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Ages 12 and up

## About the Author

ALFRED C. MARTINO is founder and president of Listen & Live Audio. He has been a sports reporter and staff writer for both newspapers and magazines. Mr. Martino was a high school and collegiate wrestler and youth coach, and he continues to have a tremendous love and respect for the sport. *Pinned* is his first novel. He lives in New Jersey.



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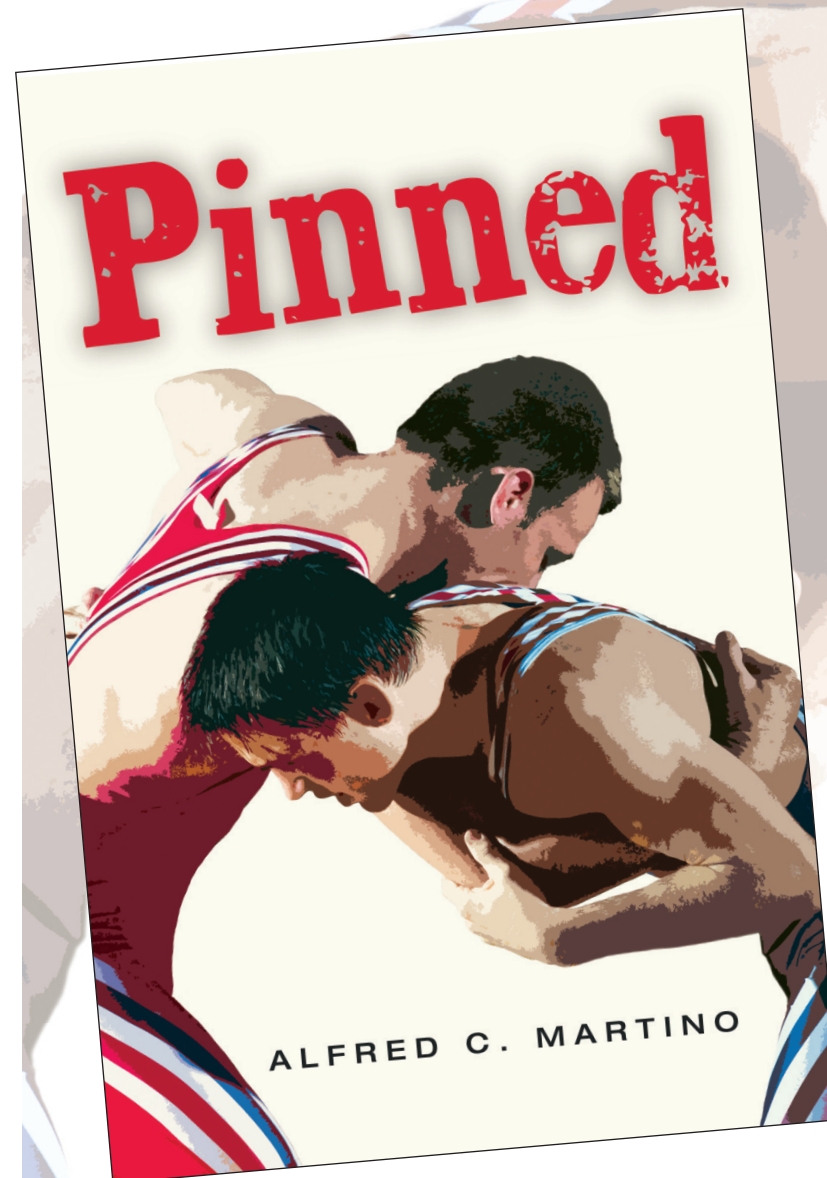


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# Pinned

By Alfred C. Martino

## A Guide for Teachers



“Unsparing and told with such visceral acuity that the reader can almost feel the burn of the mat . . . Martino meticulously details the kind of guts it takes to get the glory.”—*Kirkus Reviews*

“The novel is right on target and will keep the reader racing forward to the conclusion.”—*VOYA*

A JUNIOR LIBRARY GUILD SELECTION • A KIRKUS REVIEWS CHILDREN'S BOOK OF SPECIAL NOTE

## BEFORE STUDENTS READ THIS BOOK

1. Write the word *wrestling* on the whiteboard. Do a brainstorming activity with your students.
2. Tape a segment of television wrestling (for example, World Wrestling Entertainment) and show a short, minimally violent excerpt. Ask the students if they think of WWE when they think of wrestling. Point out that high school and Olympic wrestling are considered sports, but television wrestling is considered entertainment.

## CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Each time Ivan or Bobby begins a match, he tries to block out everything else in his life and focus only on the next minutes. Have you ever achieved this kind of narrow focus? When?
2. Anyone who is intent on becoming an excellent wrestler must make many sacrifices—physical, mental, and social. What other goals in life require difficult sacrifices? Have each student write down a goal, then list some of the steps he or she will have to take to achieve it.
3. Ivan and Bobby are absolutely devoted to, and passionate about, wrestling. Are there activities or interests you are passionate about? (Possible answers: academic subjects, sports, writing, music, art, drama.)
4. At critical times in the novel, both Ivan and Bobby talk about things being “out of control.” What do they mean by this? What aspects of life can you actually control?
5. McClellan and Messina have different approaches to coaching. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each coach. Whom do you believe is the better coach? Why?
6. Ivan and Bobby both face a serious family crisis. Compare how each character reacts to his situation and how the crisis affects the wrestling performance of each teen.
7. Ivan reacts to frustration with physical violence several times in the novel. Are Ivan’s actions justified? How do you think his tendency toward violence will affect his life in the future?
8. How did you react to the ending of the book? Were you frustrated or intrigued?

## RESEARCH TOPICS

1. The National Wrestling Hall of Fame and Museum, in Stillwater, Oklahoma, opened in 1976. Visit its website at [www.wrestlinghalloffame.org](http://www.wrestlinghalloffame.org) and choose a topic to investigate. Share the information with your classmates.
2. Research the various forms of wrestling in different countries. How do the forms differ from one another? Some forms of wrestling to research: sumo, greco-roman, freestyle, jujitsu, Pahlavani, and glima.
3. Wrestling was one of the earliest sports to be included in the original Olympic Games. Investigate the history of wrestling from ancient times to the present day.

## LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE

1. Some parents, teachers, and students may object to some of the language used in *Pinned*. Discuss why authors use profanity. Possible questions to ask: When is profanity used in the novel, and by whom? Would *Pinned* seem as true to life if profanity had not been used?
2. Read the famous scene from Homer’s *The Iliad* (chapter xxiii), which tells of the wrestling match between Ajax and Ulysses. Ask the students to draw comparisons between the wrestling match in *The Iliad* and one of the wrestling matches in *Pinned*.
3. Another author who combines literature with a love of wrestling is John Irving. In his novels *The 158-Pound Marriage* and *The World According to Garp*, Irving uses wrestling as a plot device. Choose a chapter from one of Irving’s books to read and discuss with the students. Ask the students to compare the different ways John Irving and Alfred C. Martino use wrestling as a literal and/or metaphorical plot device.

## WRITING

1. The classic advice that many authors give is: “Write what you know.” Alfred C. Martino was a wrestler in high school and college, and he has coached youth wrestling teams. He knows the sport from the inside and from the outside. Ask your students to make a short list of things they are knowledgeable about, from their life experiences or from their studies. Have each of your students choose a topic from his or her list to use as the subject of a short factual essay.
2. After the students have completed their factual essays, have each one adapt his or her essay into a short story. Tell the students to use facts from their essays to enrich their short stories, and to also incorporate characters and a plot.
3. Ask the students to write a chapter that will follow the last chapter of *Pinned*. Possible questions to ask: Who will win the state championship? Who most deserves to win? Why? Do you think the author has given clues in the book about whom *he* wants to win?

## ART

In most high schools, the football and basketball teams get most of the attention from the students and the public. Choose a less visible sport or organization—such as wrestling, the debate squad, 4-H, or Math Olympians—and make it a “spirit” poster.

## AFTER READING THE BOOK

1. Ask the students if their perceptions of wrestling have changed as a result of reading *Pinned*.
2. Arrange for members of the wrestling team at your (or the nearest) high school to present a short demonstration for the class. Ask the wrestlers to show, and name, the moves, and to explain the system of scoring. Encourage the wrestlers to talk about their own experiences in wrestling.