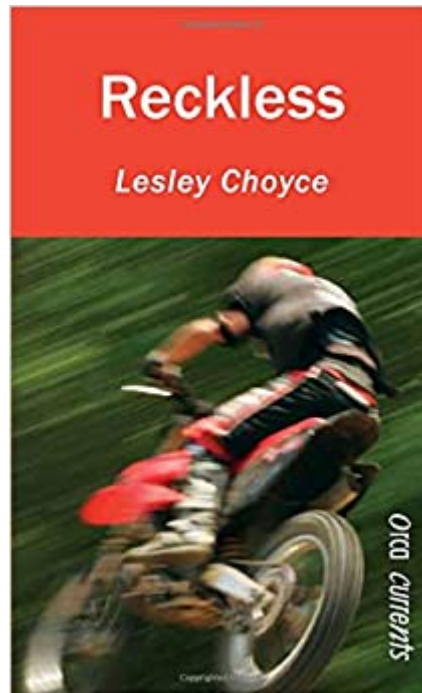




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Reckless (Orca Currents)



Synopsis

Josh knows he's riding recklessly when he knocks down the old man he suspects is the hermit of Loggerman Creek. But he is shocked when the hermit walks into the forest with his bike after the accident. Being without his beloved bike for a week motivates Josh to hike into the woods and confront the crazy old man. The hermit, Jonathan, has fixed Josh's bike, and Josh learns that he has more in common with the old man than he ever imagined. When Jonathan needs help, Josh has to respect the old man's choices in order to save his life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Grade 6-10 This high-interest, low-reading-level book is a fast-paced read. Josh is incredibly passionate about his four-stroke Kawasaki dirt bike, so much so that it sometimes feels like his only friend. During a ride on a logging road, he accidentally slams into a crazy-looking old man who is standing in the middle of his path, and who then confiscates the bike. Returning to retrieve it, Josh befriends the hermit, a Vietnam vet who chooses to live outside the grid, and who later needs Josh's help. The book twists and turns like a tricky dirt-bike track and flows just as quickly. One doesn't need a special interest in the vehicles to get pulled in, but a passion for them will enhance the story. Teacher resources are included on the Orca website. Emily Chornomaz, West Orange Public Library, NJ Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Kindle Edition edition.

Riding his dirt bike down a forest road, young Joshua hits a reclusive Vietnam vet—sparking a friendship that culminates in a heroic rescue. His battered old Kawasaki being the center of his own solitary existence, Josh is devastated when the old man known locally as the “hermit of Loggerman Creek” angrily gets to his feet and wheels the bike away, but deeply affected when he gets it back repaired and even retuned. On a subsequent visit to the hermit’s remote cabin, Josh finds his troubled friend semiconscious and bleeding from an axe wound. He rises to the occasion as heavy snows and the old man’s own pleas keep him from leaving to find help until a long, anxious night has passed. In this entry in the Orca Currents series, Choyce crafts an unvarnished tale around two loners of different generations, featuring the requisite bully, plenty of dirt-bike action, a suspenseful climax, and a happy ending. The lack of complications will make this particularly appealing fare to offer younger or reluctant readers. Grades 4-7. --John Peters

My 11-year-old son became quickly engrossed in this book. He loves motorcycles, so I was trying to find something that would interest him more than computer games, and this actually held his attention. His two comments were that most of the story was about this boy meeting a hermit and that the bike depicted in the cover isn’t the one described in the story (typical non-communicative boy).

Riding his dirt bike through the forest is Josh’s way of clearing his mind. That’s where he heads most days after school. Although he follows his parents’ rules about leaving a note and wearing his helmet, he isn’t always as careful as he should be. One afternoon, the sound of his engine and the feel of the forest floor beneath his tires leads him to be a bit reckless. Before he realizes exactly what happened, he is steering wildly to avoid hitting a bearded man directly in his path. His attempt to miss the man fails. Josh is thrown from his bike, but he quickly scrambles to his feet and to the side of the fallen man. The guy is dressed in rags and smells awful. Josh considers his meager first aid training and decides not to move the man. He checks to see if he is breathing and attempts to communicate. As he watches the man slowly come around, Josh guesses that he has stumbled across the Loggerman Creek hermit. Much to Josh’s surprise, the man gradually gets to his feet. The man questions Josh about his reason for disrupting the quiet forest, states “You need to be taught a lesson,” and then lifting Josh’s broken bike, walks off with it into the trees. Losing his bike in such an embarrassing encounter means Josh can’t mention anything to his parents. He talks with his friend, Kyle, and together they decide the man must be the Vietnam vet rumored to have lived in the wild

for some forty years. Josh finds out the man has a few friends in the community who deliver supplies from time to time. He decides he will make a visit to the man and try to retrieve his dirt bike. What follows amazes Josh. He discovers the man's name is Jonathan. His experiences in the war turned him into a hermit - distrustful of everyone and terrified of helicopters. For some reason, Jonathan allows Josh to befriend him. Many Vietnam vets have found it difficult to assimilate back into their old lives. Author Lesley Choyce gives readers a peek into Jonathan's tortured memories. Josh learns about respect and honor in his relationship with Jonathan. RECKLESS combines the fast and furious world of recreational dirt biking with the emotions and life-changing effects of war. Reviewed by: Sally Kruger, aka "Readingjunky"

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