Book Rationale

Running with Scissors: A Memoir by Augusten Burroughs
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Title: Running with Scissors: A Memoir
Author: Augusten Burroughs
Publisher: St. Martin’s Press
Copyright Date: 2002

Location: Material is located in the school library, which serves grade 6-12 and is available to be borrowed by any member of the school community

Objection: Parent thinks book is inappropriate for sixth graders.

Summary: “Running With Scissors is the true story of a boy whose mother (a poet with delusions of Anne Sexton) gave him away to be raised by her unorthodox psychiatrist who bore a striking resemblance to Santa Claus. So at the age of twelve, Burroughs found himself amidst Victorian squalor living with the doctor’s bizarre family, and befriending a pedophile who resided in the backyard shed. The story of an outlaw childhood where rules were unheard of, and the Christmas tree stayed up all year-round, where Valium was consumed like candy, and if things got dull, an electroshock therapy machine could provide entertainment. The funny, harrowing, and bestselling account of an ordinary boy’s survival under the most extraordinary circumstances…” - http://us.macmillan.com/runningwithscissors

Awards & Honors:
New York Times Best Seller List - 150 weeks
Publishers Weekly Paperback/Trade Best Seller List – 34 weeks as of 2/19/07

Reviews:


See Also …

Made into a feature length film released in 2006 …

"I write everything fully expecting to some day end up on Court TV, and I'm fully prepared to be challenged legally. Everything I write is the truth and I know that I would win. I've got journals--I mean, I was walking around with a tape recorder, basically, throughout my childhood. So... go ahead, challenge that one line, you know? Some things, you do have to creatively recreate, and that's fine, but I like to know the essence of it is true." --AUGUSTEN BURROUGHS'S RESPONSE WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE VERACITY OF Running with Scissors, WHICH IS UP TO A WHOPPING 2.4 MILLION COPIES IN PRINT. (PW, 2/19/07)

The producers of the movie and the author were threatened with a lawsuit by the Turcotte family for defamation. Both suits were settled …


Why this book may have value in a secondary school library …
- Although the book was written for and marketed to an adult audience, it is a coming-of age story about a young adolescent--which is subject matter appropriate for and relevant to young adults.
- Books that have been made into movies often have special appeal, and the book (upon which the movie is based) is frequently requested after someone watches the movie.
- Studying and writing memoirs are often curricular activities in English Language Arts classes. Running with Scissors is a memoir that offers the unique perspective of growing up with a dysfunctional family.
- The fact that the author of this memoir was sued for defamation—and the resulting settlement—raise an important issue in memoir writing and provide a unique opportunity to discuss libel, slander and defamation.
- This memoir deals with some difficult issues (coming to terms with one’s sexuality, sexual abuse, growing up with a dysfunctional family) that are still relevant for young people today.