

One week.  
One prize.  
Seven really  
weird  
challenges.

Source: Control Freaks book  
jacket

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By Colorado author  
**J.E. Thomas!**

Did you know that Thomas grew up in Colorado?

Book Jacket  
Info

“J.E. Thomas grew up near Colorado’s Front Range mountains. She spent her early summers stuffing grocery bags with books at the local library, reading feverishly, then repeating the process week after week. J.E has bachelor’s degrees in Mass Communication and Political Science, as well as a master’s degree in Public Communications. She wrote Control Freaks while working as an administrator at the same independent school she attended as a child. “

She wrote Control Freaks while working at the same school she attended as a child.

Thomas has met almost all of the Star Wars actors!



<body>

The kids at Benjamin Banneker College Prep are a little ... competitive. Okay. They're A LOT competitive.

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The minute Principal Yee announces an epic competition for the golden B-B trophy, seventh-grader Frederick Douglass Zezzmer knows he has to win.

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But it won't be easy. The competition doesn't just include science, technology, engineering and math. It also has arts and sports. Not Doug's best subjects.

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Even worse, it's a TEAM competition. Instead of being in a superstar group, Doug gets paired with four middle school misfits no one else wants.

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Worst of all, Doug's dad has a horrible backup plan. If Doug doesn't win, he has to forget about becoming The World's Greatest Inventor and spend the summer in sports camp, with his scary stepbrother.

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With only a week to go, Doug launches a quest to turn his team of outcasts into winners ... and maybe even friends.

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# Meet Doug and his Team of Misfits

- ▶ Will Doug succeed in turning this team of misfits into winners of the steam competition?
- ▶ What is a misfit, anyway? Do misfits have special talents and superpowers?

# The Team: TravLiUeyPadgeZezz

- ▶ Frederick Douglass Zezzmer
- ▶ Huey Linkmeyer
- ▶ Padgett Babineaux
- ▶ Travis Elizabeth Cod (The Shark)
- ▶ Liam Murphy

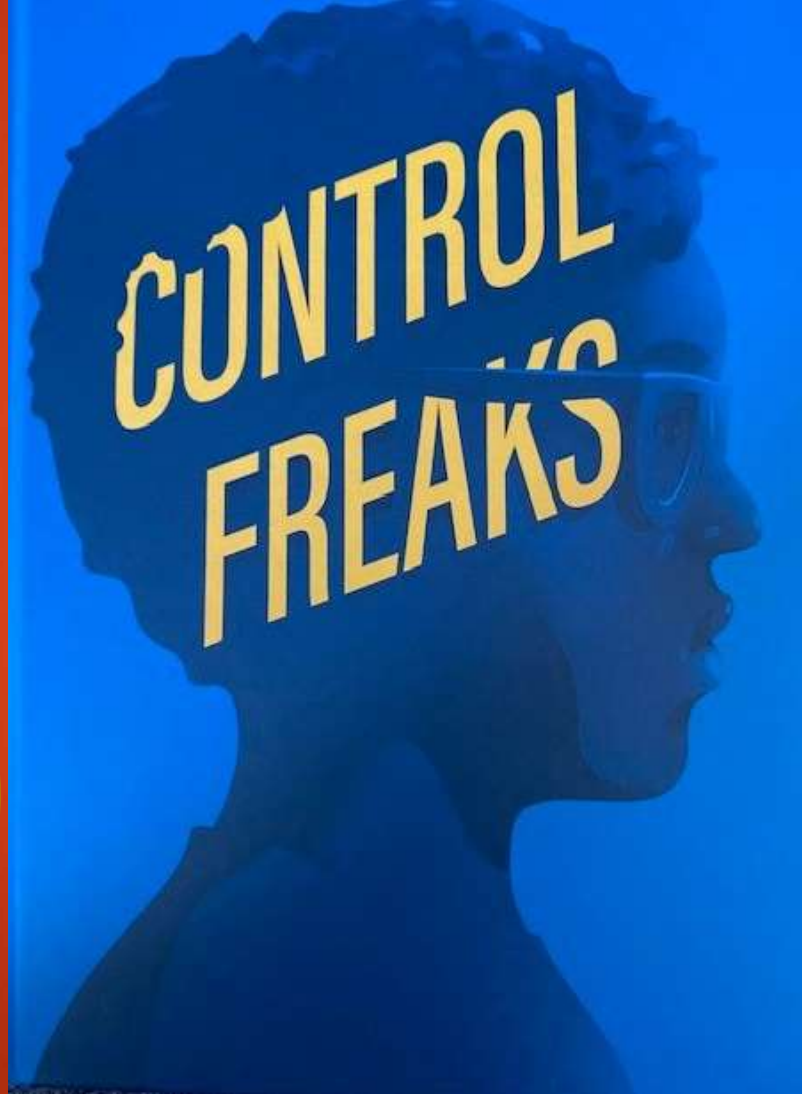


# Frederick Douglass Zezzmer

7<sup>th</sup> grader

Desperate to  
attend  
GadgetCon

Lives with Mom  
and Stepdad;  
afraid his famous  
athlete Pops will  
make him go to  
sports summer  
camp



Has a 57-step  
strategy to  
become World's  
Greatest Inventor

Leader  
(sometimes)  
of the team

# Huey Linkmeyer

- ▶ 7<sup>th</sup> grader
- ▶ Amazing card trick player
- ▶ Best friends with Doug
- ▶ Lives in a complicated parents situation
- ▶ Panics at the big finish – suffers from stage fright
- ▶ Tries to live by Grandpa's advice: "Jest beats stress!"

# Travis Elizabeth Cod (AKA The Shark)

"I AM  
An  
Astrona  
ut-in-  
training"

6<sup>th</sup> grader

"BUT I keep getting **rejected**  
from space camp!!!!

They tell me my  
**body is too small** to be with  
big kids  
**brain is too big** to be with  
little kids...

**I don't work well in teams"**

Mom died of COVID. Doesn't  
want to talk about it

"I'm going to use this stupid  
STEAMS competition to  
prove that I do know how  
to work in teams...even if I  
have to drag them..."



# Padget Babineaux

- ▶ 8<sup>th</sup> grader
- ▶ Creative technology wizard who sometimes gets into trouble hacking
- ▶ Very quiet
- ▶ Takes care of her Grammy...even during school by sending her reminder text messages

# Liam Murphy

- ▶ 8<sup>th</sup> grader
- ▶ Athlete who sometimes stumbles, fumbles and bumbles
- ▶ Trying to figure out his best sport so he can be a winner

# You've met the team. Make a prediction: How will they do on these challenges?

- ▶ Challenge 1: Create team name that expresses something important about your group
- ▶ Challenge 2: Fill a balloon with water and make a device to transport the balloon across the pond
- ▶ Challenge 3: Solve Stump 'Em logic word problems
- ▶ Challenge 4: Find coding error, solve it to unlock door padlock
- ▶ Challenge 5: Run obstacle course

If you could join the team for one challenge, which one would you choose? Why?

# Reading Options

- ▶ Start at page 1 and go full blast to the end
- ▶ If time is a crunch, share the reading –
  - ▶ Each person reads a chapter or two and does a retelling for the class (in sequence).
  - ▶ Form book groups and each group focuses on reading one of the challenges to retell to the class. Have one group do an opening and one group do the closing.
  - ▶ Make your retelling lively for the class, and include some fun questions and things to think about...maybe try out a challenge or design a new challenge!

