

The Trading Game

By Alfred Slote

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What's So Special About Ace 459?

Andy Harris's fabulous baseball card collection, left to him by his father, is the envy of every baseball fan in town. Still, Andy would rather play ball than collect cards. He's got a natural talent for the game, like his grandfather, pro ball player Jim Harris. And Jim Harris, Ace 459, is the one card Andy would give anything to own -- he'd even trade his priceless 1952 Micky Mantle card.

Then Grandpa comes to town for a visit and offers to coach Andy's ragtag team. For the first time, Andy and his friends really look good, really feel like a team. But Grampa's rules for playing the game contradict everything Andy believes about friendship and good sportsmanship. And Andy begins to wonder if Ace 459 is such a hero after all.

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The Trading Game By Alfred Slote Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal
Grade 4-6-- Andy Harris' baseball-card collection, inherited from his recently deceased father, contains some valuable items, including a 1952 Mickey Mantle card worth $2500. He's willing, however, to trade Mantle for a 25-cent card that pictures his grandfather, Jim "Ace 459" Harris, whom Andy idolizes. Grampa doesn't care much about old baseball cards--"paper heroes" he calls them. It's not until Grampa coaches Andy that he learns why the relationship between his father and grandfather was strained; Grampa demands that his players "play to win," something Andy's father wasn't tough enough to do and something Andy can't do at the expense of friendship. In addition to the trading and stealing involved in acquiring the card, the story tries to address issues of father/son relationships, including the divorce, remarriage, and death of Andy's father, and the grandfather's upcoming medical test. The plot gets bogged down by these issues, using many flashbacks and one awkward recapping of a crucial scene during which Andy (who narrates the rest of the book) is absent. Lightly veiled hints about the "win at all costs" nature of Grampa's coaching appear throughout the story, but Andy simply doesn't see them. Most of the sports action is confined to playing catch with Grampa and one climactic practice; the card collecting may appeal only to to die-hard baseball fans who will recognize players from the past and contemporary stars. --Susan Schuller, Milwaukee Public Library
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About the Author
Alfred Slote is the author of over thirty books, most of them for young people. He lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Bob Pratt:

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