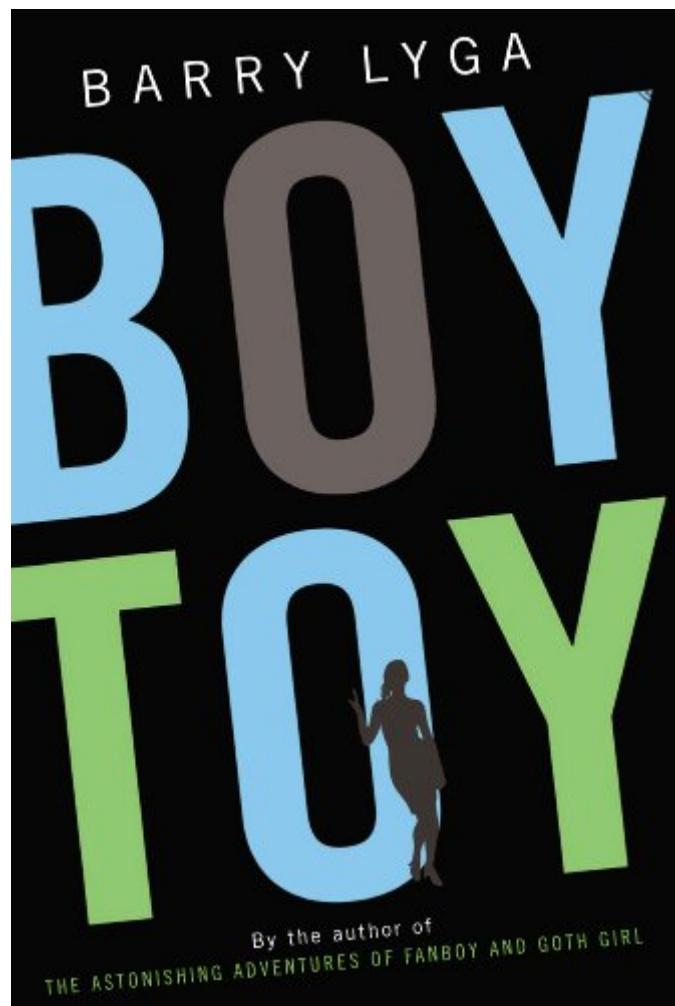


The book was found

Boy Toy



Synopsis

Josh Mendel has a secret. Unfortunately, everyone knows what it is. Five years ago, Josh's life changed. Drastically. And everyone in his school, his town seems like the world thinks they understand. But they don't think they can't. And now, about to graduate from high school, Josh is still trying to sort through the pieces. First there's Rachel, the girl he thought he'd lost years ago. She's back, and she's determined to be part of his life, whether he wants her there or not. Then there are college decisions to make, and the toughest baseball game of his life coming up, and a coach who won't stop pushing Josh all the way to the brink. And then there's Eve. Her return brings with it all the memories of Josh's past. It's time for Josh to face the truth about what happened. If only he knew what the truth was . . .

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Slightly depressed, angered, sadness and at the end relief is what I felt when reading this story.

Other than feeling relieved at very end of the story I never felt any positive or good emotions while

