



If You're Reading This

Trent Reedy

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Mike was seven when his father was killed in mysterious circumstances in Afghanistan. Eight years later, the family still hasn't recovered: Mike's mom is overworked and overprotective; his younger sister Mary feels no connection to the father she barely remembers; and in his quest to be "the man of the family," Mike knows he's missing out on everyday high school life.

Then, out of the blue, Mike receives a letter from his father - the first of a series Dad wrote in Afghanistan, just in case he didn't come home, meant to share some wisdom with his son on the eve of Mike's 16th birthday. As the letters come in, Mike revels in spending time with his dad again, and takes his encouragement to try new things - to go out for the football team, and ask out the beautiful Isma. But who's been keeping the letters all these years? And how did Dad actually die? As the answers to these mysteries are revealed, Mike and his family find a way to heal and move forward at last.

If You're Reading This Details

Date : Published August 26th 2014 by Arthur A. Levine Books

ISBN : 9780545433426

Author : Trent Reedy

Format : Hardcover 304 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Realistic Fiction, Sports and Games, Sports, Coming Of Age, Fiction, War

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Abcde says

This book was about a boy named mike, his life is sort of miserable at the moment because of something that happened in school. When he was seven his dad got killed by something he doesn't want to know (he was in the army)& he barely ever got to see him or spend time with him. He was turning 16 or 17 I can't remember but he was mysteriously getting notes from his dad. It was very interesting and mysterious I, would read it again if I wanted/could. I recommend this book to any ages.

Meg says

This was hard for me to score so low because I thought the basic plot line was excellent: Mike learns about his dead father through a series of letters that begin arriving shortly before his 16th birthday. Unfortunately, the flaws in the writing were distracting. Firstly, the mother and sister were just awful. It was hard to feel empathy for either of them despite the fact that they are living the same hard life as Mike. The football players were one dimensional - I couldn't really tell them apart. I found the football play-by-plays to be an interruption in the real plot. I don't think they added to the story at all. And finally the switch from letters to video was just too much.

I consider it for high schoolers only because of the drinking.

Agata Wilusz says

Imagine life with an overprotective mother, an annoying younger sister, very little 'life' outside of school and work, and, to top it all off, you begin getting letters from your father who died in war several years ago.

This is the life of Mike Wilson, a high school sophomore itching to get back into football and ready to lead a typical high schooler's life. When he begins to receive letters from his father who mysteriously died in Iraq, Mike starts taking his dad's advice, which leads him to many new experiences. One question that still remains for Mike is who is sending the letters?

Although it was a little predictable, I enjoyed the novel and recommend it as a middle school read. The characters were engaging and authentically set in a unique situation. The story also touches well on some tough topics concerning the war in Iraq and brings a new perspective on our soldiers' role.

Lukasg05 garcia says

this book was really good. i would recommend it to anybody because it tells about a very descriptive story. its about a kid named Michael and his dad died in the war at Afghanistan. and he died when Michael was 8 years old. and his father wasn't there for long so he gave these letters to someone in his squad to give it to his son. and he gets them on certain days and the notes ar saying like enjoy high school and dont argue with people and have a good life. and hes trying to get information on who is giving these letters to him.

this book was by far the best book i ever read. i really enjoyed the book and it was interesting to see this kid

just go through high school and his father just dying. and its crazy just to see a young kid work just as well as his mom to barely provide for there family in a rundown house. and his dad wants him to play football but his mom doesn't want him to because its "unsafe". but this book was a really good book and i think everyone should read it

Patrick Murdock says

Patrick Murdock
Mr Carroll English
October 26, 2014

Summer book review #2

The title of this book is "If You're Reading This" , written by Trent Reedy.

The main character is named Michael Wilson. Michael lost his father in the war in Afghanistan when he was 7 years old. From then on his mother has been very over protective of Michael. Michael is a very curious kid that is always trying to figure out more about his father. Isma Is a very important character in the book. Isma is a Muslim girl that dates Michael during the book. Although, Isma is constantly made fun of for her religion.

The plot of the book is Michael trying to live a normal life, full of friends, family, and sports. Michaels father, who died in the war, sent Michael letters from 8 years ago In the war. Michael receives these letters when he is 16. In the letters, Michael's dad gave him goals and mission for Michael to do. These missions included trying a new sport. Michael wanted to play football although Michael's mom is not allowing him to play. Although, Michael disobeys his mom and goes out for football.

As Michael continues his quest to find out who is father is and how he died, he discovers that the person at fault for his fathers death may be someone he knows very closely. Michael also lives up to all the missions his father challenged him to do. These missions give Michael a high school experience he will never forget.

I personally very much enjoyed reading this book. It had a lot of suspense and unlikely events. It also made you feel for all those kids who lost a parent or family member in a war. This book helps you understand how hard it is for families to overcome such extreme adversity. This book also included a lot of sports, which is one of the reasons why I very much enjoyed this book.

Sara says

While I think the author's premise and themes are good, I found this book to be contrived and not authentic. The voice of the protagonist didn't sound like a real teenager to me, but rather like an adult trying to sound like a teen. I realize that Mike is supposed to be more responsible than other kids due to his circumstances, but it still didn't ring true for me.

