



Boy A

Jonathon Trigell

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A is for Apple. A bad apple.

Jack has spent most of his life in juvenile institutions; he's about to be released with a new name, new job, and a new life. At 24, he is utterly innocent of the world, yet guilty of a monstrous childhood crime.

To his new friends, he is a good guy with occasional flashes of unexpected violence. To his girlfriend, he is strangely naive and unreachable. To his case worker, he's a victim of the system and of media-driven hysteria.

And to himself, Jack is on permanent trial: he struggles to start from scratch, forget the past, become someone else.

At a time when the privacy of the individual is under threat from all sides, BOY A raises fundamental questions about the morality of the media.

Boy A Details

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Author : Jonathan Trigell

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Genre : Fiction, Young Adult, Mystery, Crime, Contemporary, European Literature, British Literature

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From Reader Review Boy A for online ebook

Barbara Elsborg says

What a book! A heart rending story of a young man released from prison after a horrendous crime (did he do it or not?) and how he copes with life outside. The way the book is written - with sections set in the past - made sure the reader gradually became aware of Jack's past and the actual crime. I liked the background info, I like the labelling of the chapters, I liked the different points of view. I did feel though that Jack had a voice beyond his years. Yes, his manner was of a boy who'd only just come into the world from prison but he seemed older in his thought processes, but it's a minor point. I couldn't put it down. I was desperate to know what happened to him.

The book seems to be based on the Bulger case in the UK, though the victim in this story was female and ten years old, but the boys themselves did seem similar. Though not completely! I liked Jack. I wanted him to succeed in his new life and I thought the writer did an excellent job of showing us the sort of problems that he'd have.

Katie Scarlett O Hara says

Upotrebi?u re?, koju sam videla da je neko napisao na pole?ini ove knjige, fantasti?no.

Ako niste, obavezno pogledajte i film. Recenzija sledi.

Recenzija je najzad na blogu

<http://thestuffdreamsaremadeof21.blog...>

Lindsay says

"Given the challenging subject matter, Boy A is a surprisingly easy book to read. Jonathan Trigell's prose is literary, poetic in places, always compelling and never obstructive. Jack, the Boy A of the title, is the central figure of the book but throughout its 26 chapters, Trigell explores the lives of the people around him, from those who helped shape him into the man he is at the novel's beginning, and those he meets during his new life outside prison. Jack is an immensely sympathetic character, brutalised and occasionally brutal but the reader has no doubt that he has been fully rehabilitated; that the crime which landed him in juvenile detention was an aberration, the product of a particular set of circumstances rather than something 'evil' inside him.

Though Jack makes friends and finds a girlfriend he cannot escape the truth of his hidden past, nor the reality that many people, urged on by the tabloid press, want nothing more than to see him back in prison for the rest of his life. The themes of justice and forgiveness runs strongly through the novel, and we wonder whether either is truly possible in this case. The two boys are irredeemable monsters, or so the papers say, because to admit the possibility of rehabilitation is to admit that any child could potentially become a murderer.

Boy A is a very powerful, moving novel. I read it in one evening, but I know that I will be pondering the issues it raises for a long time to come."

Lena says

I wish I could find a way to adequately convey my love for this book without sounding like a gushing groupie. But, I can't, so I'll soldier on with my groupie flag flying.

What can I say other than this book is amazing. I can't begin to say how amazing it is in a short review, and I'm a fair hand at wordplay. I'll do my inadequate best.

Trigell takes the story of Jack, a newly-released-from prison, twenty-something convicted child murderer--as in, he was a child when convicted of murder (the victim was also a child) and makes you wallow in it. He takes you into the mind of Jack and makes you love him. He takes you to the slimy, dark, gritty underbelly of English society and makes you lie on your back and lick it. You can't help but do what he wants as he weaves the story through the minds of various characters, crafting a perfectly plotted, perfectly paced, perfectly terrible story of attempted redemption. As you slough along towards the inevitable conclusion, you know what's coming, but you breathlessly keep reading, wanting to look away but utterly unable. Such is the hypnotic control Trigell masters in this artfully honed masterpiece of suspense. As difficult as it must be to create such tension in a book where from the start you know almost without doubt of the story's outcome, Trigell does it, and does it well.

Although his writing style is more gritty than poetic, Trigell can turn a phrase with beauty and almost magical precision. I can't count the number of times I had to stop and savor a sentence and wish ardently that I could weave words together with such breathtaking rightness. Because each of these sentences shows craft and a kind of heartrending accuracy. You find yourself thinking simultaneously that you'd never think to put words together in that way and that it's the exact way they were created to fit together.