reading the story. IMO Josh was manipulated and sexually molested by two women although admittedly to the degree it was done was different. Eve, the teacher and pedophile was the first and worse molester. While the final act or home run as Josh referred to it, was closed door everything leading up to it was not and even if the readers were not told it happened it was obvious that she raped him. **SPOILERS BELOW** All of main and secondary characters that were women were badly portrayed. There is of course the pedophile Eve, Josh's mother who is cheating on his father, Michelle the desirable but dumb girlfriend of Josh's best friend Zik and Rachel. While more subtle than Eve, Rachel, the girlfriend wannabee is also a manipulator and molester. Even as young as 13 years old Rachel manipulated Josh into getting physical with her. For her birthday party, she had a party with Josh and 2 friends who were a couple. She dressed up in provocative clothes and then her friend Michelle and Zik pushed him into playing spin the bottle. Rachel later admitted to Josh that she practiced playing spin the bottle so she knew it would stop on him when she spun it. Then when in the closet with Josh Rachel pushed him to make out with her. While Josh went too far too fast, Rachel admitted that if he took it slower while in the closet she would have had smex with him. When he took it too far because that is what he knew from being with the pedophile Rachel screamed and ran out of the closet crying to her parents even though Josh let her go when asked and her friends were right outside the door. Josh ignored Rachel for 5 years after the closet incident due to embarrassment and thinking she hated him. However when Josh saw Rachel again she pushed him into being with her. Rachel initiated everything and did it quickly including sexual things even though she knew that he had been raped and was not ready for anything physical. Then after a failed attempt on her part to get him to have smex with her the night of Prom (which she and Michelle pushed him to attend), Rachel told him that she loved him and had loved him for 5 years. What a needy 5 stage clinger. It was apparent that Josh never loved Rachel despite at the end of the book him claiming to the contrary. It was all telling and no showing. There was nothing to even suggest that he loved her nor even desired her very much. Also there was zero chemistry and romance between Josh and Michelle. The one and only time they had smex it was closed door. Josh never even really wanted Rachel as much as he did Eve, the pedophile or even Rachel's best friend Michelle. I got tired of hearing Josh's thoughts about how sexy and beyond beautiful Michelle was. It would have been better if Josh had been with her as opposed to Rachel. Michelle was Zik, his best friend's girlfriend and Rachel's best friend but Josh had been lusting after her for years. In fact even after they were together Rachel said to Josh that she knew that she was not as beautiful as Michelle and Josh agreed with her, saying something like that Rachel was the best pitcher and no one could compete with that. Talking about baseball I understand that it was important to Josh but way too

much of the book was taken up with either talking about baseball or thinking about it or playing it. There is one section of the book that there is in excess of 11 pages describing one baseball game. I skimmed past a lot of the pages that were devoted to baseball. The thing that I liked best about the book was the ending. I felt relief that Josh got away from all of the manipulators and cheaters. At the end of the story Rachel gave Josh a cell phone with prepaid minutes so he would call her while they were apart. That just reinforced my impression that they only reasons that Josh was with Rachel was because he felt grateful to her for helping him get over his trauma and that it was because Rachel was the aggressor. It was just easier to give into Rachel as opposed to fight her as all of Josh's energy was taking up with trying to recover from the molestation. I feel confident that Josh's relationship with Rachel will not continue through the separation not matter how hard Rachel pushes for that to happen.

Review: I used to work for a local newspaper, and one of my tasks was typing up the weekly police blotter. Most of the contents of the blotter were your run-of-the-mill car accidents, petty theft, or disorderly conduct, but every now and then a report of child molestation would come across my desk. The reports were sickening, and each time I typed up the details of the incident I would ask myself a) how someone could be twisted enough to engage in a sexual relationship with a child and b) how that relationship had come about in the first place. Barry Lyga explores the answers to those questions, and more, in Boy Toy. The story centers on Josh Mendel, a senior in high school who, five years earlier, was involved in a full-blown affair with his seventh-grade history teacher. The book goes back and forth between the present and the past, taking you through the life of the affair from beginning to end and showing the impact it has on Josh's life five years after the fact. The amazing thing about Boy Toy is that even though it's about a very heavy subject, it's still compelling. I honestly could not stop reading it. I switched from my small purse to my jumbo diaper bag of a purse just so I could carry Boy Toy with me everywhere I went. I wanted to hear Josh's story. I wanted to understand. How on earth did a 12-year-old boy end up having sex with his teacher? What did the teacher see in him? How was their relationship discovered? What were the implications for Josh later, as a teenager? What's brilliant about Lyga's writing is that he makes you look at things in ways you'd never expect. For one thing, I never would have anticipated that I would sympathize with Eve, the woman who molested Josh. This isn't to say I think what she does is right. It's no doubt that it is twisted and wrong and incredibly screwed up. Rather,

