

The wave synopsis



Synopsis At Gordon High School, history teacher Ben Ross is teaching his class about World War II and the Holocaust. His students are upset by the footage of concentration camps and question why the German people allowed this to happen, insisting they wouldn't be so easily duped.

Ben Ross considers this and plans an experiment: the next day, he starts to indoctrinate the class using the slogan STRENGTH THROUGH DISCIPLINE. The class reacts well to this, embracing the sense of empowerment it gives them, and they continue their newly disciplined behavior into a second day of class, surprising Ross. He decides to take the experiment further and create a group, The Wave, adding two more slogans - STRENGTH THROUGH COMMUNITY and STRENGTH THROUGH ACTION - which leads to further rules of conduct and an organizational structure. In this way, The Wave takes on a life of its own. While Laurie Saunders is wary of The Wave and its effect on others, her friends are more willing to promote this movement. Her friend Amy is made a monitor, as has school outcast, Robert Billings.

Laurie's boyfriend David Collins, introduces the football team to The Wave in the hopes of unifying the team in their game against Clarkstown that weekend. In the following days, The Wave quickly grows in popularity, but soon its dark side becomes apparent. Laurie receives a letter for the paper detailing how members try to recruit others with bullying. At a football rally that was unofficially christened a Wave Rally, a boy is harassed and called a ??? dirty Jew???.

That weekend, the football team is unable to win against Clarkstown, as their newfound drive does not compensate for a lack of proper training and

planning. David is confused by this turn of events, while Laurie and her staff on The Grapevine plan a special issue of the paper devoted exclusively to The Wave and the negative impact it has had on the school. Monday morning, Laurie warns Amy before the newspaper hits the campus.

Amy continues to stand up for The Wave, accusing Laurie of jealousy as The Wave gets rid of the social hierarchies from which Laurie benefits. The issue of The Grapevine causes a sensation on campus, and members of The Wave - led by Robert Billings - decide to confront Laurie on her betrayal. David is coerced into facing Laurie on their behalf, but when she continues to stand by her position, he grows angry and becomes violent with his girlfriend. This shocks him into realizing that The Wave has indeed gone too far. Now united in the belief that The Wave must be stopped, Laurie and David go to the home of the Rosses in order to convince Ben Ross to end his experiment.

He tells them he will do exactly that, but that they must trust his moves the next day. The following day, Ross announces a new rally that afternoon for Wave members only: the leader of this movement, which Ross claims is taking place in schools across the nation, will be revealed at the event. Laurie and David protest, but are sent to the principals office. Afterwards, they decide to sneak into the rally. Before the gathered Wave members, Ross shows historical footage of Hitler and young Germans of the Nazi party. He makes clear that the assembled Wave believers would have made good Nazis, despite their protests earlier to the contrary, then apologizes for his own role in the experiment. The Wave is dissolved, and broken friendships are mended.

Robert Billings is especially shattered, but Ross approaches him in the hope of salvaging the self-respect the young man found within the group.