In short, from the first words this book grabs you by the throat like a vicious, one-eyed mangy dog with oozing pustules and shakes you senseless until the last breathtaking sentence.

Although I can't recommend it to everyone due to its graphic nature, I wish I could.

Ryan Robinson says

Boy A by Jonathan Trigell

Book review by Ryan Robinson

Why I decided to read the book?

Don't judge a book by its cover? Oops. I did. It was good choice though, because the cover to me was simple yet effective, interesting and cool. The picture reminded me of Blackpool in England, because I have seen Blackpool on documentaries and football shows a lot of times, and it looked like a cool place with its attractions. I decided to read Boy A, because it was different to most of the books I usually read. Also, the book was a new copy, so it's always good to read a book when it's nice and clean.

Why I liked it (or didn't like it)?

I liked Boy A because it was completely different compared to books I usually read. Most of the books I read are statistical or factual and the fictional books I read are about children or teenagers so this book was completely different. It did have rather inappropriate features, such as crime, murders, strip clubs, bars, sex and fighting. So it isn't the book to read if you are 13 years or younger.

One feature I thought was quite interesting was the adult problems in this book over teenage problems in other books, because usually the teenage problems are quite small and can be solved easily, and don't affect anyone, but the adult problems in Boy A were quite serious, and they could not be solved after all his hard work to try and fix them.

Something new I learnt from the book/ made me think differently?

The book made me think differently about giving people a second chance. Because there has been some controversy in our news at the moment which is similar to what Jack was going through throughout the book. The controversy was Shae Brider (a convicted killer) was allowed to perform on "The X Factor New Zealand 2015" even though he had just finished serving eight and a half years in prison. Now he has been let free, he is still being judged like he was 10 years ago, just like Jack. So this article to me was quite relatable to this story.

A character or setting which was interesting?

One of the settings I thought was interesting was Blackpool, England which was the setting for the last two - three chapters. It set the scene very well because Blackpool is a town which is surrounded by sea and piers, so it suited the setting quite well. It was also interesting because I have heard about Blackpool many times before (mainly because of Blackpool Football Club) and it is probably one of the most popular and interesting places in England and I would definitely like to go there someday. I liked the characters because they were ordinary but a bit weird in their own way. Two of the characters that I liked (Chris and Steve) were quite similar to this British comedian called Smithy (James Corden) because Smithy sings while he works and so do Chris and Steve.

Overall, I thought it was quite a good young adult/adult book to read. I would highly recommend it to many people and I would give it a score of 9 out of 10 because the book had a grown-up modern feeling to it which I quite liked and was quite different to most of the books I have read. Also the book even though it was quite compact, it had a lot of complexity and context to it so that's why I would give a 9 out of 10.

By Ryan Robinson

Kelly says

I seem to be the only person who really didn't like this book. There were so many technical problems and other instances of "bad writing" that it seems like no one edited it. For example, the author changed his point of view too often, putting us in the minds of unnecessary characters (like Elizabeth, the psychologist) and not enough in Jack's mind for me to get very involved in his story. The book is full of cliches and metaphors that are unbelievable coming from someone who's spent his whole life in prison. Jack's story was not compelling or believable, nor did it make me think about the topics it intended me to, like parenting, prison, etc.

Marija Miloševi? says

Edit: dodata ocena.

Sve je i dalje sveže, pa ne?u procenjivati koliko zvezdica nosi. Kako uopšte oceniti ovo?

Ovo je knjiga koja nikog ne?e ostaviti ravnodušnim i o kojoj se može polemisati u nedgoled. Nikakav stilski doprinos, pisana prili?no realno i sirovo. ?injenica da ima sli?nosti s istinitim doga?ajem od pre 25 godina meni ju je u?inila težom.

Odli?an pogled na društvo, metode odgajanja i vaspitanja i njihov uticaj na decu, pogled na pritisak medija i vlasti. I dalje sam pod utiskom, a verujem da ?u dugo i biti.

"To su trenuci koji menjaju ?ovekov pogled na svet; mali trenuci koji otkrivaju šta se krije u drugima.

Nekoliko puta je takve trenutke doživeo sa samim sobom, kada je pio. U pijanim se?anjima na polovi?ne i napola zapam?ene istine koje naizgled menjaju sve."

