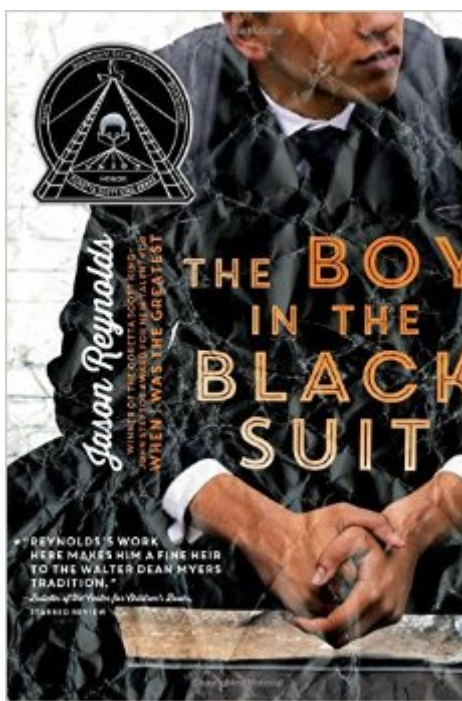


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The Boy In The Black Suit



Synopsis

A 2016 Coretta Scott King Author Honor book. Just when seventeen-year-old Matt thinks he can't handle one more piece of terrible news, he meets a girl who's dealt with a lot more—and who just might be able to clue him in on how to rise up when life keeps knocking him down—in this vivid, satisfying, and ultimately upbeat tale of grief, redemption, and grace • (Kirkus Reviews) from the Coretta Scott King “John Steptoe Award”-winning author of *When I Was the Greatest*. Matt wears a black suit every day. No, not because his mom died—although she did, and it sucks. But he wears the suit for his gig at the local funeral home, which pays way better than the Cluck Bucket, and he needs the income since his dad can't handle the bills (or anything, really) on his own. So while Dad's snagging bottles of whiskey, Matt's snagging fifteen bucks an hour. Not bad. But everything else? Not good. Then Matt meets Lovey. Crazy name, and she's been through more crazy stuff than he can imagine. Yet Lovey never cries. She's tough. Really tough. Tough in the way Matt wishes he could be. Which is maybe why he's drawn to her, and definitely why he can't seem to shake her. Because there's nothing more hopeful than finding a person who understands your loneliness—and who can maybe even help take it away.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: HL760L (What's this?)

Paperback: 304 pages

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Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.7 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars • See all reviews (49 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #32,705 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #62 in Books > Children's Books >

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Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Death & Dying

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Okay, so I'm coming dangerously close to neglecting the fact I haven't written this post in like 2-3 months, which is funny, because I read the book in less than a week. I knew if I sat down and wrote the review, I'd have so much to say, and I tend to be very wordy in reviews to begin with. *The Boy in The Black Suit* follows the exploits of a 17 year old teenage boy who's mother recently lost her battle with cancer (correct me if I'm not remembering correctly folks, I read it in January). With time, he ends up taking a job working in a funeral home, hence becoming "The Boy in The Black Suit." I normally wait until I've actually started describing my pros and cons before I make a declaration this bold, but I think this book will be the best book I've read all year. Diversity in books is interpreted differently by nearly everyone I know, so when it comes to needing diverse books, what fits for one person, might not fit for the next. When people say we need diverse books, I'm almost positive they're talking about a book like this. *The Boy in the Black Suit's* leading character Matthew Miller (Matt for short) was a character I really rooted for. I hate the word "relatable" because it suggests "relatable" has to be something specific, or a one-size-fits-all answer. But I related to him more than most characters I've read since I dedicated myself to reading diverse titles. I know the author's been around longer than I've been reading his work, but he reminds me a bit of author Zetta Elliot. I liked his use of language, mainly because the way I speak is very much like Matthew and his best friend.

There is so much to say about this book â€” the writing, the setting, the characters â€” but first and foremost, I must say that from beginning to end, Jason Reynolds and *The Boy in the Black Suit* kept me, held me, wouldn't let me go, had me living in THE FEELS. I bought this book for my son's library and underlined and left my notes everywhere because I couldn't help myself â€” I want him to see where I was touched, stilled, literally brought to tears, where I laughed and fell in love with a character, where I simply smiled because the writing is just that. freaking. good. For me, *THE BOY IN THE BLACK SUIT* is a love letter to Brooklyn â€” whose streets and characters and bodegas are so vivid and real and perfectly captured by Mr. Reynolds that I often felt like I was back on my old block in Bed Stuy â€” told through the eyes of Matt Miller, a high school kid coming to grips with the death of his mom and the downslide of his dad, just trying to hang on and make sense of life and death and loss and love. Helping him along the way are Chris, Mr. Ray, and Lovey, well-crafted, poignant characters, each playing their own, very unique roles in moving Matt forward one step at a time. The interactions between these folks are touching and funny and so damn life-affirming that you just know, someday, somehow, with this crew in his life, Matt will make it.

There might be some tears and struggling, but heâ€™s going to come out on the other end okay and thatâ€™s a great way to close the covers on a book. With a hopeful, possibly watery-eyed, smile on your face. Towards the end of the story, Matt is gifted with a Sempervivum, a plant whose name originates from the latin roots semper and vivus and means â€œlive forever.â€• Thatâ€™s exactly what Jasonâ€™s characters will do with me â€œlive forever.

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