

A Caribbean Tale

Rudy Gurley

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Reviewed by Paige Lovitt for Reader Views (9/06)

I felt privileged to read “A Caribbean Tale.” This is part one of a true story about the life of Rudy Gurley who had to overcome tremendous obstacles to become a success. As he shares his personal story, he teaches about the value of overcoming adversity and hardships. In addition to working hard towards a successful future Rudy learns a great deal about his past, his family and his culture.

Rudy’s mom became pregnant when she was very young. She had two children to his father. His father left the Caribbean island that he was raised on to try to make a better life for himself and his family. Things did not happen the way they were originally planned and his father ended up starting another family. Rudy’s mother could not afford to raise him and his sister, Roslyn, so they were raised by his aunt Sheila. As children, they had expectations of being reunited with their parents. As time passed, they were disappointed to discover that this was not going to happen. He did not meet his mother again until he was twenty-one.

Rudy moved to England to get an education. He endured some tremendous hardships on this path. He suffered through some major financial crises that had him hungry and living in some really bad places. Rudy kept plugging away and overcame these obstacles. Through hard work and determination, he achieved his career goals. During this time he also married Susanna, a woman he had vowed to marry as a young man.

In time Rudy was able to reconnect with his father as well as to meet his grandmother and half siblings. Rather than focus on the potential bitterness of having been abandoned by him, Rudy set these issues aside and was able to enjoy meeting his father and learning more about who he is. It was really admirable of Rudy to focus on building a good relationship with his father now, instead of on the rejection he had felt in the past.

In addition to learning about the Gurley family, Rudy also teaches us a lot about the culture of people with roots from Africa. I was amazed to learn about the prejudice that goes on within the black culture. I also learned a lot about the history of slavery outside of the United States. I learned more about the racial issues that still occur in the United States today as well as those still happening throughout the world.

“A Caribbean Tale” is an excellent book. As Rudy Gurley’s story flows along, you get swept up in it. I also looked at the obstacles that he managed to overcome and found myself thinking that if I keep plugging away at my own difficulties, I, too, can come out ahead. He really did succeed - and he managed to live his life with integrity. He didn’t stop to place blame for his difficulties on other people, he just kept plugging away at achieving his goals.

This story would be an excellent book for cultural studies classes to read.