

Additional Resources – Reading Comprehension

Nothing but Net

Read the text on the following pages then answer the questions below.

1. Find and copy two sentences from the first paragraph which tells you that the incident was sudden and life threatening.

2. What techniques does the author use to convey the mother's panic? Write two.

3. '*Absolutely nailed the landing.*' What does the word 'nailed' suggest in this context?

4. List three positives that Ryan takes from the situation.

5. Look at the paragraph that begins, '*Everyone was being positive...*' Explain why everyone was being positive.

6. Write three words that tell you the nurse is excited for Ryan to meet Blaise.

7. Write three ways that Ryan and Blaise are similar.

8. Use the text to help you describe the Invictus Games.

9. *'Perhaps there really was a silver lining to every cloud after all.'*
Explain what the author means by this sentence.

10. Explain how Ryan's feelings change throughout the story. Use evidence from the text.

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A terrifying screech of tyres. A jolt of shock.
Then nothing.

Ryan had opened his eyes again for the first time as the ambulance arrived. Bright, flashing lights and a squealing siren filled his head, which was already beginning to throb. “Ryan! Ryan! Oh, thank goodness you’re alive!” He recognised the voice as his mother’s. She must have been nearby, but his sight was so blurred that all he could do was reach up a hand. She grabbed it.

“W-wh-what happened?” he managed to mumble. Saying even that much felt like an immense effort.

“Ryan, honey, oh Ryan! You’ve been hit by a car. But everything’s gonna be okay, you hear me? You’re gonna be fine. The ambulance is here. You’re safe. The paramedics know what to do. I’ll be with you. You’ll be fine. You’ll be okay. Everything’s going to be okay. Oh Ryan, I’m so sorry! I’m so sorry!”

After all the operations were complete, the events began to piece themselves together in Ryan’s mind. He had been scooting. Nothing too crazy. Just trying to land a tail whip off the ramp he’d built with Scott on the front driveway. He’d managed it too! Absolutely nailed the landing. Perhaps too well. Like an idiot, he’d looked back to celebrate with Scott and see his reaction but had not slowed down. He rode straight off the driveway. There was no way the driver could have seen him; he had appeared in an instant from behind a parked car.

Scott said it was the scariest thing he had ever seen.

The paramedics arrived quickly and said that if Ryan had not been wearing his helmet, he probably would not have survived.

Ryan’s mum just said, “I love you, everything’s gonna be okay!” a lot.

She was right. Maybe. In one sense everything was okay. He was alive. He was not going to have any lasting effects from the injuries to his back and neck. He knew he was very fortunate.

That did not make him feel much better about his leg.

It was gone!

His left leg had taken most of the impact from the car. The doctors had tried to save it, but the surgeries had not worked, and his leg had to be amputated. Now, at ten years old, Ryan Lamotte was going to have to learn to walk again. Missing part of his leg.

Everyone was being positive, but Ryan did not care. It did not help, nor change the fact that his life was changed forever. He had already been shown some prosthetic lower legs and everyone had talked about how efficient and comfortable they were. People had talked about how he would be able to walk again, even run again, if he wore a special ‘blade’ leg. However, listening to doctors talk about how great prosthetic legs were did nothing to change the fact that Ryan would much rather have his own leg back. Nor did it change the fact that his wish would never be granted.

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Several days later, Ryan was asleep in bed. He had become quite good at sleeping sitting upright since the surgery. Apart from watching TV and talking to people, that was all he had to do.

However, today was different. He was gently woken by a smiling nurse.

“Hello sleepy! I’ve got you a glass of water to help you wake up. I just thought you wouldn’t want to miss the treat. There’s a very special and amazing person here to meet you,” the nurse said as she beamed at him.

To meet him? Ryan was confused. His family and friends usually let him sleep if he wanted to. He had never been woken up for anything other than medical tests or meals.

A few minutes later, the kindly nurse poked her head through the curtain around his bed.

“Are you ready to meet your visitor?” she asked, her eyes twinkling.

“Meet who?” Ryan asked, but the head had disappeared. The curtains were thrown back. A confident middle-aged man walked into view. In one hand, he held a basketball; in the other, some sort of jersey.

“Ryan, it’s a pleasure to meet you. I’m Blaise. I hope you don’t mind me visiting. I heard about what had happened to you, and because I know a thing or two about what you’re going through, I wanted to come and say hello. I’ve also heard you’re a Raptors fan. Is that true?”

“I love the Raptors!” he smiled.

“Good. That’s the right answer! I love them too! So we can stay friends now.” Blaise laughed as he held up the basketball. “I thought you might want this,” he said. Ryan took it but was still confused.

“Thank you,” he said, “but I won’t be able to play with it.”

Sympathy filled Blaise’s eyes.

“Do you know what this is?” he asked, holding up the jersey. Ryan shook his head. “It’s a Team Canada wheelchair basketball jersey from this year’s Invictus Games. The Games are happening right here in Toronto. All of us on the team have signed it!”

“Wheelchair basketball? Team Canada? You mean you..?” Ryan could not help glancing at Blaise’s legs. The older man nodded. Reaching down, he rolled up his trouser leg. He had a prosthetic foot!

“I lost it in Afghanistan,” he explained. “I was out there with the Canadian Army. It’s hard to get your head around losing part of your body, isn’t it?” Ryan nodded. He would not have guessed the man was missing a foot. He also could not believe there might be basketball in his future after all.

“So you play wheelchair basketball?” Ryan asked. Blaise smiled and nodded.

“I can hit a three-pointer. Nothing but net. Not many NBA players can do that sitting down! Have you heard of the Invictus Games? No? Not really? Well, it’s a competition involving members of the armed forces who have been injured. Loads of men and women from seventeen different countries are coming to Toronto in September to compete in a bunch of different sports. I wanted to visit you because I want you to know that your life isn’t over because of your injury. Achieving success is as much a part of your life now as it ever was. Hitting a three-pointer can be as much a part of your life as it ever was. The only difference is you’ll be sitting down. And sitting down is more relaxing anyway!”

Ryan laughed for the first time in weeks. He and Blaise talked for a long time after that. Perhaps there really was a silver lining to every cloud after all.