what I'm trying to say is that Eve is more than just your cardboard villain. She seems like a real person, with complicated motivations and clear strengths as well as clear weaknesses. She seems to truly care about Josh in her own messed up way, taking him on dates, cooking for him, cheering him on at his baseball games, etc. Where it all goes wrong is in the progression of their relationship from platonic to physical. Lyga has caught some flack for the intensity of the sex scenes in *Boy Toy*. Some readers argue that the scenes are gratuitous and inappropriate, focusing on feelings of excitement and eroticism rather than trauma or violation. I disagree with those readers wholeheartedly; I think the fact that the sex scenes are so hot and heavy is part of what makes the book successful. Before you start calling me a sick creep, let me explain. I do find it disturbing and twisted that Josh's teacher seduced him, but I can't deny that if the scenes were written between two consenting adults rather than a teacher and underage student, they'd be incredibly arousing. Reading the details of Josh's sexual encounters triggered warring emotions of disgust, excitement, and shame, which is exactly what Josh feels when he thinks back to his experiences with his teacher. It put me in Josh's shoes and helped me realize just how confused and conflicted he must have felt. Lyga's ability to make his readers see things from the point of view of his characters is one of his many gifts as a writer.

It's scary how easy it is to understand why Eve falls for Josh.

He's different from the other kids at his school, mature for his age, precocious, thoughtful. Even at 12 he is almost as tall as Eve herself. He's capable of holding meaningful conversations with her, of understanding her humor and making her laugh in return. Josh at 18, the age he is when recounting the events of the book, is no less amazing.

He's insanely smart, with a nearly photographic memory and the ability to calculate the square root of 52 or the product of 12 and 144 in his head. He's enthralled by the stars and planets. He dedicates himself to working hard at all that he does, whether in the classroom or on the baseball diamond, where he's a star hitter. It's incredibly fascinating to watch Josh try to come to terms with what happened to him all those years ago, to witness him trying to deal with the guilt and the embarrassment of knowing that everyone in his town knows all the details of his sex life.

He's got a great voice, with a compelling blend of attitude and self-consciousness. I developed a bit of a book crush on him, and he'll go down in my mind as one of my all-time favorite characters. Barry Lyga is an author who never disappoints me. He always presents a unique perspective, troubled but enthralling characters, and a plot that keeps you

interested from start to finish. I strongly encourage you to go out and read Boy Toy. I know I'll be revisiting it over and over again. This review can also be found on my blog, <http://AngelasLibrary.com>.

GRADE: A **ONE WORD:** Extraordinary

Josh is that kid. You know, the one whose seventh grade teacher plead guilty to molesting him. Now he's a senior and she's out of jail, on parole. And he's an angry mess. Then there's Rachel, his seventh grade girlfriend and what Josh did to her in the closet. He still can't face her. Everything is coming to a head.

BOY TOY is a nuanced look at teacher/student molestation from the eyes of the victim, who sometimes feels like the perpetrator. Barry Lyga gave Josh a pitch perfect voice. He has so much depth, imperfections galore. Sometimes he acts like a jerk and doesn't give others a chance to help him. He carries so much internal and external pressure, and internalizes imaginary pressure to try to make sense of his world.

Child molestation survivors need a sense of control to feel safe and gain mastery of themselves and their surroundings. Unfortunately for Josh, almost everyone in his life, except his best friend Zik, is trying to get Josh to do things he doesn't want. Rachel wants more from him than he has to give. His baseball coach expects him to carry the team on his shoulders. Only his therapist seems to realize he still has healing to do.

I love the way Lyga shows Josh's arc toward greater healing and understanding of himself and the circumstances surrounding his molestation. BOY TOY is so realistic and gets my highest recommendation.

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