

# ***The Stupendous Dodgeball Fiasco***

**By:** Janice Repka

**Publisher:** Dutton Children's Books

**Copyright:** 2004

**Genre:** Humorous Stories, Realistic Fiction

**Lifeskills:** Common sense, caring, perseverance, courage, initiative, personal best, responsibility, friendship, problem solving, resourcefulness, truthfulness, effort, organization, cooperation

**SYNOPSIS:** Eleven-year-old Phillip's dream of running away from the circus comes true when his parents allow him to stay with relatives in Hardington, Pennsylvania, where dodgeball is practically a religion and life is anything but normal.

**BOOKTALK:** Dodgeball is king in Hardington. Bullies play it, kids try to survive it, and the adults believe it's more important than baseball, apple pie, and the flag. Find out what happens when Phillip takes the entire town to court.

## **AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:**

### **Janice Repka**

Janice Repka was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and was the seventh of eight children born to a television repairman and his homemaker wife. She began her writing career as a U.S. Army journalist in Fort Hood, Texas where she reported on everything from rattlesnake hunts to chaplains for a weekly military newspaper. After serving in the army, Repka returned to Pittsburgh and earned a degree in journalism at Point Park University. Later, she earned a J.D. degree from the University of Pennsylvania School of Law. Repka is married and lives with her family in Pennsylvania. This is her first book.

Additional information about the author and this book can be found at:

<http://janicerepka.com>

## **CHALLENGING WORDS (pronunciation, spelling, defining):**

Dwindled (Chpt.3- pg. 18); lingo 5-26; ominous 6-37; equilibrium 7-44; immerse 8-48; truant 9-52; petition 10-60; forfeit 10-63; winced 11-67; discreetly 12-77; transgression 12-77; proclamation 13-84; referral 13-86; plaintiff 15-92; injunction 16-96; dejected 17-102; skirmish 17-103; inflection 17-103; rendered 19-112; fluster 19-114; morbid 19-114; ascending 21-119; chaos 21-119; reprieve 21-121; revived 21-121; modest 22-128; judicial 24-139; menacingly 24-139; frail 26-153; ruckus 26-154; contempt 27-156; frivolous 27-156; adjourn 27-156; resolve

27-156; conviction 27-157; barbaric 28-164; arrogance 28-164; futile 28-164; derriere 28-164; conceivable 28-165; flagrant 28-165; decorum 28-165; burgeoning 28-168

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Why does Phillip want to leave the circus?
2. Did you ever do something because you thought it was right, even though others disagreed with you? Explain.
3. If you were Judge Monn, how would you decide Phillip's lawsuit?
4. Why does B.B. break Phillip's glasses?
5. What part does the seeing play in the story?
6. Why was Uncle Felix always getting fired and why did that turn out to be a good thing?

### **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:**

1. Try holding a mock trial using information from the story. Students may choose an idea from the book or create their own.
2. Play a game of dodgeball (no head shots) and discuss feelings at the end of the game.
3. Visit a courtroom. Invite an attorney or judge to speak to the class and answer questions.
4. Read *Frindle* by Andrew Clements. Compare and contrast the two characters, setting and plot.
5. Make a list of circus facts mentioned in the book. Each child, working with a partner, is assigned one fact and illustrate it for a class book.
6. Write a paragraph about Phillip from B.B.'s perspective. What makes her behave as she does toward him?
7. Plan a field trip to Indiana's own circus city, Peru.

### **RELATED THEMES AND SUBJECT CORRELATION:**

**Art:** Circus art, circus posters

**Language Arts:** Journaling

**Science:** Physics, balance, flying in the air

**Social Studies:** Law, law suits, government, courts and legal procedures

**Other:** Disabilities

### **INTERNET SITES:**

Bullies: [www.kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/emotion/bullies.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/emotion/bullies.html)

National Dodgeball Association: [www.dodgeballusa.com](http://www.dodgeballusa.com)

### **Grades 4-6 Indiana Standards met by this Intermediate book:**

**Language Arts:** 4.1.1, 4.2.2, 4.2.3, 4.2.4, 4.2.5, 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.3.5, 5.2.4, 5.3.2, 5.3.3, 5.3.4, 6.1.5, 6.2.4, 6.2.7, 6.3.2, 6.3.3, 6.3.6, 6.3.8