughly enjoyed the entire book. I thought it had a good story line and was entertaining. Overall, it was a good book and many interesting things happened in the plot.

### Plot:

There were a lot of interesting events that took place in the plot. The main character, Hampton Green, lived with his mom. His dad left them when he was a little boy. When that happened, they moved into the town of Keenisaw. There was a speaker named T.Roy Strong that Hampton went to see when he was a young boy. T.Roy was an ex professional football player who played football in high school for the Keenisaw Knights.

On his way there, Blaine jumped him and asked where he was from because he never saw him before. Hampton wrestled him and told him he just moved there. Blaine instantly liked him and they became best friends ever since that day. When they were in high school, they were both stars on their football team. There senior year they had the opportunity to complete their fifth undefeated season in a row. About halfway through the season, Hampton started talking to a girl named Sarah. Sarah was very smart but she never dressed nice and always wore baggy clothes. Blaine and Hampton's other friends made fun of him and told him he could do better. Hampton really liked Sarah, and she was the only person he could truly talk to so they stayed together. Towards the end of the season, Blaine started to get more and more jealous of Hampton's stardom. Their team was undefeated and they only needed to win one more game to complete the undefeated season. They were losing 6-0 when Hampton blocked a punt giving them the ball on their opponent's 15 yard line with only one minute and 30 seconds left to play. It took all four downs but Blaine finally got the first. An opponent from Okalah, the team they were playing, helped him off the ground. When Blaine stood up, the opponent spit in his eye. He got very upset and started punching him. He got kicked out and they lost the game. Later that same night, Blaine took Hampton to Okalah to get one more down against the kid who spit in his eye. He needed to prove he would have won, but in reality he had other things in mind. He found the kid and started threatening him with a shotgun. Before he could shoot the kid, Hampton stopped him. They were not as close of friends after that, but Hampton saved him from a life in prison.

#### Characterization:

The main character in this book is Hampton Green. He is a senior in high school and is an all star linebacker in football. He is a good kid and grew a lot throughout the book. Another main character is Blaine. He has always been the star running back, but after an injury to his knee he has never been as good. He goes through a lot in this book. He believes football is all that matters, but Hampton saves him from making a terrible mistake.

#### Setting:

This book takes place in present day Keenisaw, Oklahoma. This allows readers to relate to the book because they can put themselves in the character's shoes. They can relate because it's so similar to any small town around the country today.

#### Recommendation:

I would recommend this book to all high school age football players. It is a good read, and it is a very entertaining book. I believe it would be easier for football players to relate too, because it is about a football player. Also, it is a book they can relate to because all of the characters are in high school. It is important they are of this age, because they need to be mature enough to handle the events that take place.

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### **Cole Hudziak says**

“Knights of the Hill Country”

Personal Response: I read the book titled *Knights of the Hill Country*. I thought it was a really good book. I like to read about sports, and this book happened to be about my favorite sport.

Plot: This book was about a high school football team in a small Oklahoma town. Their team name was the Kennisaw Knights. There was this linebacker who was the captain of the defense team. His name was

Hampton, and he was one of the stars on the team. Hampton was not only the captain on the defensive team, but he was going through a lot of things in his life. Hampton's dad left his mother, and now his mother had a different boyfriend every week. Hampton didn't know which things to focus on. He either had to worry about his personal life or football. Hampton had a good friend named Blaine, who introduced him to football. Hampton's friend Blaine was the offensive captain, and he was one of the best leaders in their conference. The season before this year, Blaine was number one in the league. Now Blaine had an injury that he didn't want to tell people about. They went into the last game of this season undefeated. They ended up losing the last game 6-0, and Blaine was not happy. Blaine got kicked out of the game, and he got in a fight with one of the kids from the other team. After the game, Blaine went to find that same kid, but now he brought a gun with him.

Characterization: Hampton Green was the main character of this book. He was the captain of the defense who may get a football scholarship in his future. Blaine was Hampton's buddy, and he was the captain of the offense. Blaine was a mean person who thought he was the best at everything.

Setting: This book took place in Kennisaw, Oklahoma. The time period is modern times because of the equipment that they use in the story. The setting was portrayed perfectly, because the south was huge into high school football. One main reason was because you can play football year round, because they don't get snow.

Recommendation: I recommend this book to middle school or older boys, because it was a very good book for life lessons. I thought they could get a lot out of this book. Even if they don't like football, they should still read this book.

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## **Adam Batten says**

Personal Response:

I really enjoyed the book *Knights of the Hill Country*, a lot because the book is based off characters making choices that will affect the rest of their lives. The book also showed that things can change in the matter of minutes. The book showed some important lessons in life that make people think before they act. I rated this book three stars on goodreads, because there was no action in the beginning of the book and it was dragging on a bit.

Plot:

The book takes place in Kennisaw, Oklahoma. The Knights of the Hill Country are playing for their fifth undefeated season in football. There are two main characters in the book Hampton and Blaine. Hampton is Blaine's best friend and can be a bad influence to Hampton. Hampton, at the beginning of the book, seems like he has to listen to Blaine like he is a god. Towards the end of the book, he finds who he really is. He starts to do what he thinks is right and that makes him show who he truly is. I could relate to this book a lot, because I do not fall to peer pressure. I also do what I think is right, like Hampton did in the end of the book.

Characterization:

The main two characters in the book are Hampton and Blaine. They are both unique in their own ways and have their similarities and differences. They have been friends for a long time and are always there for each other. Blaine is more of the hardcore guy who does things he shouldn't, and Hampton is more of the safe and responsible guy. These two boys play out the big roles in the whole book and make choices that will affect the rest of the story.

