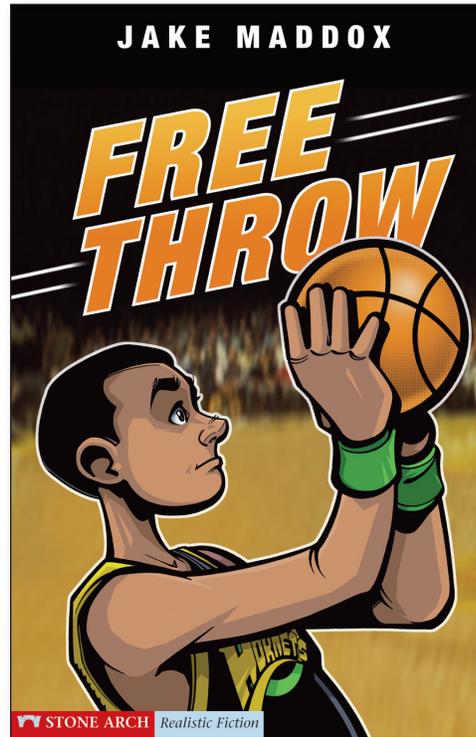




READER'S THEATER



Free Throw **by Jake Maddox**

Characters: **Derek**
Jason
Coach Taylor
Narrator

Genre: **Realistic Fiction**
Ages: **9-13**

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- Narrator:** Derek watched the gym fill up as fans came to see his basketball team, the Hampton Hornets, play the visiting team from Renner High School. It was the first game of the season. Right before the game began, Coach Taylor called all the Hornets players together.
- Coach Taylor:** Derek, I want you to do the tip-off.
- Derek:** Okay, Coach.
- Jason:** But Coach, I always do the tip-off!
- Coach Taylor:** Derek is taller than you this year. That's why I made him the center and moved you to play forward.
- Jason:** But he's never done it before.
- Coach Taylor:** I'm sure Derek can do it. I'm sure you can all do your jobs. This is the first game of the season for the Hampton Hornets. I know you'll make me proud.
- Narrator:** Derek walked out to center court and waited for the referee to start the game.
- Jason:** You think you're so great.
- Derek:** What?
- Jason:** You think you're better than I am, but you're not.
- Derek:** I never said that!
- Jason:** I'll show you who's great and who's not. Just watch your back.
- Narrator:** Derek was shocked by what Jason had just said to him.
- Derek:** Great! I grow a few inches, and our star player hates me.

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- Narrator:** Derek didn't have time to think any more about it. The referee called over the center players from the two teams. Derek and the center from Renner faced each other. Then the referee tossed up the ball. Derek jumped, but the other player reached the ball first. He knocked it over Derek's head and toward the Hornets' side of the court.
- Jason:** I knew you couldn't do it.
- Narrator:** Derek ignored Jason and ran after the ball. The first game of the season had started. Derek was too busy on the court to worry about Jason. He just wanted the Hornets to win. Soon, the score was 25 to 14. Renner was beating Hampton. Derek had blocked a few of the other team's shots, but the Hornets needed to make a few more baskets.
- Derek:** Jason has the ball now. He just needs to pass it.
- Narrator:** Derek was standing by his team's basket. He waved his arms, but Jason ignored him.
- Derek:** I'm open. Jason can see me. Why doesn't he pass?
- Jason:** I've got this one.
- Narrator:** Jason jumped and made the basket, but soon the other team scored again. After a while, the score was 37 to 35, with Renner ahead. Derek was open again. His teammate Ryan passed him the ball. Derek caught the ball. Then he turned and jumped. The ball sailed through the air. It hit the rim and dropped into the basket. Two points.
- Derek:** Yes! Now the game is tied.
- Coach Taylor:** Good job, Derek!
- Narrator:** Derek smiled and looked over at his team. Jason was frowning.
- Derek:** What's the matter with him? Doesn't Jason want us to win?

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Narrator:

Why won't Jason pass the ball to Derek? Doesn't he want his team to win? Will the Hornets lose because of the bad feelings between two of their players? Is this how the rest of the season will be? To find out what Derek does next, read the exciting Jake Maddox basketball book *Free Throw*.

THE END