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Forgive Me, Leonard Peacock

Becca Wilhite

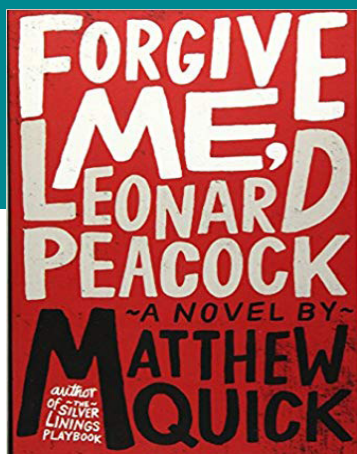
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Book Review

Forgive Me, Leonard Peacock

Author

Matthew Quick

Illustrator

Reviewer

Becca Wilhite

Rating

Excellent

Level

Young Adult

Pages

273

Year

2013

Publisher

Little, Brown

ISBN

9780316221351

Leonard is celebrating his eighteenth birthday in a nontraditional way: planning a murder/suicide. He spends his last day reaching out to the four people who mean most to him. Leonard narrates his last day with reminiscences of how each of these relationships came to be, and he offers a gift to each friend—something to remember him by. This journey through a single day showcases the loneliness, desperation, and resentment that build up in the life of an abused and neglected misfit. Leonard teeters on the tightrope of wanting someone to stop him and needing to make something, anything, happen by the power of his own hand.

Planning to kill his former best friend and then himself, Leonard speaks in a vivid, desperate, focused (if unreliable) voice that sends an unforgettable message of the dangers of bullying, abuse, and gun violence. As he makes his way through his list of four friends he wants to say goodbye to, the story of his secret abuse at the hands of a trusted friend unfolds. Conspicuously absent from this list of friends is his New-York-fashion-designer mother, the most unforgiveably selfish fiction mother since Roald Dahl's Matilda. If Quick's bold strokes of angst-building childhood experiences sound overdrawn, they're not: the drama rings sadly true through Leonard's hopeless, destroyed voice. After experiencing the novel, the reader wonders, is Leonard asking forgiveness and then signing his name? Or is he begging of himself his own forgiveness?

*Contains severe language, moderate sexual content, moderate violence, and suicidal ideation.