### Setting

The book takes place in Kennisaw, Oklahoma. The hometown football team is going for the fifth undefeated season with a town full of pride. The town is important to the book, because the kids are playing football against other nearby towns, which also play big roles later in the book. The book takes place in a modern time, because the kids are still doing things that they would do today. They are partying, going to concerts, and making the same old bad teenager decisions.

### Recommendations:

I would recommend this book to guys from middle school up to adults who love football, and learning good life lessons. Girls might like this book if they like the author, learning some important things in life, or maybe even football. This book is a great read for young adults to adults who wants a great read and also gets to learn a good life lesson.

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## Cristian G says

### Personal Response

I read *Knights Of The Hill Country* by Tim Tharp. I really liked this book. I liked that the book was about football. I also liked how the author described how Hapton Green played football. Hampton was so good at football, it seemed that he could stop time. He could see the next move of his opponents. I also liked how Hampton liked a girl that was not a popular girl and Hamptons friend Blaine did not approve. Blaine and Hampton were very good Friends since they were little. Blaine wanted Hapton to be with a popular girl, but Hampton did not. I also liked that Hampton's team, the Kennesaw Knights were going for their 5th undefeated season.

### Plot

The book was about a senior student named Hampton. Hampton's background was not very good. His dad walked out on him and his mom was heartbroken. Hampton was part of the Kennesaw football team, he was a linebacker. The Knight's had a big reputation for being undefeated for four straight years. They were looking for their fifth undefeated season. If they won their fifth season, they would be in the record books. Blaine was Hampton's best friend and had been since they were little. It was Blaine and his father that got Hampton to play football. Hampton was so good at football that you would think that he could stop time. The best Kennesaw football team was way back when a football player called T. Roy Strong played. It was the best team Kennesaw has ever had. T. Roy later was a pro football player. Later Hampton's mom met a guy named Tommy Don. Tommy Don said he was a football player and that he used to play for Kennesaw, but now he painted art. Blaine told Hampton that his dad was in highschool with Tommy Don and that he betrayed the football team back then. Hampton was not sure so he went to research himself. He went to the library and went to the yearbooks and sure enough, Tommy Don was in the football pictures but he was not in the championship picture. Hampton went to Tommy Don and asked him what actually happened. Tommy Don said that T. Roy Strong was not the best football player on the team it was a kid named Bo. People knew

that he was good but he was black so they did not cheer for him as much. There was an assembly that happened in their school that was about the Knights fifth undefeated season. After the assembly Hampton's coach told him he had a good chance to get a football scholarship. Later Hampton went out to the field for 5th undefeated season.

#### Recommendation

I recommend this book for both middle and high school students. I do strongly recommend this book to anyone that likes sports or who plays football because this is a book that they will enjoy a lot. I recommend that boys read this book because girls will probably not like it and they will get bored.

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## **CHRIS YOUNG says**

#### Personal Response

I, personally, loved this book because I could relate to it so much. I felt like I lived it. I would rate this book 5 out of 5 stars because of how much I related to it.

#### Plot

Hampton and Blaine had been friends ever since they were little when Hampton moved to Kennisaw, because his dad left his mom and his mom needed a job. Blaine became very good friends with Hampton so they hung out very often. Blaine's dad looked out for Hampton because he knew his mom didn't as much. They grew older and older and played football throughout their years and lived their life to become legends someday like T roy Strong. Blaine isn't always the friend that Hamp used to have because he always bosses Hamp around. Blaine always has to approve of his decisions. Hamp is an all star linebacker for the football team. When he was on the field he was himself and everything came naturally but when he wasn't on the field he couldn't think. Blaine was the running back for the knights but he had a bad year because of an unoccupied knee injury he got last year in Oklaha when two players aimed straight for his knee when they tackled him. Hamp fell for a girl named sara in a history class he had with her. They met in the small group they were assigned to. She helped him with homework and they planned a couple other dates but Blaine didn't think Hamp should date her because she wasn't the type for a star football player. They eventually started to date. The undefeated knights came to a halt when they were defeated by Oklaha and Blaine went nuts with a gun.

#### Characterization

Hampton Green, also known as Hamp, was the main character in the book. He played defense for the Kennisaw Knights. He was the best middle linebacker in the league. Hamp wasn't the best when it came to girls. Throughout the book he fell for a girl by the name of Sara Reynolds. She was a girl that wasn't the typical hotshot football player's girlfriend. She had messy brown hair and wore baggy clothes. Blaine Keller was Hampton's best friend. The two of them have been through a lot. Blaine and his dad brought Hamp under their wing, because Hampton's mom wasn't always there for him and neither was his dad. Blaine dated a girl named Rachel. Blaine was the running back for the football team but wasn't as good as he was predicted to be because of a knee injury he got junior year. He was very bossy towards Hamp and his girlfriend. Hamp's mom was a single mom and she "got around." She wasn't very supportive of Hamp. She also never went to any of his football games until the game against Sawyer.

#### Setting

*The Knights of the Hill Country* took place in Kennisaw, Oklahoma in the fall of their fifth straight undefeated season. Hamp lived in a small cramped rent house in Kennisaw. The football field and the school were two places they were most of the time. It took place in modern time. The time impacted the setting

because football has changed over time and the football that was played in the book was played the exact same as it is in today's world. The way the kids acted in school was the same as today's world because of the judgment that they had and the different stereotypes they used.

#### Thematic Connection

The theme of *The Knights of the Hill Country* was individual vs society because Hamp was different from all of his friends both on and off the field. Off the field, Hamp wasn't good with people and especially girls. Hamp could never think of the right things to say at the right time. On the field, Hamp was better than everyone else. He could "see the future" or how he explained it was he can "stop time."

