

Tangerine by Edward Bloor

Subjects: Soccer—Fiction; Brothers—Juvenile fiction; People with visual disabilities—Juvenile fiction; People with disabilities—Juvenile fiction; Florida—Juvenile fiction

Awards: Ten Best Books for Young Adults, Horn Book Fanfare

Book Lists: Florida, Gifted, Grade 6

Props: Thick glasses, soccer ball



(Wear glasses) My name is Paul Fisher and I am legally blind. I didn't always have to wear glasses. I used to see just fine. But then something happened, when I was a kid, though I'm not sure what. But not to worry, with these things on, I can see as well as anyone. And—truth be known—I have clearer vision than most. For instance, I can see stuff that my parents can't.

Take my brother—Erik, Mr. Football Hero. My father is so obsessed with the “Erik Fisher Football Dream” that he moved our entire family to Tangerine County, Florida just so that Erik could be a big football star, the high school's winning kicker. But what my parents can't see is that Erik is psycho and I stay as far away from him as I can.

I suppose the move to Tangerine was good for my brother, but it was not so good for me. First, *(Bring out soccer ball)* although I made the school soccer team, I was kicked off because my mom signed me up as a handicapped student. That was unfair. *(Put soccer ball down)* Then my school was eaten by a gigantic sinkhole. I'm not kidding. All the portables just sort of sank—right into mud. I was lucky I didn't get sucked down into the mud myself. So I was transferred to Tangerine Middle School. I tried out for the soccer team there *(Pick up soccer ball)* and I found out quick enough that there were no honor society members or kids with parents in the PTA on the soccer team. The kids were tough.

But believe it or not, things actually started to improve. I made the soccer team as goalie. *(Put ball down)*

And, I made friends with this girl, Theresa Cruz, who basically had the same school schedule as me so she was assigned as my guide on the first few days of school. She's cool and her family owns a tangerine grove. In fact, her brother, Luis, has actually invented a new type of tangerine. He thinks it'll make him rich.

Anyway, everything was going just fine until a week or so ago when Luis keeled over and died—right in the middle of his tangerine grove. It was freaky. The doctors said it was an aneurysm due to a recent blow to the head.

Well, that got me thinking. A couple of days before Luis dropped dead, I was stuck watching my brother's football practice because Mom had some kind of meeting at the high school. I did not want to see my brother Erik or his friends. So I ducked under the bleachers. I picked my way over the steel bars, getting closer and closer to the front. To my left I could see Erik in the center of a group of admirers that included some girls, his buddy Arthur, and a couple of skinny football guys. Then suddenly I saw Luis Cruz. Luis seemed upset as he approached my brother. They exchanged words and then my brother nodded at his friend, Arthur, and he whipped out a bat and bashed Luis over the head with it. Luis went down hard. My brother walked past and joked, “Arthur takes care of all my light work.” The kids gathered around my brother and laughed at his joke.

I may be legally blind, but I saw plenty that day. I haven't said anything about it so far. But perhaps my brother is responsible for Luis' death and someone should know. But, did I mention that my brother was psycho? This isn't the first person he's hurt badly. I even have first hand experience with that. But no one else seems to see him as I do. I don't think anyone would believe me if I told them what I saw. In fact, why should I tell? It would just mean bringing my brother's psycho wrath down on me.

Will Paul expose Erik and force his parents to see him for what he really is? Or is the truth more than they can bear? *(Hold up book)* *Tangerine* by Edward Bloor.