



The Silver Linings Playbook

Matthew Quick

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Meet Pat. Pat has a theory: his life is a movie produced by God. And his God-given mission is to become physically fit and emotionally literate, whereupon God will ensure a happy ending for him—the return of his estranged wife, Nikki. (It might not come as a surprise to learn that Pat has spent time in a mental health facility.) The problem is, Pat's now home, and everything feels off. No one will talk to him about Nikki; his beloved Philadelphia Eagles keep losing; he's being pursued by the deeply odd Tiffany; his new therapist seems to recommend adultery as a form of therapy. Plus, he's being hunted by Kenny G!

In this enchanting novel, Matthew Quick takes us inside Pat's mind, showing us the world from his distorted yet endearing perspective. As the award-winning novelist Justin Cronin put it: "Tender, soulful, hilarious, and true, *The Silver Linings Playbook* is a wonderful debut."

The Silver Linings Playbook Details

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From Reader Review The Silver Linings Playbook for online ebook

Nikki says

I.. LOVED this book. So heartbreakingly honest... so funny and real.

Pat Peoples has been in "the bad place" for years. He is, by anyone's definition, crazy. He's violent, he has forgotten years of his life, and his arch nemesis is jazz musician Kenny G... but he's endlessly and relentlessly hopeful. He believes in silver linings above anything else... and he believes that by trying to become the best man he can, he will eventually reach his own silver lining. His father seems to have his own issues... he is distant and moody and his affection for Pat is anything but obvious. His mother is the eternal nurturer and protector, and his younger brother supports Pat no matter what. Pat's therapist also becomes very attached to Pat and friendly with Pat as he helps him overcome his mental blocks and unstable moods. Pat Peoples is a character you cannot help but love and root for.

Tiffany has been through her own struggles. She is a compulsive liar and she, too, suffers from a sickness that she cannot control. In each other, Pat and Tiffany find a common ground and a unique bond.

This was just a beautifully told story about struggle and optimism. Despite everything, "crazy" Pat Peoples sympathizes with others. He believes in working hard for success and being kind, not right.

This book has a valuable message and a wonderful delivery. I absolutely adored it.

Jessica says

This is has become one of those books that I really, really enjoyed reading, but couldn't quite put my finger on exactly why. I mean, I watched the movie before and absolutely fell in love with it. I'd heard that the book and movie were very different so I wasn't expecting a perfect match (I think this helped as well.) I found myself just falling in love with Pat and Tiffany's COMPLETELY messed up lives for some reason and was rooting for them the entire book. Not just romantically.. I was really, really hoping that each of them got the happy endings that they deserved. I can't believe how far Pat has come from the beginning to the end of this book. I don't know.. some books just really speak to you and it's hard to put it into words.. I definitely recommend this book!

Kenchiin says

I really thought this was 'that stupid book' everyone loves and I would hate.
Funny fact: I loved it.

Alex says

Just saw the movie and I cried like a little girl..

The next day, after reading the book...

Well, I'm a little disappointed in the book. The movie was excellent. I loved the chemistry between the actors, their wonderful performances and the story.

I found myself skipping pages in the book whenever Pat talked about football. I didn't find Pat and Tiffany's romantic relationship credible because the book lacked the proper detailed descriptions of their heated encounters.

I'm going to compare the book and the movie, so brace yourselves:
Here are **movie** Pat and Tiffany:

Now here are **book** Pat and Tiffany:

Here are some of **movie** Pat and Tiffany's funny and touching moments:

Now here are **book** Pat and Tiffany's moments:

Here's **movie** Pat and Tiffany's ending:
(view spoiler)

And here's **book** Pat and Tiffany's ending, or better yet, my reaction to it:

You can see why I loved the movie.

In short, I wouldn't have read this book if I hadn't seen the movie first. Good thing it was a fast read.

3 stars

Lee says

Here are seven weird "bestselling writing tips" suggested by this playbook to line writers' pockets with silver:

1. Use short chapters, with chapter titles consisting of a phrase taken from the end of each chapter

We like short chapters because we like easily achievable goals (ie, I'm gonna read five more pages before I turn off the light and go to sleep -- OK, one more chapter -- OK, one more quick chapter -- and suddenly you've read fifty more pages and stayed up a while longer than expected). It also means more blank space, so after you've read three or four chapters you've turned a bunch of blank pages and therefore have turned more pages than you've read, which makes readers feel good about themselves and about the book.

2. Employ a damaged or "off" first-person POV (ie, narrator) to make writing easier

Simple, straightforward, even somewhat degraded language and perception is an effective and popular technique because it kicks authorial shortcomings under the rug -- ie, there's no need for striking language, passages, insight etc since the narrator is damaged and fanciness (or to use the narrator's preferred term "swankiness") would be unrealistic. An easy way to pull this off is to define commonly known terms and do not use contractions (don't use "*don't*").