#### Recommendation

I would recommend this book to anyone who loves football but more specifically males between the ages of 12 and 20 because that was how old Hamp and Blaine were.

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### **Hunter M says**

#### Personal Response:

I thought this was a great book because of the football and the lessons learned. It made me think about my own life and help me with decisions that I would possibly have to make. I can relate to Hampton because of the tough decisions he has to make for the right reasons. This book did end though very abrupt and it left many questions unanswered. I really hope for a sequel to this story.

#### Plot:

The book's main characters, Blaine Keller and Hampton Green, have been long time best friends. The Keller family took in Hampton when he moved to Kennisaw and helped him through the years grow up. Growing up, Blaine was always cocky about how good he was at football and Hampton was more of a humble guy and tried to avoid the spotlight. All the way through their junior season, the Kennisaw Knights, were undefeated. Although suffering a bad knee injury that no one knew about, Blaine tried to keep the spotlight on him. Blaine's performance on the field was worse and worse throughout his senior season and Hampton was gaining more attention. This put Blaine on edge and got himself and Hamp into some situations, including some fights, that they had a hard time getting out of. This also put up a block between Hampton and the girl he likes, Sara. She is a quiet girl that Hampton finds himself able to talk to, which is surprising because he struggles with his words. Although Hampton is happy, Blaine thinks Sara is not a girl the football players should be with. This is also part of the major theme of the book. With a bum knee and a fading spotlight on Blaine, Hampton lead the defensive charge as the star linebacker to stay undefeated until their last game of their senior season. During that game, Blaine had fully lost his composure, costing his team the game. After the broken streak of undefeated seasons and failing to make it five seasons in a row, Blaine seeks revenge on the other team's linebacker, Covey Wallace. Blaine forces Hampton, who struggles with using his words, into the party to find Covey. When they pull up, Hampton refuses to get out of the truck, but Blaine does anyway. When Blaine initiates contact with Covey, Blaine waves his gun at him. Hampton then gets out of the truck, not to fight Covey, but to control Blaine, which was much needed for a long time. After the fight incident with Blaine and Hampton, Hampton explains to Sara what all happened, and they continue to proceed with their walk in the country. The book then ends abruptly with many questions, and hopefulness for a sequel.

#### Characterization:

Hampton Green is one of the main characters and he is a fun-loving guy. He is not the smartest guy, but he



has a gift that makes him an incredible football player. He can slow time down with his mind allowing him to make incredible plays on the field. He also has a soft side to him, that does not relate to the people and friends that surround him. Hamp is also a great guy deciphering between right and wrong throughout the book. Blaine Keller is Hamp's best friend and another one of the main characters. Blaine is a hot head football player, who only thinks that his high school football career will define his entire life story. Blaine chooses to do a lot of the wrong things, and Hamp is the one to kind of control Blaine in those situations.

#### Impact of Setting:

This book took place in a modern time and that was important throughout the book, because of the use of flashbacks was a key to the story telling. The book took place in many places including: the football field, classroom, library, the home of some of the characters, and many other places. The impact of the time period this book takes place in, makes the story very relatable to me and my life.

#### Thematic Connection:

The theme of this book would be change versus tradition for certain individuals, like Hampton Green. The way Hampton sees things is very different to the status quo of the town of Kennisaw. I think that is a key in this story in teaching a lesson. An example from the text would be, when Blaine tells Hampton he should be with a girl who football players should be with and not Sara, the girl he likes and is happy with.

#### Recommendation:

I think this book is more geared towards men because of the football and sports aspect. Women would like this book too because of the lessons derived from the story. I would recommend this book to people of the ages over 14 because of some of the inappropriate gestures made in the book.

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### Ash says

I usually don't like reading books with boys being the main characters because, let's be honest, in almost every book I've read where the main character is male there's always mention of boobs and sex. Quite frankly this annoys me, and I find it totally unnecessary. The main character is obviously still a boy but I found that his thoughts on these things were much less frequent and less perverted than in other books that I've read. That's besides the point though. I'm not really a football person so I found myself a little confused at some of the football stuff. But this book is so much more than about football.

Even though Hampton is the star linebacker of his football team he doesn't ever let it get to his head. He's a sweet guy who wishes that he knew as much about school or girls as he did about playing football. Hampton has a lot more brains than everyone gives him credit for, even himself. At the end of the book he finally trusts his own thoughts instead of just mindlessly following what he thinks he "should" do. He doesn't have any huge epiphany. Throughout the book and his conversations with people you start to see Hampton understand himself and trust in his own judgement. He figures that he might be more than just the big, dumb, red-headed football player that he always thought he was.

When I first finished the book I knew I liked it. Though as the day progressed and I went back and thought about the book I started to realize how much I REALLY liked it. Hampton is just such a sweet and real guy. He's loyal to his best friend Blaine till the very end, even when he's doing the wrong thing. I can't think of a more perfectly flawed and great guy than Hampton. This book surprised me. It wasn't what I was expecting. The writing was great and funny. Hampton's thoughts sounded so real, it didn't feel like for even a second that he wasn't an actual person. I can't think of any way to describe this book other than spiritual. Not in a

preaching God way. You'll have to read the book to really understand what I mean. Great story!

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## **Asghar Abbas says**

Now honestly tell me, what would this August be without a Tharp novel? Even if this is not that August? I really had a good time with one of his books back in Aug of 2014. With the rain, words, new music, mermaids, Chiara Bautista, and a girl whose name still is Moon. Good times. Sadly, Aurora wasn't there yet, she wasn't a part of that greenness. But the following year, August of 2015, was all about her, even if it wasn't. Spume from the Sea.

