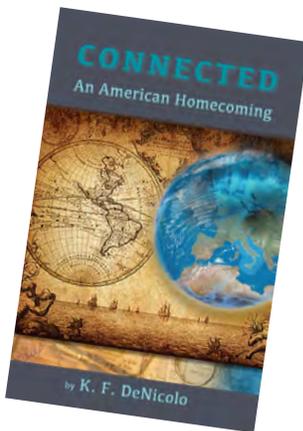


In the Age of Covid-19

# A Virtual Study Guide 1

*for Parent and  
Children*



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to accompany K.F. DeNicolo's book

## **Connected** An American Homecoming

Author

**K. F. DeNicolo**

[www.kfDeNicolo.com](http://www.kfDeNicolo.com)

and visit K. F. DeNicolo on Facebook

Graphic Design & Production

Chris Poston & Tiffani Fleming

[www.figraphics.com](http://www.figraphics.com)

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# Study Guide



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## **Responsibility: Confrontation and Leadership-Nick's House**

Prologue: Didn't want to look like a loser. Acted fast and furiously but not wisely. See what happens when Nick goes home after trouble at school.

Get in the house. Trouble at school today in the usual places, in the hallway or maybe the cafeteria. Anywhere where kids were on their own. Didn't even have to be in school could have been on the phone or writing notes in the bathrooms or on the walls. Yea could have been anywhere, but this was one of the worst places. At school, someone was going to pay the consequences. Nick knew who that someone was going to be- him. Nick had been arguing with himself all the way home from school. "Just walk away-that's all I had to do...how could I- then none of the kids would like me. Worse, what if they turned on me. Jack wasn't going to let me just leave. Should have told him. I just know this isn't going to go away. Not the way the teachers looked or the parents in the cafeteria. This was going to be big, big trouble. If anyone didn't need more problems it was me and my family.

If you want to call what I have a family-real mom no where around, step mom who hates me, dad can't get a good paying job, gram trying to help when she comes over, step brother and sister do nothings and then there's me. Trying to fit in-buy the right jeans, gym shoes, going along with the crowd. I should have stopped to think, plan, and solve the problem. Too late. I just did what ever came first. I am a coward. I am mean. How could I talk to Theresa and Jo like that? It was no way to treat a girl or anyone. Then messing up the cafeteria, throwing stuff, just smashing everything. How do I tell dad, gram- I can just hear my step family laughing, gossiping, telling everyone what a loser I am. I'll go out until dinner time, maybe, say I already ate, or feeling sick, got to go straight to bed. That'll work. Got to move, out of here fast, make a call, get a cover, grab some food.

"Where you going in such a hurry?" gram asked Nick.

"Well, there a basketball game and I have to."

"Stop Nick" gram interrupted. Your teacher called your father this afternoon. I've been watching and listening to your dad talking to himself today. Snippets of his conversation sound like yours. Let's see, "What did I do wrong, why didn't I go back to school. No one seems to want me for a good job with a decent paycheck -says robots doing my job or someone in China. I was a coward, couldn't face being in a class to learn something new. I had to start all over again be low man on the totem pole. Be the 50 year old rookie criticized by someone half my age. Have people pick on me, just tried

to slide buy. Yeah, not really thinking, no plan- long slide to nowhere. That's me like father like son. Stupid, stupid me."

"So you see Nick, we've had enough people beating themselves up today." Time to face our mistakes, correct ourselves, make amends and move forward. Dad, you and I are going to the principal's office tomorrow. Might be a good idea if you asked yourself what you did wrong and how you could change things. People at school might have a few ideas about what you need to do. Nick everyone makes mistakes. We try and learn from them. At the end of the day, I ask myself what I did wrong, what I would change, what did I learn? It's a good habit to get into-takes some getting used to. Anyway, dad asked me to talk thing over with you, he's working his second job. Tomorrow, 9:00 am. sharp at school. The rest of the family's going on with what they need to do. Get some dinner, do your homework and sleep on it. Tomorrow we deal with it.

**Reader's Guide Summary:** In this story, Nick is dealing with the aftermath of bad choices and bad behavior. Nick's family seems very divided about everyday life and very stressed. There are pressures about getting along, being respectful and finances, problems at school and thinking things through.

**Reader's Guide: Exercises and activities:**

Can you think of a time when you or someone you know acted before they thought things through? What happened and what did you learn.

"Act in haste, repent at leisure" is an old proverb. What do you think it means?

What does it mean "to buy time" before acting? Can you think of some things to say to avoid being pushed into a decision?

How do you think each character felt?