Ben says

Book Review

Book Review - Boy A by Jonathan Trigell

Serpent's Tail Publishers – ISBN 9781846686627 – 248 Pages - £7.99

Boy A follows the rehabilitation of Jack, just out of prison for the murder of a 10 year old girl, when he was the same age. He is 24 now, and the story-line of Boy A finds him trying to get to grips with his new life, in a world that will not let him forget his past.

A campaign by the Sun aims to keep his release on the front pages, and leads to an attack on an innocent man who looks like the photo that they have digitally aged.

Jack was bought up by parents who had other things on their mind. His Mother has cancer, and his father has problems with Alcohol, and neither of them pay any attention when he stops going to school in a mining town where all of the mines have been shut down. It is not long before he meets Boy B, his co-accused, and perhaps his only friend. They form a close knit duo, finding comfort and camaraderie in each other which is missing from the hard corners of their lives.

When a girl, the apple of her parent's eye is found dead they are both found guilty, with the tabloid press leading a hate campaign against the two boys. Neither of them stood much of a chance.

Boy B is later found dead. It is officially thought to be suicide. The truth is that he was murdered, but the lack of any sympathy towards him as child-killer is well illustrated within the novel. The theme of good and evil, and personal responsibility is well explored within the novel. The ambiguous nature of the Murder of the girl itself also leaves the reader unable to make up their own mind about the culpability of Boy A in the crime.

Jack is shown some form of redemption in the help and support offered by Terry, his Case Worker, who sees something of the boy he was behind the Child-Killer that the rest of the world sees.

It is Terry who helps Jack to adapt to his new life, his new job, and his new friends. His support when the truth threatens to get the better of him. He wants to tell the truth to his new friends, and Michelle, the work colleague who becomes his girlfriend, but he knows that he can't tell anyone anything.

There is a sense of foreboding in the storyline, with the sense that Jack is doomed by his past not to have the future that he craves. A kindly work colleague, Chris takes him under his wing, and shows him the life of the average 24 year old, who does not have the same secrets in his past. They go to nightclubs, to pubs, and socialise. It is at a party that Chris is attacked, and learning what he learnt in Prison, Jack protects his new friend. There is the young girl that Jack saves from the car accident that kills her father. It is in this act that Terry says that he is forgiven by something bigger. Jack does not believe in God, but he would like to.

This is a book that is full of energy, of optimism, of an unworldly man discovering the world for the first time. The first steps into his job, of having real money, of his relationship with Michelle are very well drawn, and gives Jack, and the reader a sense of optimism that things may well work out. Unfortunately, the outside World, and The Sun with their coupon campaign have different ideas.

Boy A looks at forgiveness, of character born out of adversity, of new starts, of leaving the past behind, but unfortunately this is not an option that is open to Jack. It is Terry's son, Zed, jealous of the close bond Terry has developed with Jack that sells out his location to The Sun, and it is not long before the strings around Jack's new life are unravelled. First the Sun descend on to where he now lives, his work colleagues turn their backs on him, and all that Jack has left is a life in Prison, or the end that he chooses, giving up the struggle against the tide at Blackpool Pier.

It is the ending for Jack that the Sun and their readers want, but it is not the one that he deserves, and this sense of loss for the character at the end of the story is perhaps Jonathan Trigell's greatest achievement in a book that has already won many prizes.

Viki Johnson says

It was an interesting idea. Sort of, though the author denied it, based on the murder of Jamie Bulger in the early 1990s by two young teenagers. Was their horrific crime nature or nurture, can imprisonment really be the best way to deal with the actions of a child. I really wanted this book to provide some thoughtful and deep insight in what he imagined had happened, and what it might be like to emerge from prison, entering as a young boy, leaving as a man? I was hugely disappointed. It was an exploitative book, published to coincide with the boys release from prison, again the author denies any connection...The characters were shallow, undeveloped, some were pointless. It tried to present a authentic and realistic view of what the situation might have been like for boy A , but the relationship between boy a and his dedicated officer was ridiculous, and don't even get me started on the love interest. I was a good idea, but shame it wasn't written by someone else, a someone else who had the skill and imagination to write a great piece of fiction whilst tackling some of those big questions that are begging to be addressed. Such a shame!

Mike Puma says

Sometimes, award committees get it right—often they don't. The Pulitzer committee may leave you puzzled; the Caldecott or Newbery committees do what they must to arrive at some sort of consensus (often the lack of consensus is apparent in the staggering number of Honor books they also award). With *Boy A*, the 2004 John Llewellyn Rhys Prize and the 2005 Waverton Good Read Award committees got it right.