Anyway, those who haven't discovered Tim Tharp yet, I strongly urge them to do so, get to know him better, and more. He is one of the best novelists I know of; his books are some of my favorites. He makes genius simple and writes about the most real of characters, characters that are just people, his dialogues show sharpness and wit. What's not to like?

I don't usually go for sports type novels, or where the protagonist is a jock, but I read this for this is more than just that. And, Tharp is funny. So funny. This is where the reading gets fun and addictive. Remember, it is about the simple pleasures in life, and sometimes the pleasure is in the waiting.

Granted, for the first chapter or two I was bored but that's mostly because of the technical aspect of the game that I couldn't follow properly. I am not into football; American or any other kind. After that, smooth sailing really. However, those initial chapters did do a brilliant job of introducing our laid back, mild mannered hero to us, who is definitely a throwback to days where common decency was common and normal, definitely a charm of a bygone days. However the overuse of the word Them made me weary after a while, though I guess that's how these characters would talk in those parts of the country, you know? But you could tell our hero was a poet. It felt like he wasn't that bright and yet he was. What I liked was how all the people in this book were fleshed out, refusing to be stereotyped. They all had something to say and, baby, it wasn't about football. You should listen. To. This song.

Do me a favor; when you read this book, and how can you not, do make sure you don't have anything else to do. Like be a constant gardener. You may want to finish this in one go.

footnote : listening to Baby by Warpaint.

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## **Teagan says**

Personal response:

The book *Knights of the Hill Country* was very good. The cliques and rivalries between two high schools were defined in this story. The struggle that Hampton had to face between going with the flow or creating his own direction could be relatable to anyone. The relationship between Blaine and Hampton definitely grew and changed as the reader got deeper into the story. The character, Sara, was admirable for her outlook on life, which was heavily impacted by her father's accident.

#### Plot:

Ever since Hampton met Blaine as a young child, they were best friends. Blaine shared with him what he knew about life and the love of his life, football. Ever since that day, Hampton shared the dream of being a successful football player and went on working towards that goal. The dream was to attend Oklahoma State University, a respectable college for football. They both were yearning for a scholarship to OSU. Hampton was usually open with his friends about his interests, but one interest he always kept hidden was his interest for Sara. Sara wasn't the type of girl a jock like him was supposed to be with according to his friends. Football players were supposed to go out with pretty cheerleaders who didn't share their opinions and kept quiet. With her high academic standards, strong views, and mop of unruly hair, Sara just didn't fit the standards.

#### Recommendation:

I recommend *Knights of the Hill Country* from grades eighth to twelfth. I recommend this book to this age group, because someone who is in eighth grade would enjoy the concept of friendship. High school students would enjoy this story, because the characters are in high school. The gender I recommend is both. I recommend boys to read this book, because the story is mainly based off the topic of football, and football is primarily popular among boys. The reason I recommend girls as well is because of the romance between Sara and Hampton, and girls typically like romance stories.

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#### **Peter S says**

The Book, *Knights of the Hill*, by Tim Tharp was published on 2006. *Knights of the hill county* is a book about a High School Football senior (Hampton) who is struggling to fit in with his friends, impress a nerd girl who everyone makes fun of, and getting used to his mothers relationships. To make it worse, his best friend he's known since 4th grade (Blaine) is discouraging him from reaching his goals. Blaine treats him like crap because he's really selfish, which is going to come back and bite him. Blaine is overconfident and believes that he is better than Hampton and that they are both will get scholarships to play college football at Oklahoma University, but that's the complete opposite of what happens.

One of the strengths that I noticed in this book, were how the character believability was on point with ALL of the characters. Tim Tharp, the author, was extraordinary in including strong character believability, which ended up making the book more realistic and believable. Moments like adrenalin when they when a game, drowsiness during the down moments, and times where characters were shown in love. I think the strongest moment of believability was when Hampton finally stood up against his best friend. It shows that his character changed from very shy and mute to confident and righteous. This was triggered by Blaine because he always pushed Hampton to his limits and Hampton was too afraid to speak up. I can picture that happening in real life, and it's incredible that the author was able to include such strong character believability.

Some on the weaknesses in this book were that it was really predictable and had little backstory. First, some of the characters had very little backstory and went included as much. The book would have been better if some of the other football players were included in the book more instead of just Blaine and Hampton. I think the author should have included more about Hampton's mom, her boyfriend, and Sara. Another weakness was how the book was very predictable. When I first began to read this book, I predicted that Kennisaw was going to lose an important game, a fight between Blaine and Hampton, and Hampton was going to fall in love with a girl. If the author made this book more predictable, I think the book would have been more action-packed.

To be honest, I really enjoyed this book, it really spoke to me because I'm and a football player and I can relate to most of the book. It was a really good book about football and if there was a sequel, I would definitely read it. That's how much I enjoyed this book. I would recommend this book for everyone, but mostly for teenagers who enjoy sports and just football in general. Also, would recommend to mostly males, considering most females don't enjoy sports books. This book was very enjoyable and I recommend anyone who wants to read a good book.

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### **Valerie says**

I think this is a really good book. It seems honest and real. All the characters are developed well and Hampton (main character) seems so genuine. Of course, with having a real male character I found out things that I didn't really want to know. Like how horny teenage guys might look at girls but it wasn't too bad, it was mostly just annoying.

Hampton has problems and a lot of them. Family problems (his mom ignores him), girl problems (he likes a girl who is not the football-player's-girlfriend type), friendship problems (his friend wants to do one stupid thing after another), and school problems (he doesn't feel all that smart). The one thing Hampton knows he is good at is football but he is not conceited because of it. With all these problems you'd think that Hampton would feel sorry for himself but he doesn't.