Also, the character of the mother was too contradictory and confusing. She was overprotective and didn't let Mike play football, but she left her kids alone to fend for themselves for hours, rarely checking in with them, and she avoided talking to them about real issues? The town is so small that there are only 40 kids in the senior class, but she doesn't ever find out that Mike is playing football?

In fact, few of the female characters are portrayed positively, except the librarian - even Isma has issues. Mike's mother, Isma's mother, the sister, the sleazy girl - all negative characters. I noticed that the author didn't thank his mother in the acknowledgements... issue there?

All this being said, my teachers' book club decided that this is a 'niche' book- many kids will try it and put it down because of the slow pace. But other kids (perhaps boys who play football, and/or have a parent in the military) will stick with it and enjoy it. We will promote it in the hope that that one kid is reached.

Lauren Waters says

Mike is the model son. He studies, reads and works to earn extra money for his mom and younger sister. The problem is that Mike wants more out of life than just work, work, work. When he goes behind his mom's back to join the football team, it brings him more friends and more troubles since his new buddies don't approve of his crush. On top of keeping football from his mom, Mike also keeps a much bigger secret about the letters he is receiving that his dad left for him before he died serving in the military. This is a great coming of age story. Many teens will be able to relate to the characters and their struggles with relationships and growing up.

Mrs. M says

Won this book on Goodreads!!! This is my first book that I have ever won!!! YAY!

Enjoyed this story. Showed it to my students and they are going crazy over it!! Thanks Trent Reedy for writing such a heartfelt story.

Maddie Bottles says

This book was one of my FAVORITE books of all time!!

Mike and his younger sister Mary have lived alone, only being raised by their single mom. Mike's father was killed in Afghanistan. As Mike tries to understand what happened to his father, he realizes that not only is he missing his father, he's missing out on high school fun. What will happen next??? Will he ever figure out what happened to his strangely missing father?.....

Brittany says

This turned out to be my new favorite book! I loved it and it was just amazing. It is about a boy named Michael whose father died in war and he doesn't know how. He has a overprotective mother, and is poor so he has to work on a farm. He also has to get through obstacles including fights with his family, getting letters from a unknown sender, and hiding that he joined the football team (from his mother).

Collin Y says

I think that this book was a real 5 star because it's a book about a boy named Mike who lost his dad 7 years ago when his dad died in the army. So he is 15 years old and then starts getting letters from his dad. This makes you wonder, who is sending the letters. The letters tell Mike that he should do stuff like play football, get a girl, and get at least one A+ on a test (which he is good at getting). So he what his dad's letters say.

Jennifer says

I really enjoyed this book!

I read it to preview it for our school library. Our school is K-8, and the main character is a sophomore in high school. There is quite a bit of making out and some scenes with underage drinking, so I am not sure it is right for our school. However, I think most of the things that stick out to me as a parent are things that certainly went on at my high school and are typical of most.

As I said, the main character is a sophomore boy in high school. His father was killed 7 years prior in Afghanistan. As a result, his mother is overprotective and only lets him study and work on a nearby farm. She refuses to talk about his father. Nearing his 16th birthday, he starts getting letters from his father, giving him a chance to get to know him better and also raising more questions about his death and what he was fighting for. The letters also challenge him to make improvements in his life, from asking a girl to dance to doing something kind for his mom and sister. The letters and the actions he takes to fulfill the challenges begin the transition from a boy to a man. There is also a lot of football in the book.

I seriously think this should be required reading for all incoming freshman boys, and it is so good that I've encouraged my daughter to read it too.

Ms. Yingling says

Mike has a lot on his plate. He does well academically, but he also has to work a lot to help out his mother. Ever since his father was killed in Afghanistan, life has been difficult. His mother is too afraid to even let him play football, and the atmosphere in their run down house is tense. When Mike receives a letter which his father wrote before he died, and which promises more letters to come, he is glad to get to know his father better, but also stressed by all of the old wounds the letters reopens. He takes the challenges his father makes-- going out for football, asking out Isma, and going to a party. This puts Mike more and more at odds with his mother, and he even finds difficulties with members of the football team over Isma, whose parents came from Afghanistan. Ultimately, Mike needs to decide who he wants to be, whether or not he decides to follow his parents' advice.

Strengths: The best part of this is the framing of personal growth within the arenas of football and romance. This makes it a book that works for both older middle school students as well as high school. Mike's struggle with dealing with his father's death is done very realistically; I thought it was a particularly good touch to have the younger sister claim that she didn't really even remember her father. The hardships that Mike had-- riding his bike, not having a computer, having to work and worry about leaks in the roof of the house-- were not overdone and added a lot of depth to his character. The details about the war in Afghanistan were good as

well, especially the local feeling about Isma and her family.

Weaknesses: This got a bit preachy on several topics, but this tends not to bother students as much as it bothers me. Definitely purchasing.

Abigail the Fangirl says

Wow, this book was seriously good. It had some great lessons in it and it was really enjoyable. I also really liked the main character, Mike, he was a hard worker, enjoyed learning, and was just a good person overall. I don't usually get emotional while reading a book, but this one had in me in tears. It is just so real and deals with a lot of things that are going on in the world. I would recommend this book to anyone and everyone!

Jaymie says

Grabbed at the library. It was an okay book. A reminder to live life to the fullest and to treat others kindly. Was an intriguing idea. Love the idea of being able to either leave A message for my loved ones if I know I'm going or to receive one from a lost loved one. I would actually love a letter from my dad.