Told with a relentless dread, the novel presents the story of a damaged youth (*Boy A*) as a steady, relentless pursuit to the inevitable. Readers are asked to identify with a protagonist whose past is defined by a horrible crime (his own), as well as the crimes committed against him by people who couldn't know how they hurt him, didn't care what effect their behavior might have on an already suffering youth, and those whose moral arrogance overrode any opportunity for compassion or understanding (some readers may feel the same way).

While not an overly optimistic book, or a fairy tale everything-will-be-alright story, *Boy A* does leave readers—some readers—with the hope that those who can pick themselves up, those who do start all over again, will succeed in whatever capacity they can and with whatever strength hasn't been crushed out of them.

What begins with rather hokey A to Z chapter headings (which, ultimately, make their own sense—think A to Zed, not A to Zee, Americans), through a fragmented text (like *Boy A*'s life), and with many British references and much British slang (<http://www.urbandictionary.com/> will help), *Boy A* is one to read, ponder, and pass on to others. Not for everyone, perhaps, but definitely worth the time.

Katarina says

"Deca mogu biti ?udovišta. Danas to znamo. Ali nekada su deca bila samo deca."

Niti kra?e knjige niti teže teme. Emotivni maraton.
Tr?anje u susret nevremenu, buri koja je neminovna.

Prikaz je na blogu:
<http://totallyrandombyc.blogspot.rs/2...>

Rianne says

This book is so well written! The first hundred pages or so were quite boring and the story wasn't really clear, but after that it all came together and there's so much more to this than you would think by just reading the description.

The thing is that it was sometimes hard not to like Jack, and that's just so weird because he's been in prison and a girl is dead but still you feel for him. It was sometimes a bit hard to understand because of flashbacks and point of view swaps but that had a charm too.

Jasmine says

Okay I went back and took stars off some of my other reviews because this is one of those pieces of art that reminds you that most people are not hitting the ideal. Yes art is subjective, but somethings seem to just have something special that other pieces don't have. This is one of those pieces. Out of five stars I give it 7 and 1/2.

This book has a format that makes it flow. Instead of a few long chapters there are a lot of short chapters named for the letters of the alphabet such as A is for Apple, Bad Apple. Things that I think we tend to subconsciously ignore but when you are paying attention add interesting layers into the book.

This is by far the most moving book I have ever read. All of the characters come off as real without any defined "evil", or at least leaving this up to interpretation. As the book states at one point people are complicated. Even with the devastating plot of the book I found myself wishing that this was true.

In addition to the fact I think that this book should be forced upon every person on the planet, I think it is especially important for people interested in literary and cultural theory as well as writers as an exemplary example of an author molding the classic format of literature to modern subject matter and beliefs.

The book provokes questions about society, family, prisons, and innocence. The concept behind the story is fascinating before you even pick it up, and the writing is fantastic to compliment the story itself.

Nancy says

Posted at Shelf Inflicted

If I hadn't come across Mariel's review, I'd probably never have found out about this chilling story. To my surprise, it won multiple literary awards and was adapted to film. I really need to get out from under my rock more often.

Boy A is Jack, newly released from prison for the brutal killing of a young girl. He was a child himself when the crime occurred. Now he is 24 years old and trying to adjust to a world that has passed him by while he was imprisoned.

This story is not an exploration of the criminal mind, or about life in prison. It is about Jack's life as an adult living under an assumed identity while he works, makes friends, and finds love. Jack has the support of his "uncle" Terry, who helps him adjust to life on the outside while protecting him from those who would not let him live his life if they knew about his crime.

I am reminded of Walter Mosley's Always Outnumbered, Always Outgunned, a gripping story about a black man released from prison for a murder he committed while in a jealous rage. This story is different, because the man is an adult when he killed. There is no awkward transition between childhood and adulthood. He must live the best life he can while enduring poverty and prejudice.

Because Jack was a child when he killed, public outrage and media hysteria are at its worst. It is not enough for a criminal to do his time. He must pay for his mistakes the rest of his life. While Boy A is Jack's story, it

is also a commentary on the inadequacy of the prison system, how media can damage lives, and the influences parents, friends, and others can have on impressionable young lives.

I want to believe that Jack made it to the boat safely.