I couldn't seem to hate any of the characters, not even Blain (Hampton's best friend). He is the kind of guy in high school who you would just love to hate because it's so easy. He is cocky, egotistical, a jerk, etc. But I can't hate him because he just seems to be falling apart. While Blaine is falling apart Hampton is discovering who he is and what his worth really is. I'd really like to have a friend like Hampton.

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### **Collin baehnman says**

Personal Response:

*Knights of the Hill Country* was a very good book. It ushered me to believe that I knew what was going to happen next, but then it completely flipped it on me. For example, Blaine Keller seemed to be this superstar athlete before his knee injury. After the injury, he went from being a superstar athlete to being just a good one because of his knee kept giving out on him. Hampton Green was an all-around great player; he was able to give his offense chances they normally wouldn't have if they just had good players.

Plot Summary:

In the beginning of the book, I was introduced to Kennesaw, Oklahoma. The town was the home of T. Roy an NFL player for the Dallas Cowboys. The Kennesaw Knights were on a winning streak of five seasons and every game the streak became longer. There were a few players played for Kennesaw they were, Hampton Green and Blaine Keller, those two guys were more than likely the best players on their team. Football players in Kennesaw were treated like royalty. They were able to walk around town like they were the top team in the nation. They could start fights and not accumulate any trouble whatsoever. The reader will find out how Hampton was an outstanding football player, but with the ladies or in the classroom he wasn't too great. Blaine and his friends try to get Hampton a girlfriend, but Hampton had different ideas. Hampton likes

this girl named Sara Reynolds, she wasn't your average cheerleader type girl. She liked to read, school, and her hair was crazy. Blaine has other plans for Hampton he says, "you need a great looking girlfriend, because that's what football players do!" The girl Blaine was talking about was Misty Koonce. She was a senior from Kennesaw and she was a looker they said. Blaine thought it was a great idea that they would go on a double date with him and Rachel, Blaine's girlfriend. There was a problem there; Hampton was with Sara studying and she asked him to go to the Wild West Days, which was like a fair. That night was the same night Blaine picked for the double date. Hampton didn't want to go, but Blaine forced him to say, "no" to Sara which was hard for him to do. When they left for the date, Hampton was contemplating just not even going with just to go the Wild West Days instead to hang out with Sara, yet again Blaine talked him out of it. The four arrived at a park and right away Blaine and Rachel disappeared, Hampton and Misty were sitting on swings and were talking about trophies and how she has never got one. Misty thought of a bright idea of breaking into the school and stealing one of the trophies that were in the case; Hampton didn't say, "no." They went to the school and Hampton took a smaller teamwork trophy. When Hampton got back she looked at the trophy and threw the trophy down and said, "a little one!" All four left the park and went to the Wild West Days. Hampton started to get excited because this was where Sara would be with her parents. The four walked up on a grassy knoll, sat down, and began looking around watching people and the events. Hampton looked for Sara and didn't find her at all. He began to look for Misty, but she's gone too. Hampton ended up finding a wheelchair while looking for Misty. A little ways up a hill, he saw Sara's parents and a spot open for Sara. Hampton found Sara and offered to buy her a soda or something; she politely declined. Blaine walked up and told Hampton about the guys Misty was talking too. They were the guys from Oklah, which was Kennesaw's rival. Blaine really didn't like them, because they were the team that messed up his knee. Blaine wandered over to the four guys from Oklah and started a fight right in the middle of the Wild West Days. Hampton did not want to get into the fight, but he ended up being drug into it when Blaine yelled, "I need some help here!" The six of them fought. Blaine and Hampton were on the ground when a cop and one of the coach's pulled them apart. After the fight, Hampton didn't even try and go talk to Sara. He just left with Blaine and Rachel. A couple days passed, and Hampton started talking to Sara again. A little while after they started talking again, Hampton offered to take her for a hike up in a region by Kennesaw. It was Friday night and the Knights were playing a team that wasn't very good. The Knights had an idea that they wouldn't lose, because they were playing such a small school. They were doing so well that the coach took out Hampton while Blaine stayed in to try to get more rushing yards. The Knights won the game by a landslide. Then their focus turned to Oklah, Kennesaw knew it was a game they had to win. Blaine knew the game was going to be super dirty from last year. "Who knows what kind of bullcrap they're going to pull this year," Blaine said to Hampton. Hampton knew what Blaine thought the whole time. Blaine was very upset about what Oklah did to his knee and he wanted to take his frustration out on them. When Hampton got home he expected to see the norm, but this time was different. Instead of his mother being drunk and obnoxious she was calm and sober. There was a huge pile of chicken wings lying on the coffee table as well as some chocolate milk. Hampton walked in and he was astounded, he hadn't seen his mother like this in years. He had no idea what was wrong with his mom, he didn't know if it was a good thing or a bad thing that he wasn't in his room. Tommy Don was sitting across from Hampton's mother, he was a well-postured man, he played for Kennesaw back when T. Roy played. He was kicked off the team, and never looked back. Hampton was introduced to Tommy Don by his mother, they ate wings and Hampton was happy with his night. The next day Hampton talked to Blaine about what happened the night before and Blaine went crazy on Hampton for thinking Tommy Don was a good guy. Blaine told him, Tommy Don was a traitor to the Knights and that he shouldn't be trusted. Hampton believes Blaine, but it takes Hampton a while to confront Tommy Don. Once Hampton confronted Tommy Don he learned that everything he thought T.Roy did, a black running back did instead. The game vs. Oklah was fast approaching and you could see it in the guys. Its game night there were some nerves in the locker room. Hampton worked his butt off on defense and Blaine tried to do his part on offense, but players from Oklah were getting into his head. It's the fourth quarter, the Knights were down by a touchdown. They were on the seven-yard line; the quarterback hands it off to Blaine he ran as fast as he

