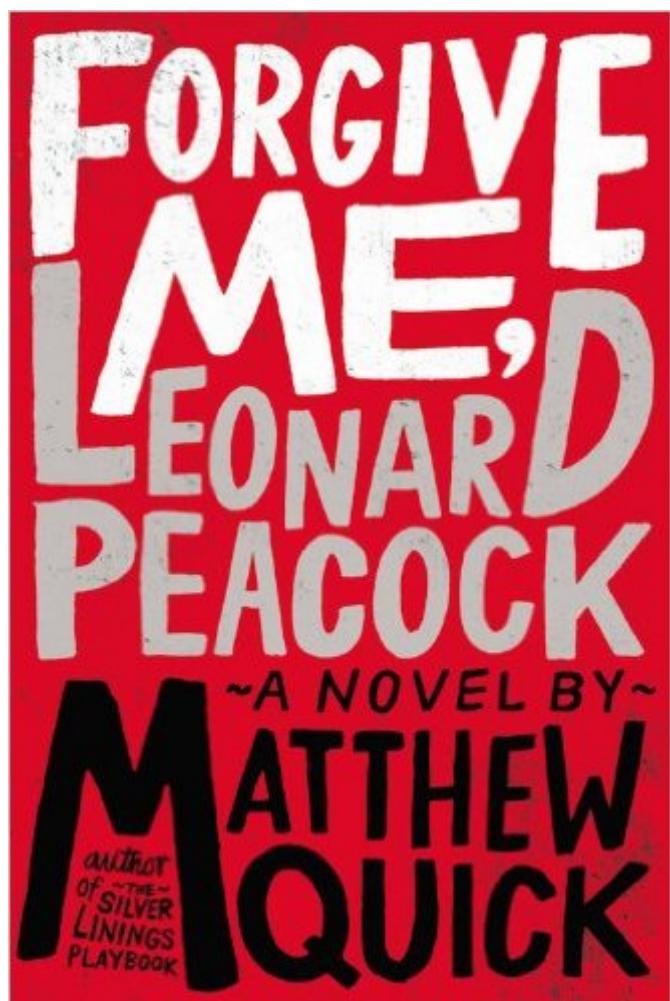


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Forgive Me, Leonard Peacock



Synopsis

In addition to the P-38, there are four gifts, one for each of my friends. I want to say good-bye to them properly. I want to give them each something to remember me by. To let them know I really cared about them and I'm sorry I couldn't be more than I was--that I couldn't stick around--and that what's going to happen today isn't their fault. Today is Leonard Peacock's birthday. It is also the day he will kill his former best friend, and then himself, with his grandfather's P-38 pistol. Maybe one day he'll believe that being different is okay, important even. But not today.

Book Information

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: Little, Brown Books for Young Readers; Reprint edition (July 1, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 031622135X

ISBN-13: 978-0316221351

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (211 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #44,077 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #19 inÂ Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Sexual Abuse #21 inÂ Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Suicide #106 inÂ Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Boys & Men

Customer Reviews

Leonard Peacock just turned 18 and he wants to celebrate by killing his ex-best friend and himself. Before he does this, he plans on delivering some gifts to four people in his life that really matter to him. Each person represents something special to him, and their reactions to the gifts were pretty mixed, and this was the first thing I found pretty heartbroken about this book. It's his birthday and no one remembers. No one knows. And instead of receiving well wishes and gifts, he's planning his last hours on other people. I usually have a hard time getting through books dealing with heavy topics such as teen suicide and abuse. I'm not sure if it's Matthew Quick's insanely talented way of crafting a story, or if I could just deal with it in this particular book, but Forgive Me, Leonard Peacock was such a wonderfully sad read. Quick was able to delicately balance some intensely heavy material with some lightheartedness which kept me from going over the edge emotionally. Leonard's has been through a series of pretty crappy incidents which is what leads him to this life altering decision. We have a boy who's been neglected by his mother, who's lost a once

great friend thanks to a very horrible incident, and doesn't really fit in anywhere in life. Quick's ability to interweave Leonard's present and past events was remarkable. I felt like I was right there with Leonard throughout the story, which is something that I'm not always able to do while reading a book. *Forgive Me, Leonard Peacock* is a story that left a mark on me, and won't be soon forgotten.

Matthew Quick has presented us with Leonard Peacock, in a story that is emotionally gripping to the last ambiguous page. Leonard lives alone in his suburban New Jersey home: drug addled ex-rock and roller father and model mother selfishly pursuing her own life and dreams that do not include Leonard. Intelligent, Leonard is a philosophical thinker desperate to find hope and happiness in adulthood as his childhood hasn't been full of laughs. His former best friend, Asher, is portrayed with a sociopathic bent: while we are never fully told the reason for their antipathy, the result is all too clearly apparent in Leonard's anger, and vengeful fantasies. What is special about today is that it is Leonard's birthday, and not one person has made an attempt to acknowledge the day. But, his plans for making his 18th birthday special have been building for a while now. Told in short chapters much like journal entries, much of the story is told in first person point of view: we actually see and feel Leonard's disenchantment with the state of the world, after the journey to find a positive reason to becoming an adult. We hope, as he takes us along his journey that he is able to find a reason to continue, and find some hope to soothe his troubled thoughts. That he is highly intelligent and thoughtful, and perhaps even a bit elitist in his beliefs about the mental capacity and functioning of others is clearly evident. In fact, despite his wish for a painful end for his best friend, and his apparent willingness to embrace his own death: this is not a kid who is mean or vengeful. His self-proclaimed new best friend is his neighbor, Walt, an elderly and infirm man that shared his fondness for classic films, especially Bogart, with Leonard. Much of their conversation is peppered with, if not wholly consisting of quotes from films, although deeper conversation between the two nearly brings Leonard to tears before he flees. His further attempts to say goodbye, and make those moments important, and to reassure others of their capabilities and goodness as human beings is touching and thoughtful: he carefully evaluates each person he encounters with an adult sensibility that far belies his years. The most touching goodbye is with his Holocaust teacher Herr Silverman, who makes a concerted effort to get Leonard to open up, to be hopeful for a future: in fact he even set him an assignment to write letters to himself from people in his future, as a reminder that things can and will be different and better. We are treated to these letters in the story, there is that hopefulness contrasted against the post-apocalyptic world in which they are set, all written in Leonard's hand, there is a beauty in that assignment and the hopefulness that sets them apart from

his other journal entries. Totally engrossing and utterly gut wrenching, despite the darker overtones, there is no ghastly conclusion with his suicide, it is left to the reader to find a meaning in the complete work: and therein lies the beauty. Leonard's entire day is snippets of thinking over the past weeks, months, and years as he searches for a reason to continue on. Far from being a conclusive 'why they do it' sort of story, this is one of the many different postulations on possible reasons, issues and places where individuals can and do make a difference in a troubled life. With ample literary, philosophical and classic movie references, readers are treated to new perspectives and viewpoints, and are invited to expand their own horizons and reevaluate their own opinions. While this is set in the genre of teen reader, I also would encourage adults to pick this book up and read it: far from simply laying out a direct correlation from cause to event, this book takes many short chapters to wander and absorb positive and negative experiences, imagery and input and leave the ending undefined and nebulous, much like life. I received an eBook copy from the publisher via NetGalley for purpose of honest review. I was not compensated for this review: all conclusions are my own responsibility.

The first half of this book is brilliant. Narrator is insightful and sadly funny. The last 40 pages it falls apart and enters into some cliches. I liked how it ended, just not the way it did. The holocaust teacher deserved a better...finale. Once you read it you'll understand.

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