

Boy21

Matthew Quick

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“Boy21” is a realistic-fiction novel that details the life of basketball player Finley McManus and also pays close attention to fellow player Russell Allen. The story starts off relatively normal, at the end of the summer focused on Finley’s and his girlfriend Erin’s start to their senior year of high school and the start of the new basketball season that arrives in tandem with it. It takes place in the rough area of Bellmont in which gang violence is abound and not many are strangers to it. Finley’s mother was lost to it and his grandfather had his legs removed from it, along with other things happening like an abduction of Finley.

This life known to him changes suddenly when the Coach of the team introduces Finley to basketball star formally known as Russ Allen, who had recently lost his parents in a double homicide. Russ had been an excellent player at his old school on the west coast and had a lived a life that was the polar opposite of Finley’s, but because of the unique circumstances, the two are drawn together to become each other closest friends of nearly their entire lives. Russ goes by a new surname to hide his identity, Washington; however, he personally goes by “Boy21,” perpetuating the narrative that he came from space. The novel follows Finley assisting Russ through school and sacrificing a lot simply for him to do well and succeed.

Overall, I felt that the novel was decent. The writing felt childish to me at times which was a little off-putting considering that there are words like “horny” being used along with a constant theme of Finley “making out” with his girlfriend Erin. To me the target audience seems to be less-experienced young adult to teenage readers (12-14) for whom books written in such a style like the “Lord of the Rings” novels for example, would be unsuitable.

Recommended Titles

“Fast Break”- Mike Lupica

“Challenger Deep”- Brendan Shusterman

“Wilder Boys”- Brandon Wallace