could but got tackled at the one yard line, it was a six-yard gain, but as Blaine gets up Covey Wallace spits right in his face. Blaine punches Wallace right in the face as hard as he could. After the punch, the game was over and the Knights had lost. Hampton looked up into the stands and saw his mother, Tommy Don, and Sara all cheering for him and they walked onto the field after the game. Blaine was all in a huff about everything that went on during the game. Blaine took Hampton to Oklah to settle the score. Blaine was drinking on the way up to Oklah, that's when he got the bright idea to bring a shotgun. When they arrived Blaine grabbed the gun and tried to shoot Covey, but little did he know Hampton took out the shell before they got out. They walked up to Covey and started talking about the game and what Blaine wanted to happen. What Blaine wanted something called fifth and goal, he gets one more shot at the winning score. Covey didn't like this plan and he constantly refuses and that's why Blaine brought out a gun to make him do it. Blaine started on his little plan, but he didn't realize he would have a "traitor" in his midst. When Blaine pulled the trigger nothing happened. Blaine tried to hit Covey over the head with the empty gun. Covey backed up and Blaine missed; Hampton grabbed the gun, threw it into the lake, and then grabbed Blaine to throw him down. Hampton yelled for Covey to leave while he was being called a "traitor" by Blaine. Hampton talked some sense into Blaine and they left without anyone getting shot. The next day Hampton and Sara hiked before they both go off to college.

#### Characterization:

Blaine Keller was one of the main characters along with Hampton Green. They were best friends since they were about four years old. Hampton moved to Kennesaw, he met Blaine, Hampton and Blaine played football together ever since. Blaine's Dad taught Hampton how to play football. Blaine's junior year he was crushing records for running for the Knights at tailback. Towards the end of the season, the Knights were playing the Oklah Outlaws, and one of the players made a dirty tackle that took out Blaine's knee. Hampton was playing defense for the Knights when that happened, Hampton could tell Blaine wasn't the same runner. They both always thought they would go to OU (Oklahoma University) together, the idea came to a screeching halt when Blaine was tackled that day.

#### Impacts of setting:

The setting of *Knights of Hill Country* was very important, because it was based in a larger school. This was important because there are one-way players like Hampton or Blaine, if it was a smaller school then you would see Blaine would play some defense or Hampton playing offense. *Knights of Hill Country* takes place in a modern time, because Kennesaw has kids using phones and driving around expensive cars. Kennesaw has a lot of memories in football from the five years winning streak to a player making it to the NFL. Kennesaw was a larger town in Oklahoma, there are hills around the town where teens party and what not. There were actually rich and poor sides in Kennesaw, which means Hampton was from the poorer side of Kennesaw and Blaine was from the rich side of the city.

#### Recommendation:

I would recommend this book to 14-year-old boys and girls, because it does have some strong language. Also it was based in the high school setting the older kids would be able to connect to the book more. *Knights of Hill Country* just gives the reader a perspective of football rarely seen; it's the life of a good team, normally it is a bad program turned around in the true underdog story. In this book, the reader sees how much little mistakes can hurt a good team.

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## Lani H says

### Plot Summary-

Knights of the Hill Country is a suspenseful book about a star football player, Hampton, stopping time. Well, he couldn't actually stop time, but when he was on the field, it seemed as if he could. He would freeze everything that was going on in his mind like a picture. He used this method to win games for his team. He would look at all the players on the opposing team and see what they were doing. He would look at the quarterback and see who he was going to pass the football to and get there to make an interception and score a touchdown like he always does. He plays for the Knight's highschool football team. Hampton was known for being the best player on the team. He was one of the best linebackers in highschool. Hampton's best friend Blaine used to be known as the best player. Of course being the best football player would cause some jealousy, but it's not what you would expect from Blaine. Blaine did some crazy things out of jealousy to Hampton. Hampton didn't like attention and would never brag, but other people would always bring up how awesome of a player Hampton is. This made Blaine even more jealous. The worst point for Blaine was when Hampton got offered a scholarship to a school that they have always wanted to play football at since they were little kids, and Blaine didn't. Not only was all of this jealousy going on, but Hampton was starting to get interested in a girl. This girl wasn't the type a girl a star athlete should be getting into. The Knight's have gone four years being undefeated in a row and this year will be the fifth. Hampton says that not only will they have the title of being undefeated, but they also will be legends. With all of this pressure on him to win the last game, girls, and his jealous buddy Blaine, it's hard for Hampton to focus on football. Will Hampton win the last game for the Knight's to become legends, or will he choke and lose the game with all of this pressure on him? Read the book to find out!

#### Main Characters-

Hampton- athletic, handsome, has a love for football, known as the best player, dynamic character.

Blaine- Hampton's best friend, good at football but Hampton has gotten better, jealous of Hampton.

Sara- a girl that Hampton likes, tough, didn't let things bother her.

#### Key Issues-

friendship, honesty, decisions.

#### Other Interesting Information-

The author, Tim Tharp, wrote this book in first person and it sounds like a country boy talking to you so it can be hard to understand. This book has short chapters in it so it is for readers that like to read in short periods of times but at some points in the book it is also a page turner. This book has a lot of foul language. I rated this book four stars because it's not my favorite book but it did keep me wondering what would happen next and that kept me reading it. I recommend this book to athletes. Not only athletes though because it deals with decisions you make in life.

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### **Julia Rice says**

Personal Response: *The Knights of the Hill Country* was a great book. It was a pretty quick read but definitely got the point across. I thought the author did a good job of portraying the characters and their personalities. The author made the climax very defined and the reader could tell that something big was about to happen. All of the tension and feelings built up to the end, where it all went down. The author put out a good message through this book by showing the effects of pressure and friendships.

