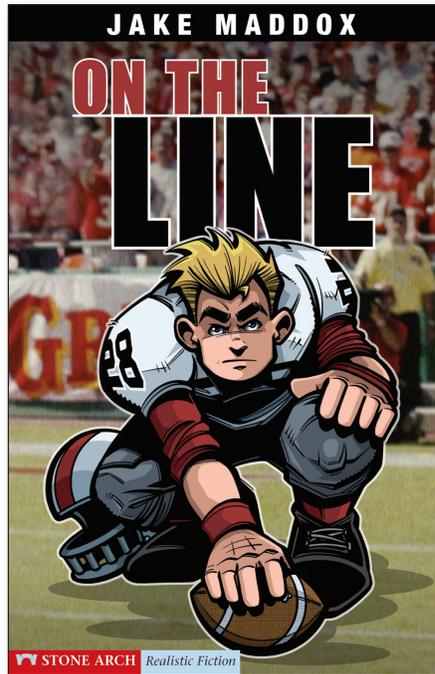




READER'S THEATER (Teacher's Version)



On the Line **by Jake Maddox**

PAPERBACK ISBN: 978-1-59889-240-6
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Characters: **Narrator – reads above grade level**
 Matt – reads below grade level
 Robby – reads slightly below grade level
 Coach Parker – reads at grade level

Genre: **Realistic Fiction**

Ages: **9-13**

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On the Line page 1

- Narrator:** Robby Samuels loved football. He was so excited for the start of a new season. Last season was the worst for Robby. It had lasted only 20 minutes. In the first practice of that season, Robby broke his arm. He couldn't play again until the next year. Now it was time.
- Matt:** This is a new year. Stop thinking about your arm. And stop thinking about stupid old Andy Renkins.
- Robby:** Thanks, Matt.
- Narrator:** Andy Renkins was the league's best player, but he was not that nice.
- Matt:** Good luck with practice.
- Narrator:** The coach blew his whistle. Robby ran onto the field. All the players were sitting on the field, stretching. Robby sat in the middle, trying to disappear from Andy, but it only took Andy a few minutes to spot him. The coach put the players into two groups to start their drills. Robby was in Group B and very happy to see that Andy was in Group A. Practice went well. Robby felt great out on the field. After the third day of practice, Robby stopped by Matt's house on the way home.
- Robby:** Hey, Matt, do you want to come over to my house and play Galactic Meltdown? I need something a little less active than play football.
- Matt:** Sure. How are tryouts going?
- Robby:** Good. Andy hasn't been bugging me too much.
- Narrator:** A while later, while Robby and Matt were playing video games, the phone rang. Robby ignored it. A few minutes later, Robby's mom came into the room and told him the phone was for him. It was Coach Parker. The coach was calling to tell Robby he'd made the Lions team.
- Robby:** I made the team! The Lions won the championship last year. I can't wait to be part of that team.

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- Matt:** That is great news. Did Andy make the team?
- Robby:** Coach Parker said he e-mailed the roster to my mom. Let's go find out.
- Narrator:** Robby's mom already had the roster pulled up on the computer screen. Robby and Matt looked carefully at the screen.
- Robby:** Yeah. Andy made the team too.
- Narrator:** The next day was the Lions' first practice.
- Coach Parker:** Boys, I am Coach Parker. I have been coaching in the league for a long time. Last year, my team won the championship and I expect to do the same this year. Winning is hard work. Each of you has to learn your position and do your job the right way. If we all work together, we will win the championship.
- Narrator:** The boys were excited. The coach ran the team through drills. Robby felt good about the drills. Then the coach blew his whistle.
- Coach Parker:** That was a pretty good start, but we have to work harder if we want to win the championship.
- Narrator:** That night, on his way home from practice, Robby stopped at Matt's house.
- Matt:** What are you upset about?
- Robby:** I'm not sure I like playing football anymore. Everyone is thinking so much about winning and not about just having fun.
- Matt:** I can't believe you are going to let Andy and the coach wreck your season. You still like football, right?
- Robby:** Yeah, I do. What's your point?
- Matt:** Just because they are taking it so seriously doesn't mean you have to!

Narrator:

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Robby knew Matt was right. The next day at practice, Coach Parker told Matt that he would be the starting center. Robby knew that he would have to practice hard to be good at this position. But he was excited to be a starter. After three weeks of practicing hard, the team had their first scrimmage.

Coach Parker:

Narrator:

This is our chance to see how good we really are. We'll know what things we will have to work on before our first game.

The scrimmage started out great. But during a play, Robby fumbled the ball and was knocked to the ground by the player he was blocking. Before Robby could get up, Andy walked by and Robby felt pain in his hand.

Robby:

Narrator:

Ow!

Andy had stepped on Robby's hand with his spikes. How will Robby play the rest of the scrimmage? Will Coach Parker be mad at the team? What will happen in their first game? Read *On the Line* to find out about the rest of Robby's football season.

THE END