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Tap Out



Synopsis

2013 YALSA Quick Pick for Reluctant Young Readers *Booklist Top 10 Sports Book for Youth: 2013 selection* Seventeen-year-old Tony Antioch lives in Pleasant Meadows, a trailer park where questions aren't asked since everyone already knows the answers from their own experience. He dreams of rescuing his mother from her constant stream of abusive boyfriends but in reality can barely duck the punches that are aimed at himself. When Tony is coerced into joining his friend Rob's Mixed Martial Arts class, he is surprised to find that he has a talent that he actually wants to develop. But with a meth-dealing biker gang that is hungry for recruits and a vicious cycle of poverty and violence that precedes him, Tony is going to need a lot more than blood and guts to find a way out. Gritty, powerful, and unapologetic, Tap Out explores what it takes to stay true to oneself and the consequences of the choices made along the way in order to do so.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars See all reviews (21 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #268,249 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #7 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Sports > Martial Arts #46 in Books > Sports & Outdoors > Individual Sports > Mixed Martial Arts #128 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Physical & Emotional Abuse

Customer Reviews

I received a digital galley, free, in exchange for my honest opinion. This originally caught my attention through the BEA Book Buzz I received from Netgalley. When I saw that it was about mixed martial arts, I knew that I had to get my hands on it. When I read about Tony's first time at the gym I had to laugh. That was me the first time that I walked into a mma gym, and I was only there to watch! Later, I tried to figure out why they clapped for me when I could barely block the punches that were flying at my face. My biggest strength in the beginning was making the guys work their butts off trying to pin me. I was (am) stronger than I look. This is probably true for everyone who

dances in the cage. Sometimes while reading I had flashbacks of guys that I sparred with. Tap Out does an amazing job of mirroring real life. With some stories you have to get grimy with it. It's that point past dark and surreal that takes to the ugly side of reality. Devine got real grimy with Tap Out and I think it makes this story stand out even more. Unfortunately, Tony's story is one that too many teens will be able to relate to. The great thing about it is that it gives these same teens a voice in a language that is their own. This review has been written at different points throughout the reading of this book. I only mention this because I've had to stop reading for a bit. I had to stop because I couldn't breathe. There are so many emotions coiled up inside of me that they are beginning to suffocate me. Anger at Tony's situation forcing him into the monster he didn't want to become. Sadness because he doesn't see/understand that he always has a choice. Frustration because I know that understanding that he has a choice is almost impossible because of his situation and environment. Fear because as an outsider I can see where the path he's on will lead him. Desperate because Tony's face is replace by the faces of youth that I've worked with in the past who can relate to Tony's tory, if not lived out their own version. Anger because this story - even down to the MMA crew - is drenched in way too much accuracy to be comfortable. Hope - a shred is left - that Devine has given Tony an out. !!! There are too many that don't have an out and I really need Tony to have one. At this point, I finished the book and I've reminded myself that this is just a story. There was blood, death, hope and a small sense of fear at the end. But, the only word I can say to sum up what I think about Tap Out is Wow!!! I love this book for so many reasons that I will do my best not to bore you. First, I have to say that Devine has accomplished a monumental thing. He has written a book that is relevant to teenage boys and one that they will read. Tap Out is Tony's story. Tony is a flawed character who has been dealt a @!#\$ hand and lives in an impossible situation. His story removes the veil that people have allowed to cover their eyes. People want to survive no matter where they come from or what it looks like to outsiders. Surviving and thriving looks differently to people depending on their situation. I'm not saying this to make excuses, only to ask that people reserve judgment. Some people have it harder than others. Another reason I loved this book was because the characters were well-developed and they came to life. Though it wasn't pretty, it felt real. MMA is a world of its own. If you've never been on the mat you wouldn't understand it. The guys who punch you, kick you ad roll with you really do become family. I didn't know this when I started. Being the only female didn't matter. I had their backs and they had mine - on the mat and off. Your MMA crew will lift you up and carry you when you don't have the strength to walk. They will stand with you and help you face whatever, and they do it with strength and honor. They don't leave you, they make you stronger. There were plenty of opportunities for Devine to fail,

but he did not. Thank you, Mr. Devine! I hope that Tap Out finds its way into the hands of anyone who needs the hope to keep fighting even what they get caught in an arm bar or clinch, or some other uncomfortable and slightly painful position in life. I hope that they understand that there's power in not tapping out. Recommendation: Everyone needs to check this book out! But most especially those who work with teen boys who may be written off and not encouraged to live up to their potential. What's Next? I can't wait to see what Devine's going to write next!!!!5 GRIMY STARS *****I FOUND ANOTHER 2012 FAVORITE!

There are very few books that reel me in on the first page. However, this story and its characters hooked me from the very beginning and never let go. Not only was this a gritty look at some of the undesirable parts of the American culture that are often purposefully ignored; it was also a time honored story of conflict and decisions. Good versus evil, right versus wrong and all the gray and indifferent places in between. Unfortunately for Tony the main character in this book, the decisions he faces are more pressured and life altering because of his socioeconomic status. The author also creates the supporting characters so colorfully that the reader feels a vested interest for each one as Tony's story unfolds. I will admit that the read was difficult at times. I shut down at 3am with only a chapter to go only to wake up 15 minutes later and finish the book. My recommendation for this book would be any teenager or young adult that would ever dare to complain about their existence in a white collar neighborhood to elicit some empathy towards their less fortunate peers. It would also be a suggested read for those less fortunate peers to elicit hope to find a way out. Great Job Eric keep up the good work!

Eric Devine's TAP OUT is a searing, unforgettable read. When I compare TAP OUT to S.E. Hinton's groundbreaking THE OUTSIDERS, I do not do so lightly. This book is absolutely amazing. Tony Antioch is a 17 year old facing decisions that no person of any age should have to make. Trapped by circumstances wholly outside of his control, Tony is representative of countless real-life young adults dealing with unimaginable horrors. This book should be required reading for anyone working with impoverished, disenfranchised youth. Even though it's fiction, it will give insight into what many of our students are dealing with. In reading TAP OUT, I was reminded of a speech given by one of the original Freedom Writers, when he explained that so many school days when he didn't have his homework, it was because he had been up all night taking care of his mother after she was beaten nearly to death by his father. As a teacher, I hope that TAP OUT will open some hearts to what others endure on a daily basis; as a reader, I found TAP OUT to be a heart-pounding piece of

extraordinary fiction! Looking forward to more from Eric Devine.

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