

Friday Night Lights

H. G. Bissinger

Da Capo Press

Non-Fiction/Sports

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A Life you will Never Forget

By: Brandon H

When you ask most people "what is the book Friday Night Lights about?" your most likely to get an answer that is "oh it's about the football team who lost in the championship" but, although that is true, there is much more detail than just that. *Friday Night Lights* by H.G Bissinger is one of the greatest novels I have read. (Over the numerous amounts of years I have been reading for). A young group of boys learn how to cope with racism and overcome obstacles that most people at their age would never be able to do.

The players on the Permian Panthers learn how to maintain their act on and off the field as the coaches pushed them to be the best they possibly can. It was always hard for the players to accept each other for what they looked like because in the town of Odessa, Texas, whites cannot accept the black citizens. There was a line clearly drawn between the players but will quickly learn how to overcome the impossible. The head coach of the Permian Panthers, Gary Gaines, always has had an intelligent mind when it came to football and acted as the scapegoat to the team when something went wrong. The people of Odessa had extremely high standards for the football team putting a great amount of pressure on Coach Gaines. In Texas, football means everything to the people as kids and young adults start playing at extremely young ages.

The main character James Miles, known as "Boobie", was the Star player on the football team who unfortunately would have to cut his high school football career short after a stunning

injury in the pre-season. He was expected to easily play Division 1 football at extreme College powerhouses like USC and Nebraska. After his injury he started to rely on some of the other players on the team to pick up the pace for his absence. The quarterback, Mike Winchell, attempts to pick up the slack from "Boobie" but always feels the heat coming from the tough fans of Odessa. Mike eventually makes a huge mistake in the championship game and is the key reason in why they lost. Don Billingsley, the team's starting halfback, can't control himself off the field. He always seemed more interested in fighting, drinking, and girls than the game of football. He has a good family history on the Panthers as his father was a former all-star in the 1960's. Ivory Christian, the best defensive player on the team (Middle Linebacker), delivered the biggest blows to opponents and put religion before the game of football. He was by far one of the most athletic players on the team and would eventually receive a division 1 scholarship at Texas Christian University. Besides his play on the field he was a major leader in the locker-room breaking up disputes between players.

I highly suggest that if you are considering reading this novel you do so as quickly as possible. I was so into reading this book that it was almost impossible to put it down! If you aren't a sports person I would still suggest this book because even though it is based around football, it shows how people overcame racism in the late 1900's. This book also shows that winning isn't the key to having success in life. Unfortunately, the Permian Panthers didn't win the State championship but learned how to work together and be one unit. With the help of the coaches they worked to achieve their goal of having one extremely successful season. The novel finally ends with the coaches writing the juniors names on the chalkboard to get ready for next year. The Panthers would win the state title that next year with a quarterback who would go on to play in the NFL.

This is definitely one of my favorite books I have read over the years and I hope you have the same experience. This novel will take reading to the next level, not allowing you to put the book down until you finish the last page.