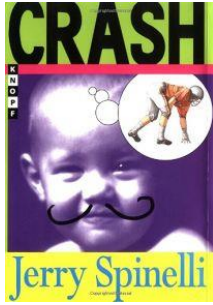


CRASH by Jerry Spinelli



Spinelli (*There's a Girl in My Hammerlock*) takes the brawny, bullying jock who is the villain in so many middle-grade novels and casts him as the narrator of this agile tale. Ever since first grade "Crash" Coogan has been tormenting dweeby Penn Webb, a skinny, vegetarian, Quaker boy who lives in a tiny former garage with his aged parents. Now that they're in seventh grade, "chippy chirpy perky" Penn becomes an even better target: not only does Penn still wear outdated used clothes, he joins the cheerleading squad. But even though Crash becomes the school's star football player and wears the most expensive togs from the mall, he still can't get what Penn has--his parents' attention and the admiration of the most gorgeous girl in school. And when his beloved grandfather Scooter is severely disabled by a stroke, Crash no longer sees the fun in playing brutal pranks and begins to realize that there are more important things in life than wearing new sneakers and being a sports star. Without being preachy, Spinelli packs a powerful moral wallop, leaving it to the pitch-perfect narration to drive home his point.

(from: <http://www.publishersweekly.com/978-0-679-87957-2>)