Joe Stamber says

A sorrowful tale of how tragically things can go wrong when young people are neglected, abused, abandoned and generally treated badly. I saw the film years ago and Andrew Garfield's mumbling, frightened performance absolutely nailed it. There is a sense of dread throughout the novel regardless of what is happening (as there is in the film) and I was constantly waiting for bad things to happen. The reasons why people turn out bad, choose a particular course of action and whether or not they can be redeemed is, and always will be, open to question. Boy A is a book that will make you think and feel. It might not be technically perfect but I have given it the best rating I can based on it as a whole, for the way it dragged me in and beat me up. Like the film, it will stay with me for a long time.

Kyle says

may be the best book i have read, no not overreacting -- at the least the best in a long, long time -- first the style, simple direct writing, no overdramatizing, gratuitous vocabulary, overdescription -- not trying to impress anybody with ornate language -- just a sad, so sad, story to tell and tells it and makes you feel it -- just short to the point jabs that all land -- some british jargon and references that knowledge of certainly would have enhanced, but these didnt take away from the effect -- really, i have never had my heart broken so much by a book -- not to mention so early and often -- havent seen the film yet but plan to shortly, though i can't imagine it matching this -- read this book

Jackie Molloy says

It mirrors the tragic story of Jamie Bulger. We meet Jack as he is released back into society secretly after spending all his young life in institutions and prisons. He is supported by the child-like faith his support officer, Terry, has in him to be a functioning member of society. Everything is difficult for Jack as he hasn't had a life yet and he suddenly has a freedom to experience what for others are ordinary things. Of course, inevitably events catch up with him and through the unrelenting spite and resentfulness of Zeb, Terry's son, he is exposed once again to the anger of society for his wicked childhood crime of murder of a young girl. Without Boy B, you feel sure he would never have had the nerve to do this but there are many influences on him leading him inexorably to this path in his life.

Jack starts very warily and as events progress it might be alright. He lives very much in the present as his experiences unfold. Every character is understandable as the author tracks their thought process. I didn't really feel a strong like or dislike for any one as they are all just people at the mercy of their own wants and character flaws. Zeb brings it all down eventually but even he is understandable in his rage at his neglectful father Terry. It's funny that never really feel revulsion for Boy A, it is more a head shaking sadness that any of it ever happened. Such an evil mix of circumstances makes it all feel so inevitable.

It is a very creditable plotline, having basis in reality. Boy A haunted and hunted by demons, one of which is the press which hounds him mercilessly. His life was ruined while he was still innocent which seems the

source of the tragedy, the murder of the girl is strangely slightly less emotive. It unfolds with a sense of hopefulness that then becomes impending doom.

I approached this book with a certain amount of reluctance as I still cannot bear to think about the fate of Jamie Bulger. The story progresses at a decent rate. Whilst dipping back into the past to give the platform for what is happening. The characters are all very real in all the range of human weaknesses, impulses and good intentions. The interaction of the characters does make for compulsive reading.

The whole book is somewhat uncomfortable reading because of the subject matter. It is very a very difficult subject to write about and Jonathan Trigell writes it very well in deed. If anything. It re-enforced to me how your life can get out of control and take a totally different path as a result of events and people that you don't know about, impacting on you. And how people can work against people for no particular good reason, just spite.

The ending was rather escapist, leaving you uncertain as to the actual fate of Boy A but feeling he jumps and disappears. Frozen in time like the last still of ' Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid'

Mariel says

This isn't a spoiler tag but a longwinded tag. (I'm embarrassed tag.)

Words are not my first emotional language. I'll think without words and later try to come up with some that fit what I was feeling, if enough of it sticks by me through the thickness and thinness. The way I understand (assuming I understand what I believe I understand) things is feeling out what people mean based on whatever I can get out of posture, tone, facial movements, eyes that don't smile, spaces between words and silences. (My social retardedness definitions. I can't be right 'cause I do the wrong thing a lot.) What is around them, what isn't. I'll want to match it with my own. Bittersweet smile? Heartbroken movement of lips with words unsaid? (It probably comes out of being shy. The watching is from hope that there's more to life.) Sometimes it is nothing I get and another part of my life disappears from me like one of those time eaters from Stephen King's The Langoliers (not even with their sharp teeth. It isn't important enough to be painful). Sometimes it'll later occur to me that something that happened before reminds me of something else (most of the time that something is movies, or built up stories I've made up to make my own surroundings feel more vivid and worth getting up for). What I really live for is to take a start of something I've watched, to feel I might have slipped inside some kind of ellipsis mental space of someone else, and shared something real and enhance further "experience". A posture that goes beyond what they are saying. "He looks nervous that something good might happen." "She feels like she's a kid again." Anything that's more than distanced strangers talk. I'm not going to know MOST people I'll encounter very well. That's one of the wonderful things about stories, the knowing. (Not to mention they give me the experience to understand how I might've felt some other time, let alone imagine how someone else felt. Not in the "We both knew that..." Kevin Arnold voice over Wonder Years way. He's a jerk. He didn't KNOW anything they knew. Just maybe...a hope? That something special happened. Maybe.)

