

Arcady's Goal

AUTHOR: Eugene Yelchin
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GENRE: Historical Fiction
LEXILE: 630L

SUMMARY:

As a child of parents arrested as enemies of the people, Arcady is barely surviving in an orphanage in Communist Russia. He dreams of lifting himself from his hardship by becoming a famous soccer player. A Soviet inspector takes interest in Arcady and the risks these two take are both physical and emotional.

BOOKTALK:

“Huffing and puffing, Dimka is knocking himself out to keep me from scoring into his goal....

I'm about to kick the ball when Dimka grabs me by the coat and spins me around. *Whoosh.* The fence flickers by. I lose sight of his goal, but that doesn't stop me. I backheel the ball through his legs. The ball slams into the crate, planks shooting out in splinters.

Goal!”

(p. 2-3)

Soccer is everything to Arcady Yelchin. As an orphan, he dreams about becoming a soccer champion for the Soviet Union's Red Army Soccer Club, like his hero, Fedor Brutko. An unexpected person takes a risk for Arcady. In dangerous times, will Arcady's fighting spirit lead to his goals or even greater trouble?

AUTHOR'S NAME: Eugene Yelchin

Author's Website: <http://www.eugeneyelchinbooks.com/index.html>

Other books written by the author:

The Rooster Prince of Breslov

Won Ton, a Cat Tale Told in Haiku

Breaking Stalin's Nose

CHALLENGING WORDS

inspector (p.8)- *noun* an official whose job is to check that things are in the correct condition or that people are doing what they should

solitary (solitary confinement)(p.35)- *noun* a punishment in which a prisoner is kept alone, separate from other prisoners

comrade (p.40)- *noun* a friend, especially someone you have fought together with in a war or worked with

credentials (p.162)- *noun* documents that prove who you are or that show your qualifications or status

stigma (p.233)- *noun* a feeling that something is wrong or embarrassing in some way
<http://www.macmillandictionary.com/us>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In Chapter 3, we find out why the orphan boys don't have parents. What can you infer "crimes against our people" could be? What might have happened to their parents?
2. In Chapter 4, one of the inspectors is different than the rest. What does he do and wear that contrasts him from the rest of the inspectors?
3. If you were Arcady, when the inspector, Ivan Ivanych, comes to adopt you, would you go? Why or why not?
4. How does Arcady act when he first moves in with Ivan Ivanych? What can you infer about his life in the orphanage from these actions?
5. What do the boys on the soccer team say about "enemies of the people"? Why do you think they start treating Arcady differently?
6. The woman at the school said that the athletic director has been signing all the recommendation letters. What are some clues that something is wrong between Ivan and the athletic director, Fireball?
7. Ivan finally tells Arcady what happened to his wife and how he became an inspector. What happened to Natasha and how are Ivan and Arcady now in danger from Fireball?(Ch. 29 &30)

ACTIVITIES WITH STANDARDS:

Language Arts:

Theme

- **Bravery** means taking a bold step regardless of the personal danger. Both Ivan and Arcady take risks that are bold steps. How does Ivan save Arcady and how does Arcady, in turn, save Ivan? Which character shows greater bravery? Give examples from the story to support your answer.
- **Hope/Freedom**- Birds and athletic ability are used in *Arcady's Goal* as symbols. How do birds or athletic ability provide hope or freedom in *Arcady's Goal*?

5.RL.2.2 Determine a theme of a story, play, or poem from details in the text, including how characters respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

Point of View

- From what point of view is *Arcady's Goal* written? How would the story be different if written from Ivan Ivanych's point of view?

5.RL.3.2 Describe how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are portrayed.

Setting

- Compare and contrast the two homes from *Arcady's Goal*.
- Chapters 1 & 2 introduce Arcady's orphanage. What are 3 words you would use to describe where he lives. Give evidence for each.
- In Chapter 10, Arcady gets to his new house. What are 3 words you would use to describe where Ivan Ivanych lives? Give evidence for each?

5.RL.2.3 Describe two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or play, drawing on specific details in the text, and how they impact the plot.

Social Studies:

- **Human rights-** Using resources on the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin, and Communism, research some of the reasons people were declared "enemies of the people."
- **Soccer-** The Red Army Soccer Club from 1945 inspired *Arcady's Goal*. Research what is known about soccer in the Soviet Union in the 1940's.

6.2.5 Discuss the impact of major forms of government in Europe and the Americas on civil and human rights.

5.W.5 Conduct short research assignments and tasks on a topic.

6-8.LH.5.2: Write informative texts, including analyses of historical events.

6-8.LH.7.1: Conduct short research assignments and tasks to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

6-8.LH.7.2: Gather relevant information from multiple sources, using search terms effectively; annotate sources; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation (e.g., APA or Chicago).

RELATED INTERNET SITES:

Common Core Teacher's Guide

<http://images.macmillan.com/folio-assets/teachers-guides/9780805098440TG.pdf>

Interview with Author

<http://www.busylibrarian.com/2014/10/lets-get-busy-with-eugene-yelchin.html>

Soviet Union Research Resources

[Gulags- What Were Their Crimes?](#)

[Stalin Biography](#)

[LIFE magazine Sept. 16, 1946](#)

ACTIVITY SHEET CREATED BY:

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