Plot: This book took place in Kennisaw, Oklahoma, a small town where everybody knew everybody. Friday night football games were always a huge part of their culture. The Kennisaw Knights were heading towards their fifth consecutive undefeated season. The main character, Hampton Green, was one of the star players

on the team along with his best friend, Blaine Keller. Hampton and Blaine had done everything together ever since they were in first grade. Blaine was a very outgoing and confident guy and Hampton kind of just followed Blaine. Hampton wasn't very good at talking to girls and his teammates always made fun of him for it. Blaine had the idea that being on the football team meant being popular and getting the hottest girls. When Hampton decided to hang out with a very quiet and shy girl named Sara, Blaine thought he deserved better. This book showed how peer pressure can have a huge impact on people. Friendship was also a common theme in this book.

Recommendation: I would recommend this book to either boys or girls ages 14-19. There is some mature language and content. Both genders would enjoy this because it is pretty neutral. I can see where boys may enjoy it more than girls due to the fact that it is about football and the main characters are boys.

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## **Luke Sands says**

### **Personal Response**

I thought this book was great. I liked it mostly because I related to almost everything that is going on in Hampton's life. I liked this book because I love football, just like Hampton does.

### **Plot**

*The Knights of the Hill Country* is about a high school senior, Hampton. Hampton is best friends with Blaine. Blaine used to be the star player of the football team. Blaine hurt his knee last season and he never played the same since. Hampton and Blaine do everything together. Blaine doesn't like the girl Hampton likes, named Sara. Sara is a very smart, quiet girl. She isn't the popular girl football players are supposed to date. Blaine forces Hampton do things the Hampton knows Sara wouldn't like. Blaine starts a fight with some players from their rival team and he needs Hampton to back him up. That's the beginning of Blaine's fall to rock bottom. After Blaine loses the most important game for them, he threatens the Okalah star player. Blaine and Hampton went into Okalah and Blaine held him at gunpoint. Hampton stops Blaine from shooting him. The next morning Hampton and Sara finally went on there date.

### **Characterization**

The main character doesn't change very much throughout the book. Hampton is always a quiet, humble football player. The character that changes the most in the book is Blaine. To start with Blaine was just an overconfident and popular guy. He changed to be a hopeless maniac to get the same attention he once had.

### **Impacts of the setting**

This book takes place during modern times and is in a small football town in Oklahoma named Kennisaw. It takes place when the football team is working on a five season win streak. The setting impacts this book by making Blaine lose more than a football game. Blaine lost the five season win streak for the team. The setting also impacts it when Blaine started the fight with the Okalah boys he would have had more of a punishment if he was anywhere else but Kennisaw.

### **Thematic Connection**

The themes of this book are mostly fear of failure and overcoming peer pressure. Blaine is always extremely afraid of failure. He becomes a totally different person after the team lost the game. He actually fails more



because just he failed the first time. Hampton overcomes peer pressure because Blaine constantly tries to get Hampton to do things he doesn't want. Hampton always has enough reasoning to say he doesn't want to do something. Hampton normally stops Blaine from doing something stupid.

### **Recommendation**

I recommend this book to all high school football players because it is very relatable to football player. Even though the main character is a boy and the book is about football, girls may still relate to Sara and Hampton's relationship. I would recommend this book only to high school students because anyone else would relate or understand very much of the high school culture in the book.

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### **Quentin Borremans says**

Personal Response: I really enjoyed reading this. I felt that I was really close to Hampton Green. I felt that I could have been Hampton and certain points in the book. We both are very awkward. Being awkward is what gets Hampton into some of the troubles that he has, and I feel that goes for the same as me.

Plot: Hampton was totally different on the football field than he was in the real world. He was very good at linebacker and was offered a scholarship to a big time college. His best friend, Blaine, introduced football to him. Blaine also wasn't the best influence for Hampton. Blaine always tried to pressure him into doing things Hampton was comfortable with. Hampton was never good with girls, and Blaine wanted to change that. The problem was, Hampton finally found a girl that he could talk to. Blaine did not approve of this girl because she was not the best looking girl at the school. So Blaine decided that he needed to set up a date for Hampton with Misty. That date never worked out. Later on Hampton finally got the guts to ask Sara out. He was happy that he did. He had a football game the next day and wanted the date on Saturday to be even better coming off the win. They don't end up winning and Hampton is pretty bummed out. The date with Sara boosted his mood and the book ends with them having a picnic.

Characterization: Hampton Green was very good person. The people who he hangs out with makes him do things that aren't so good. His best friend Blaine, was not a good influence. Hampton does knew enough to try not to do most of the things Blaine does. At the end, Hampton stood up to Blaine and saved a couple of people's lives. When Hampton was not around his friends, he opens up about who he really was. After he started talking to Sara, he could be who he really was and wasn't criticized for it.

Impact of Setting: The book takes place in Oklahoma. They are a small town, and they are really into football. Mostly everyone knows each other. I would say the books takes place around present day. My reasoning for that is because they have a lot of the things we have today, like modern cars.

Thematic Connection: I believe that the theme is good vs. bad decisions. As I read, I noticed that Hampton had a lot of bad feelings while hanging out with Blaine. For example, Blaine was always doing something stupid, like drinking beer. He always offered some to Hampton, but he declined. Hampton always thought that fighting was stupid, but he did because Blaine wanted him to. At the end, Hampton finally steps up for what he believes in, and turns against Blaine before something really bad happens.

Recommendation: I recommend this book to anyone that is 13 or older. I think this book has many adult things younger people shouldn't read about. I thought this was a good book as it had a decent story to it. I

gave it 4 out of 5 stars because it was not the best book I have read, but it is by far not the worst book out there.

