Forgive Me, Leonard Peacock

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 Forgiveness is a powerful concept, often associated with absolution, reconciliation, and personal growth. It is a journey of self-discovery, where one confronts the past and finds a way to move forward with a lighter heart and a clearer mind. In the novel “Forgive Me, Leonard Peacock” by Matthew Quick, the author explores the depths of forgiveness through the eyes of a young man named Leonard, who is celebrating his eighteenth birthday in a nontraditional way: planning a murder/suicide. Leonard’s journey is a vivid portrayal of 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.