



Cruise Control (Stuck in Neutral)

By Terry Trueman

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Cruise Control (Stuck in Neutral) By Terry Trueman

How sick is this: I'm the major jock-stud in high school, but my brother has the brain of a badminton birdie and a body to match. I've got everything and he's got nothing. I'm a three-year, three-sport letterman and Shawn can't even stand up! Like I said, sick, huh?

It's hard to be a brother to someone who doesn't even know you're there. How can you talk to him when he can't understand a thing you say? How can you listen to him when he can't speak a word? How can you love him when he's so messed up, he can't love you back? And how can you have a life of your own when your father bailed on the family, leaving you to be the "man of the house"?

Fueled by rage at what has happened to his family, Paul is ready to explode. And he is haunted by something even worse—something he can never tell anyone. It is something he will have to face if he is to have any hope of a future at all. While Cruise Control is a companion to Terry Trueman's Printz Honor book, Stuck in Neutral, it is the completely independent story of a family's "other" son—the one who is healthy, gifted, normal. It is a courageously hopeful story told with power, compassion, and humor.

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Editorial Review

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Gr. 7-10. In this companion to *Stuck in Neutral* (2000), Trueman revisits the story of Shawn, the developmentally disabled teen whose point of view made that first novel so memorable. This time the narrator is Shawn's older brother, Paul, a gifted athlete. The irony of the family situation is not lost on Paul ("what a sadistic madman God must be to have thrown Shawn and me into the same family"). While Paul loves his brother, he hates their father, who, unable to cope, has abandoned the family. But Paul, like Shawn, is a victim of circumstance, and Trueman does a passionately convincing job portraying a boy who feels trapped and suffocated by responsibilities he never asked to shoulder. As he puts it, his life is "like a car roaring down the freeway in cruise control . . . and I can't even slow down." Only at the end does the story stray briefly into wish-fulfillment territory, but by that time, readers will be so invested in Paul's survival that few will quibble. *Michael Cart*

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About the Author

Terry Trueman grew up in the northern suburbs of Seattle, Washington. He attended the University of Washington, where he received his BA in creative writing. He also has an MS in applied psychology and an MFA in creative writing, both from Eastern Washington University.

Terry is also the author of *Stuck in Neutral* and its companion novel, *Cruise Control; Hurricane; 7 Days at the Hot Corner; No Right Turn; and Inside Out*.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Shannon Batiste:

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Bernetta Smith:

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