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## **Noah Rucks says**

### Personal Response:

I read the book *Knights of the Hill Country* by Tim Tharp. I thought this book was very good, because I could relate my personal decisions to the main character's action. I also felt like I was in his footsteps. I would rate this book four out of five stars, because it left some questions unanswered.

### Plot:

In the book *Knights of the Hill Country*, Hampton and Blaine were best friends that played football together. The Kennisaw knights were going on their fifth undefeated season. The team went to tie the most undefeated seasons in a row but lost the last game. Blaine would always boss Hampton around, and Blaine always had to approve of his decisions. Blaine got kicked out of the game, because he started to hit another player from the other team. That night Blaine was very mad. He went to the other town to find the kid he had the fight with during the game. Blaine found him and confronted him about what happened during the football game. When Blaine confronted him, Blaine took his gun and was going to shoot the other person. Hampton took the shell out of the gun without Blaine noticing beforehand Blaine tried to shoot the person.

### Characterization:

Hampton Green was the main character who was an excellent defense of linebacker. He made big stops in the football games to help them win. Hampton liked this girl named Sara. She was a girl who wore baggy clothes and had messy hair. Another character was Blaine's dad. Blaine's dad treated Hampton like he was his own son, because Hampton's dad left him and his mom. Hampton and Blaine tried to get into a division one school.

### Setting:

The book took place in high school in a small town called Kennisaw, Oklahoma. The book took place in 1990 to present time because of the style of cloth that they wore. The setting was important, because they tried to beat their school record to going undefeated.

### Recommendation:

I recommend this book to high school guys. They might find this book more interesting, because sports are incorporated in the book. High school girls might like this book because of the guys in the book.

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## **Cara says**

This one is going to be a hard one to review because I don't think I can do it justice. There is nothing extraordinary about the book but that is what makes it so great. It is a story about growing up and you do it along with our football hero Hampton. You can't not love him. I mean you can only wish there are guys out there like him.

The relationship he has with his best friend Blaine did give me a lot of insight of why guys do stupid things, even though it may still be wrong at least now it makes more sense. Blaine himself is a great complex character in this book, and the pain he's feeling is palpable through the pages and you see him trying to hide it with all his got.

Football does play a big role in this story. It's used as a tool to help us see the bigger perspective of life, and help people like me (who didn't really get what was the big deal) understand what makes this sport the American icon it is. A great story about what life is really about.

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## **Easton Groskreutz says**

### **Personal Response:**

Personally, I thought *Knights of the Hill Country* was a great book, and it showed a great story people could relate to. I felt involved throughout the story and related to some situations in *Knights of the Hill Country*. In the book, there was some recurring themes that would put the characters in danger of being socially deranked and also becoming arrested for their actions. I ranked this book four stars because the book was not totally related to my social life. The positive similarities I made with being in sports helped me relate.

### **Plot:**

This story is about Hampton Green, a star linebacker on the football team in a small town in Oklahoma. He lives with his mother after his father left them when he was little. He tends to spend most of his time with his best friend, Blaine. Hampton first met Blaine when he moved into town. They ran into each other when they were attending a ceremony for the star, T-Roy Strong, who played for the Knights, went on to play for the Dallas Cowboys, and won a Superbowl. Hampton grew up with Blaine and his family. Blaine had taught Hampton the game of football and was always the star. However, during their junior year, Blaine had a knee injury against a rival team who was known for playing dirty. After his injury, he had never quite been the same. Most people did not notice Blaine's knee bothering him, but Hampton could always see it. During their senior year, they were striving to be undefeated for five straight seasons in a row. No team had done that since the great T-Roy Strong played. This year was different for both Hampton and Blaine. Hampton really stepped up and made big play after big play, but on the other side of the ball, Blaine just was not the same as he had used to be. Hampton was becoming the star and this was eating away at Blaine. Hampton didn't care for the fame as much. Off of the field, Hampton did not always know what to say or do. He began to get feelings for a girl in his history class, Sarah. They ended up planning to go on a date after the last football game. This last game had a lot of pressure within it, because they had a chance to go for five perfect seasons. It was a tight score throughout the game and ended in an unexpected way. The morning after the game, Hampton woke up and took the girl he truly liked on the date he had waited for a long time.

### **Characterization:**

Hampton is a senior in high school and the starting linebacker for the Knights football team. He has some trouble with getting his point across and struggles with what to say at certain times. However, when he was on the football field, he knew exactly what to do. Blaine is Hampton's best friend and also the starting running back on the Knight's football team. Blaine's dream is to play for Oklahoma University and then play in the NFL. Blaine is very *hubris* about his abilities on the football field but suffered from a knee injury. Sarah is a girl Hampton begins to have feelings for, but to the rest of the school she is just a nerd that Hampton does not deserve.

### **Settings:**

It takes place in small town Kennisaw, Oklahoma. This year, the Kennisaw Knights are going for their fifth straight undefeated season in football, and if they succeed, they will be the best high school team in the eastern Oklahoma to ever play. Most of the time, the setting either takes place on the football field or at the school. The other places that show up are when Blaine takes Hampton in his truck (Citronella) to go to a cafe or to go hunting.

Recommendation:

I recommend this book to sporty children that play fall sports. I recommend this book to people around fifteen, because it teaches an individual about good sportsmanship. This book also shows how to behave when even stuck in terrible situations. *Knights of the Hill Country* is a very inspirational book. It shows a path where Hampton is stuck but then has to choose either his best friend and his bad choices or pick what he knows is right. *Knights of the Hill Country* shows good decision making and gives a good example of what could happen if things go wrong. It also shows how to make them right. I recommend this type of book to children who choose the wrong path as well.

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