**The Fourth Stall**

By Chris Rylander

**Louisiana Young Reader’s Choice Nominee 2014**

**Grades 6-8**

*Submitted by Tammy DiBartolo, Youth Services Manager, Rapides Parish Library*

**Title: The Fourth Stall**

**Author: Chris Rylander**

**Publisher: Walden Pond Press**

**Pages: 314**

**Summary:**

Mac and Vince have been friends since Kindergarten. Now they are in sixth grade and are running a lucrative business from the fourth stall of an unoccupied boy’s bathroom at school. If you have a problem Mac can solve it. But it will cost you. Mac and Vince are die hard Chicago Cubs fans and they are certain that this will be the year that the Cubs go to the World Series. They want to go the game but it could get expensive. Business is booming until one day a kid named Staples tries to take over Mac’s territory. Mac and Vince have to find a way to stop Staples or they will never have enough money to go to the game. The story is told from Mac’s point of view so it is a good choice for boys. It is fast paced and humorous, especially the descriptions of Mac’s friends. This is an important book for middle- school students as it deals with bullying, both bullies and victims. The book is part of a trilogy but students will not have to read the entire series to enjoy the book.

**Awards**

2012 SCBWI Sid Fleischman Award Winner

**Author’s Biography**

Chris Rylander was born in North Dakota and now lives in Chicago with his wife Amanda. Yes, he is a Cubs fan. The Fourth Stall is his first novel.

**Other Titles by Author**

The Fourth Stall Part II

The Fourth Stall Part III

**Related Titles**

*Lawn Boy* by Gary Paulsen. Wendy Lamb Publishers, 2007. 96 p.

ALA Quick Pick for Reluctant Readers 2008

*Sidekicks* by Dan Santat. Scholastic, Inc., 20011, 224 p.

ALA Quick Pick for Reluctant Readers 2011

**CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS**

**MATH ACTIVITIES**

**About.com**

<http://math.about.com/od/businessmath/ss/Interest.htm>

**ixl.com**

<http://www.ixl.com/math/grade-6>.

Mac thinks that Vince has stolen the money that they had saved. If Vince had to pay the money back, how long would it take? Talk with students about credit, interest and loans. Go to the above websites for class activities.

**Freemathhelp.com**

<http://www.freemathhelp.com/battingaverage.html>

Mac and Vince are huge Chicago Cubs fans. They know the batting averages for all the best players. Go to the website to learn how to compute batting averages.

**LANGUAGE ARTS**

Vince is always quoting his grandmother who says funny things. Talk with students about idioms and they way we use them today. Go to: <http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/dailylp/dailylp/dailylp048.shtml>.

**Education World,** <http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson/book_report_ideas.shtml>

Book reports can be done for this book in a variety of ways.

Mac has lots of friends; Nubby, Great White and PrepSchool are just a few. Mac gives a really good description of each of these nine friends. Have students create an imaginary friend complete with a nickname and describe the friend in a paragraph.

**ART**

* Using the descriptions of each of Mac’s friends (pages 81-90) create a picture of one of the friends.
* Have students draw all nine of Mac’s friends to scale using the information from (pages 81-90).
* Have students design a new book cover for the book.

**BASEBALL ACTIVITES**

**Education World,** <http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson107.shtml>

This site offers information on baseball and activities that can be done both outside and in the classroom.

**SOCIAL STUDIES**

**Education World**

<http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/student_engagers/bullying_student_engager.shtml>

This site offers resources on bullying, activities to do in class as well as discussion starters about the problem of bullying.

**Scary for Kids**

<http://www.scaryforkids.com/urban-legends/>

Staples was an urban legend. Everyone had heard of him but no one had really seen him.

This site offers urban legends and asks students to decide whether they are fact or fiction. Discuss with students how these legends get started and why they stay around for so long. Teachers, this site may frighten some students. Please review before sharing with students.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What kind of business did Mac run out of the “fourth stall?”
2. How do you feel about the methods Mac uses to run his business?
3. Is Mac a nice guy? Why or why not?
4. How are Mac and Vince’s personalities different?
5. Why do you think that Vince always gives Mac credit for having good ideas even some of the ideas are his own?
6. All of Mac’s friends had reputations for being tough. Which of the nine friends (pages 81-90) would you fear the most and why?
7. Which of Mac’s friends would you like to meet the most (pages 81-90) and why?
8. Why were Vince and Mac saving money?
9. Why was everyone so afraid of Staples? Give examples.
10. Were you surprised at the way the book ended?