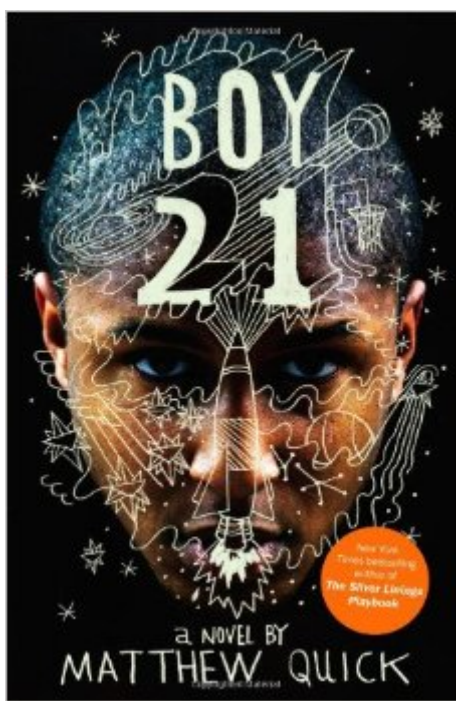


The book was found

Boy21



Synopsis

You can lose yourself in repetition--quiet your thoughts; I learned the value of this at a very young age. Basketball has always been an escape for Finley. He lives in broken-down Belmont, a town ruled by the Irish mob, drugs, violence, and racially charged rivalries. At home, his dad works nights, and Finley is left to take care of his disabled grandfather alone. He's always dreamed of getting out someday, but until he can, putting on that number 21 jersey makes everything seem okay. Russ has just moved to the neighborhood, and the life of this teen basketball phenom has been turned upside down by tragedy. Cut off from everyone he knows, he won't pick up a basketball, but answers only to the name Boy21--taken from his former jersey number. As their final year of high school brings these two boys together, a unique friendship may turn out to be the answer they both need.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (158 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #23,679 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #8 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Sports > Basketball](#) #12 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Prejudice & Racism](#) #19 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Depression & Mental Illness](#)

Customer Reviews

Matthew Quick's prior novels focus on damaged characters that end up relying on their network of friends and family to overcome emotional as well as practical problems. Be it his adult debut *The Silver Linings Playbook: A Novel* (soon to be a major motion picture directed by David O. Russell and starring Bradley Cooper) or his Young Adult debut *Sorta Like a Rock Star*, Quick crafts unique voices that carry readers through tribulations. It is important to understand this -- despite what you may believe you prefer in a good book (plot, romance, drama, humor) none of it matters if the VOICE doesn't work. If the narrator irritates you or lies to you or withholds information without reason, you may become frustrated. If you understand what the narrator cares about -- even if they

keep secrets -- you will be engaged. In *Boy21*, Quick continues his tradition of troubled characters with strong voices. A self-professed 'minimal speaker' (he literally responds with nods and gestures early on, but does speak), main character Finley is harboring a tragedy that occurred before the first page of the novel. He loses himself in the rituals of basketball and his loving, true relationship with Erin. We know from page one what and who he cares about, and it's one of the prime rules of fiction: show the reader what the character cares about and the reader will care, too.

Plain and simple, *Boy21* is a GREAT book. I was on the search for a quality read aloud for my freshmen English classes, so I picked up *Boy21* on a whim. I wanted to read it anyway, but I kept thinking about my 3rd hour freshmen class that's primarily boys who don't enjoy reading. *Boy21* seemed like the perfect fit for them, so I went with my hunch and started reading it. As soon as I read the first couple chapters I knew I made the right decision. Finley's voice really stands out on the page, which is ironic considering he doesn't like to talk much. He actually reminds me a little bit of Lucky Linderman from *Everybody Sees the Ants* by A.S. King. Both Lucky and Finley have a sort of innocence about them. They both have trouble speaking up for themselves, and they also want what's best for those around them. Just like Lucky, Finley is an admirable character. One of the reasons I like Finley is because he's so loyal to his friends, coach, and family. When his coach approaches him about helping *Boy21* (Russ), Finley doesn't hesitate to offer his help. He trusts his coach, so even though he worries that Russ could take his starting position on the basketball team, he still tries to make friends with Russ. Russ has an obsession with space and refers to himself as *Boy21*, but he and Finley pair up well. They're both amazing basketball players, even though Russ doesn't show this right away, and they both deal with unfair treatment. They're both treated poorly for different reasons, much of which is based on race and rivalry, but it still serves as a bond. After a startling and tragic turn of events, Finley really grows as a character. His loyalties are tested and he begins to doubt what's truly important in his life.

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