There's a failing with me, I've been feeling. It's words with a real meaning. It is harder for me to get out of words what I feel drawn towards in people spaces. Words come last. What's the definition? I've said all this before, probably. The experience feels less like experience of my own if I don't feel like I was there to listen to something. I'm almost there, I can imagine it and then I try to imagine the faces in my mind and if they look happy or sad, which shade of it, how long did it last, was there regret... It doesn't feel alive like a twist in one way it wouldn't have happened. It's different when the writing feels like the words were born in their brain already and they didn't have dark search for them. (Nabokov is one of those. Elizabeth Bowen reads to

me like a mind reader. There's talk about psychological novels? It's better than that. Mind reading novels that fit in the way that psych labels never could. Those feel homogenized.)

Sometimes I feel like everything I "know" is forgotten like the times you can't remember your own phone number and the harder you try to get it back the further away it gets.

I don't know which one Boy A fits into. Jack spends all his brain trying to live as if one moment (a murder) happens forever and he's a kid forever. He's not a kid forever. It didn't happen forever. Where's the space that's your own brain and no one else can ever take it away from you? It is lost in different ways. In the eyes of everyone who didn't believe he could be anyone else (in freaking hindsight!). There are words (It didn't do it. That wasn't me) and there are words that should be ignored (This is all I'll ever be) and listen to the dark searching for who he is (There isn't only darkness inside a person). Possibilities? What about hope? What about that...

Anyway, it's a weird space of no thought and trying to convince, which feels to me like too much thinking, when inside the irises of those who don't feel around in the dark in a way that feels natural to me.

The 2007 film Boy A is one of my favorites. I saw it before I read the novel. The film is one of the most faithful adaptations I've seen. Many of the events are the same. It's different like walking into the same room with lights on or off. (The film has more flashbacks to childhood than the book. The film doesn't have the scenes of Jack's time in prison.) What I read off of Jack in words and off of Jack of flesh (played by Andrew Garfield in the film) was different. Jack of the book is words spoken by people in his life and past. Often words spoken by people who did not see him at all. Jack was afraid to be seen even as he was desperate to be seen. If I were in that room I would have been looking for that. I wouldn't have been looking to see if I could write someone off or not.

It was a suspended feeling for me to try and see past those visions to something I could believe. Is it my failing and I don't get how others see other people? Stories are all from different eyes and yet I felt like this time it was less my eyes. Maybe I'm weird. The film felt like reading Jack from Andrew Garfield. His shame to continue living and the desire that might beat past that to live anyway. The potential for violence (that had happened, tragically killing himself as he helped kill someone else. When he was a kid) that is dormant, what happens to bring out that side of him, how it might have happened differently if something else had happened differently. People are capable of all sorts of things. The people who were out for blood to kill Jack, like they were the law themselves, were no less violent than he (who did not set out to kill anyone that morning). If people are capable of anything, they are capable of anything. Do they get to say that when something bad happens and never for the good? His struggle to live with the guilt and shame, make a new life... It was in every afraid to raise his voice word that Garfield spoke as Jack. His afraid to be happy smiles. Grateful for anything good at all.

(There's a discussion questionnaire in the back of the book that is good. I liked the one about why kid killers are considered to be more evil than adult killers.)

The book showed Jack through different eyes. Jack's clinginess towards Terry. He loves him, maybe he needs him more. What if he had had that love sooner in his life? Is it need only? It is written that he feels guilty that Terry spends more time with Jack than he does with his son, Zeb. It was written... yet that was all I could see. Terry feels it is okay to like Jack more when someone else he likes (Jack's new landlady) also seems to like Jack (she does not know who he really is). It was more telling to me that he does not talk about his part in the killing, of how he fears losing Terry, than it did when it is stated how he feels. The unsaid says more to me because it feels it is there to see, weighting words. Son Zeb feels that Jack stole his father (in

reality, he himself chose not to see his dad, blaming his parents divorce on his dad's work with inmates he tried to help adjust to life outside). The pride Terry feels in how far Jack has come shows in the eyes on the screen, in how he puts his arm on his shoulder. Zeb must hear it in his dad's voice and wonder how a murderer could ever do anything to be proud of. He cannot forgive something that happened years ago (a divorce). How could he ever understand that a whole life isn't made up of one event?

