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Jack Strong Takes a Stand

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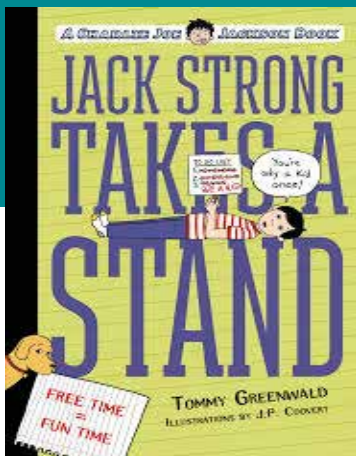
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Book Review

Jack Strong Takes a Stand



Author

Tommy Greenwald

Illustrator

Melissa Mendés

Reviewer

Katherine Martin

Rating

Outstanding

Level

Intermediate

Pages

226

Year

2013

Publisher

Roaring Brook Press

ISBN

9781596438361

Jack Strong goes to school and does homework like all other middle school kids, but nearly all of his free time is filled with extracurricular activities. Jack's patience dwindles when, instead of hanging out with friends, he is shuttled from one activity to the next. He decides to stand up to his parents by sitting down on his favorite couch and refusing to get up. Jack attracts the attention of many people, infuriating some and inspiring others. The host of a local TV show comes to Jack's house to interview him. Surprising everyone, including himself, Jack gets off the couch, ending his strike. He and his parents come to a compromise, freeing his schedule of the activities he hates so he can spend more time on what he loves.

Tommy Greenwald portrays the thinking of a young middle school boy with conflicting interests. Jack's voice is well developed and his thought patterns flow in a very natural way. Illustrations throughout the book add clever details and humor to Jack's story. A theme of balance is evident throughout the novel, as even Jack himself, who once was overwhelmed with a busy schedule, becomes bored and tired of his new couch potato life. The question of whether preteens and teenagers should be concerned with preparing for college by filling their schedules with extracurricular activities is explicitly brought to attention through characters such as Nana and Mrs. Fleck. This question is answered on page 209 when Jack's father comes to the conclusion that Jack should not have to do things he is not interested in, but should instead pursue those things he does love.