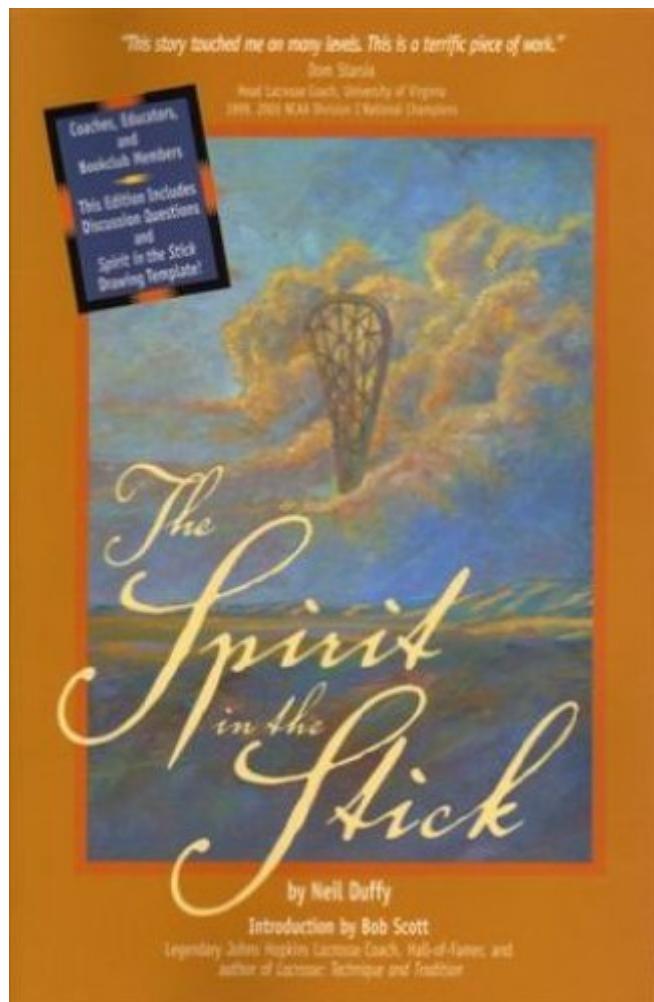


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The Spirit In The Stick



Synopsis

The Spirit in the Stick is an historical fiction/fantasy story centered on the careers of Navyâ™s Jimmy Lewis â™66 and brothers Doug and Jack Turnbull of Johns Hopkins of the 20â™s and 30â™s. The book traces the history of an ancient Native American lacrosse stick as it is passed down through several generations, dating to the eighteenth century. The most recent recipient, a young boy named Robbie Jones, receives the stick from Jimmy Lewis and quickly becomes aware of the stickâ™s special powers. The book has received strong endorsements from the likes of Bob Scott, the Hall of Fame coach from Johns Hopkins who says in the Introduction, âœThis story is a major contribution to the great game of lacrosse. Indeed, it transcends the game. The rich historical and spiritual roots of its main characters provide stories which will touch every reader, regardless of age, gender, or association with the game of lacrosse.â • An excerpt: â ¡âœAre you doing O.K., Robbie?â • Red Hawk asked as he saw how shaken the boy was. âœWhat happened to the plane!?â • âœThis is going to be hard to watch....â • âœI can handle it. I need to know.â • âœAre you sure?â • âœIâ™m sure.â • âœO.K., letâ™s go to Baltimore.â • Robbie and Red Hawk next appeared at the home of Jackâ™s mother, Elizabeth âœMumâ • Turnbull, Baltimore, Maryland on Election Day, November 7, 1944. Mum Turnbull had risen from her breakfast table at 9 a.m. and changed into a dress in order to perform her citizenâ™s duty to vote in the general election. She proudly clipped on her set of pilotâ™s wings, a gift from Jack upon his earning his qualification. While it was a task she performed every dayâ™on every sweater, blouse, dress, jacket (and she would eventually be buried with)â™today she did so with a great deal of melancholy. She had been notified that Jack had been reported missing two weeks earlier and hadnâ™t received any more recent news. No news, in this case, she thought, was bad news. With each passing day she had a greater feeling of foreboding. She walked to the front closet to get her coat when the doorbell startled her. She looked at her sister May, her housemate since her husbandâ™s passing. She briefly hoped the visitor might be a neighbor coming to walk her to the polling station. That hope lasted but a second, when a chill ran through her body. She knew before she opened the door. She looked at May and said, âœThis is it.â • She took a deep breath and opened the door slowly. Her breath left her lungs, and she briefly felt faint. Before her stood an army officer and a chaplain, certain to bear the news she feared most. âœMrs. Turnbull?â • the officer asked delicately. Mum offered an acknowledgment with a barely perceptible nod. âœMrs. Turnbull, I am Colonel Finney. This is Reverend Sheedy. May we come in?â • Still not speaking, Mum opened the door further, allowing the men to enter. She walked to her kitchen table and gestured for the men to sit. They waited for her and May to do so first. Finney began, âœMrs. Turnbull, it is with great regret that I

must inform you that your son, Lieutenant Colonel John I. "Jack" Turnbull has been killed in action over a small town called Petegem-aan-de-Leie/Deinze, Belgium, about nine miles southwest of Ghent and near the German border. • Mum did not move or respond. Her face betrayed the slightest hint that she wanted to know how and why, so the chaplain continued softly, "Mrs. Turnbull, your son was assigned as Command Pilot for a mission over Leverkusen, Germany. His group made a successful run over the site, but encountered a severe thunderstorm on their return to base. It appears that the aircraft that Jack was in was struck by another in its group, causing both to crash." •

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I can't think of any sport with a history and culture as rich as lacrosse. The strong feeling of community among players, coaches and lacrosse families and their shared respect for America's first sport are wonderfully expressed in *The Spirit in the Stick*, by Neil Duffy. Robbie Jones is a fourteen-year-old lacrosse player, a young talent. He's been noticed by lacrosse legend, former naval aviator and test pilot Jim Lewis, who has determined that Robbie will be the next recipient of an important gift. The gift is a special hand-made, wooden lacrosse stick, over two-hundred years old, with Cherokee and Iroquois origins. Lewis received the same stick from

another legend when he was about Robbieâ™s age. And he has been only one in an exceptional line of âœcustodiansâ• who have absorbed the full history of the sport and have learned difficult and important life lessons from the spirit in the stick. There is a lot to this story. As Robbie travels in time to learn about the history of lacrosse and the stories of the stickâ™s previous custodians, you might be tempted to compare it to Honus and Me, by Dan Gutman, a very good story about a boy and a special Honus Wagner baseball card. But The Spirit in the Stick is something else entirely. This is a book that is first about honoring the history of lacrosse, about respecting the game, about discipline, teamwork, about being strong of mind and body. But itâ™s also a book about injustices and persecution, about heroes in war, about the human element of war, about sacrifice and loss. Even still, tracing back to its Native American origins, itâ™s about being in touch with and respecting the subtle but powerful forces of nature.

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