It wouldn't have occurred to me to read fear in Terry of getting too close because of who Jack was. Because the media whips up frenzy over new cases? Adults killing kids would be old (unless they were blonde and pretty). How was he any different than any other inmate Terry would have worked with? Terry who says that he is a new man now. Says, says, says. I need to look into the eyes and see which is true. Film Terry I believe had hope that he was a new man.

Jack of the book is rooted in a rootless way to the childhood he didn't have. His childhood before the murder, before prison. A childhood of disgusted neglect at home, brutal neglect at school. Bullies and fear and unforgivingness. No one would stand up for him and say that they didn't see it coming all along. Boy A ceases to have a name (in the film he is Eric). He's the killer of the little girl, loved by all who did not know her when she was alive. (If Boy B had been born several months earlier, Boy A would have taken all of the blame himself.) As if they didn't purposely not see him at all. After the murder, well, he grows up in prison. Boy A's prison therapist notes that he is childish for someone of his age (when he is seventeen). He tells her what she wants to hear (that he killed the girl as much as Boy B did) so that he will be allowed to continue seeing his case worker, Terry. This is what we want you to know, right? The eyes of a note taking shrink desperately desirous of awards were not ones I would have chosen. I believed he was childish when Jack reacts to his situations as if he had no experience in which to judge anything by. He has the fear of letting on that he has no experience.

Jack feels he is not allowed to live past what had happened to him before because he does not deserve it. The hesitation, a hopeful look, closed mouth again. If he could admit to his new friends, especially his new girlfriend, who he was... Is lying about who he is another crime, another betrayal of trust? The happiest time he has ever known. Is it a lie because they don't really know him? After he is exposed and the wrath of England is upon him once more, Jack leaves Chris a message imploring him that it was really him all along, as if a plea for it to be true, to be seen as something else than a child murderer. I felt the plea in the words. It wasn't what was true because it couldn't be the truth or untruth. He was Boy A. He was also Jack who saved a little girl from a car wreck with his workmate Chris. A guy who wanted to be someone. Future...

Terry was wrong that he could just be a new man. I think the whole point was that one man isn't one thing only. The point of the film was also a message to England who go blood crazy and want to hang and imprison for life, regardless of sentences and time served. Vigilante justice. People there have had to hide for being falsely accused of being killers by the media. I know that's the point too (not one that goes over very well, if hatred for Samantha Morton playing Myra Hindley in Longford tv movie was any indication. That was about the lawyer fighting to get her released when she was kept past her sentence. I'm sure Garfield got some hatin' too. I'm sure Trigell got some hating!). Quotes on the book jacket talk about Trigell building sympathy for Boy A, maybe as if it were a magician's trick and Jack wouldn't have deserved it otherwise. I think the point is paying attention to people and trying to listen enough to find out why people do anything. If anyone had cared that Boy A was beaten up on, or that Boy B was raped by his brother, that the two never went to school anymore. That they gave themselves up to abandon because that was the only time they felt free. But people don't want to think about why pitt bulls who are trained for violence attack kids either. They'd rather put down the dog and ban them from city limits. They were written off as dogs. There was potential for good as well as violence in Jack.

I pay attention better by watching than by what people say. If I hadn't seen the film I might have seen Jack as

a young man who thought more about what other people thought of him than as a man who was afraid to live with himself as he truly was, if he wasn't capable of being more than he had been.

Do actions speak louder than words? (It depends on what kinds of words and how they are spoken.) **True spoiler ahead**

Jack kills himself in the end. What speaks the loudest? Did he die because he was afraid to live with people once they knew what he had been? That the words that would always be the loudest were those?

What would his eyes have said? Did he reconsider right after he jumped? (What life flashed before his life? That might tell him once and for all what he decided his own life was.) Or did he hope that someone understood?

I would want to understand... I would want to read and hope for hope.

Stats are a dangerous thing. I hate seeing stats and end results and those words.

Amanda says

Hello there FEELINGS, how are you today?

I was ready to give this two stars until the 50% mark. The story moved along a little too slowly for me, a little too haphazardly. Sure, the characters were, maybe great isn't the right word, but intriguing. Ever so intriguing. Still, I thought, this will probably two stars. Man, was I wrong.

Boy A will be on my top reads of 2015. I'm considering bumping up my rating to five stars. Because that last half. Emotions. Scattered all over the place. I'm not sorry to say some of my friend literally told me to take it easy, not ramble so much incoherent gushing. Right now I'm still not done gushing out my feels for this book, so I apologize if this review is a mess.

Boy A is the story of Jack, who after years in prison is now released to the real world. His crime? When he was in his early teens, he and another boy murdered a young girl, Angela, and it became a national tragedy. The boys were hounded, terrorized by media, and generally what you'd expect. When Jack is released from prison he gets to choose his own name, which he decides will be Jack. In the real world he is nobody, a new person as close to no one knows his history and real name. He's free from the people who bullied him when he was young, free from all bad childhood memories, and most importantly, his crime, although that still haunts his mind. But now he can experience friends, having a girlfriend, living on his own.

If Jack had been nine months younger he would have been innocent, simple as that. How can you have definitions and scales about murder? Why was it all right for the CIA to kill Che in cold blood, a man who really might have changed the world? Or the innocent people in Chile, Argentina, East Timor, Congo, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Haiti, Guatemala, Turkey, Brazil, the Philippines. Political mass murders, that are lucky to make the paper at all. Crimes committed by mercenaries, men who kill for money, not seen to be as bad as someone who acts from some nameless sickness, shameless sudden impulse?

Let me tell you this: Jack's character isn't the most important part of the story. It's about how people are affected, family and friends, the country, people involved with the crime. It's about who is guilty, what is guilt. It's about power and desire. It's about so much.

Does that mean he's evil? Or is it without those urges he could not be good? If being good is a denial of the bad then those we deem evil are not worse, they are weaker. And if goodness means anything at all, surely it means the strong helping the weak.

In the end thought, it's hard to say who is right and who is wrong. A tragedy will always be a tragedy, but there can always be more to the story. Maybe it's impossible to win.

Only the young die good. And Angela Milton died young enough to be perfect. A martyr to modern society. Evidence that we are fucked. Thought records suggest we always have been.

Lee Ann says

The capacity some human beings have for committing acts of violence stuns me. I just do not comprehend how someone can lose their head to the point where they are able to inflict pain and/or death on another person—especially pain which requires a direct act of violence in which the aggressor experiences physical contact with his or her victim. This all becomes exponentially more horrifying and incomprehensible when the crime involves children.

Somehow, all these feelings were pushed to the sidelines when I read Jonathan Trigell's "Boy A". I did not forget how disgusting murder is, or how awful it is for the victim's family. What changed was that I had empathy for the assailant, Boy A, and his situation.

The story centers around Jack Burridge, who has spent a large part of his young life in various forms of incarceration because of a murder he committed as a child. The law has since decided that he is rehabilitated, and subsequently, he has been granted release—he sheds his former name, along with his past and enters the world as Jack. The only connections to his past are his case worker, Terry and the panic button he wears in case he needs help from the law, which now protects his anonymity.

Trigell transitions back and forth throughout the book—taking the reader through Jack's current life, to his unsure and lonely existence before he became Boy A, to his years in secure facilities and jail. In addition to this journey, Trigell shares glimpses into the lives of the people around Jack—the friendship between B and A before the murder; B incarcerated; Jack's parents; Terry, etc. This movement allowed me to gain a wider perspective on the why and the how when it came to Jack's human development and the choices he made. I found I pitied A, and wanted him to stand up for himself, but at the same understood why he was only a follower and never a leader.

I also found that I liked Jack. He is wide-eyed, scared, and hesitant, but this, along with his effort to build a life for himself as Jack makes him endearing. He is not completely alone because he has Terry, and Jack loves him as a son loves his father. I just wanted to hug Jack and see him succeed in this incredibly daunting endeavor. I even found that I could look beyond Jack's past as Boy A and questioned whether or not he truly

murdered Angela Milton.

My mind has been opened towards reasoning and understanding in a way that it has before. I tend towards the close-minded and often see things only in black and white; even more so when it comes to crimes of violence and brutality. Trigell has made the world gray for me. I still do not know if I believe in rehabilitation, and I feel absolute abhorrence for crimes committed by so-called innocents; but now I also see how a good child can make life-altering, life-ruining choices just because he or she is lonely and lost. In 2008, "Boy A" was voted in the UK as "the most discussion worthy novel by a living writer in the 'Spread the Word poll,'" and I must concur.