2a. Like the "likeability" concept. The damaged narrator herein is likeable because he's experienced trauma and is doing what he can to overcome it. Which is inspirational. And readers like inspirational books. A more ambitious novel might associate the narrator's trauma with the country's trauma post-9/11 (not the case in this one).

2b. Let the reader see around the narrator. It was moving to learn along with the narrator what he'd forgotten and what he'd missed while institutionalized (eg, the Eagles in the Super Bowl!).

2c. Bond with readers via quirky terminology. The narrator has language and behavior quirks that at first don't make much sense but over time serve as a bond between narrator and reader, like "the bad place" referring to the mental institution and "apart time" referring to the split with his wife -- also his hysterical aggressive response to the musical stylings of Kenny G.

3. Set competing love interests in motion, favoring the real over the ideal

Impossible love interest for which the narrator obsessively pines comes up against a realistic love interest to which the narrator is pretty much oblivious. Readers like conflicting love interests, particularly when one is impossible and the other is unrecognized or smack in front of the protagonist's face (see "Jerry Maguire").

4. Riff on popular cinematic/literary works as a substitute for insightful/thematically suggestive exposition

Let's hear it for intertextuality: Narrator's ex-wife was a lit teacher so he's reading up on the American classics (*Gatsby*, *Huck Finn*, *Catcher in the Rye*, *The Bell Jar*, *Farewell to Arms*). Narrator very simply discusses themes and author therefore sort of deftly associates such themes and the corresponding classic novels with the novel in the reader's hands (see *Special Topics in Calamity Physics*). Also references "Rocky" and "Empire Strikes Back" -- classic American movies -- and the narrator refers to his life as a movie while the book itself is wholly dramatized and therefore feels "cinematic," as though it might lend itself well to the big screen. The self-consciously cinematic bit where the narrative is presented as a montage like in "Rocky" when Stallone is training (and narrator suggests that reader hum the Rocky theme while reading) may have been where I began to feel the novel unravel a bit -- things got a little rushed about 60% through, starting with this montage, followed by short letters and clipped scenes. I didn't mind different textures in the second

half of the book but I did feel like things fell off a bit as a consequence: a four-star book up until the montage?

5. Serve the Community

It helps to have a book deal with a microculture that most people don't have access to but which makes readers feel good when immersed in it thanks to narrator's immersion. This isn't really a book about the Eagles -- a team I've seriously rooted for since the late 1970s and read about daily even in the off-season etc -- it's about the community that revolves around the game, the fandom that brings people together. These scenes made my old heartstrings emerge. Again, it's not about the Eagles (although it nicely uses real player names and actual events in the 2006 Eagles season, for example the Terrell Owens pill overdose) -- it could've used any team with a fanatical fan base.

6. Remember that family matters, particularly father/son issues

The father (portrayed by DeNiro in the movie) is a great character in this since he's clearly on the spectrum but older and therefore not diagnosed. His hysteria about the Eagles and change in general suggest a history of mental illness he's masked through routine (Eagles obsession and reading historical fiction). Meanwhile, the mother throws her hand to her mouth whenever father and son do the Eagles chant (minor point: no one yells "ahhh" before starting it and no one spells it out with their bodies) and sobs, which is affecting at first but over time seemed sort of sappy (ie, emotionally manipulative). The bit where the narrator takes the baby into the ocean freaked me out as the father of a one year old -- that's emotionally manipulative up the wazoo, presenting a scene involving an endangered child.

7. Withhold major traumatic events until the end

Traumatic events for the narrator and Tiffany were withheld to the end but their revelation was spoiled for me thanks to the movie. I'm not sure how I would've responded to the scenes at the end if I didn't already know them. They explain a lot but also it seems like the narrator would've had a history of violence or at least a few more episodes. Anyway, the traumatic events could've been revealed in the first scenes as a gripping opener but then the reader wouldn't be disoriented along with the narrator and the revelation of the major withheld plot point wouldn't be cathartic for the narrator and possibly satisfying for a reader.

+

Anyway, other than being a life-long Eagles fan and a Philly resident, why did I read this? I read it thanks to a friend's ranting about it recently -- he's actually been ranting about it since it came out a few years ago (I hope he has the first edition hardcover -- it's worth more than \$100 these days), in part because he's a writer who wrote a semi-similar book, a memoir (*Bury Me in My Jersey: A Memoir of My Father, Football, and Philly*), that came out around the same time and wasn't made into an award-winning movie that surely made Matthew Quick presumably/possibly wealthy. So I was repeatedly told over the course of a few years that this novel was not something I'd like at all -- and since I also saw the movie -- I was interested in giving it a try after hearing my friend rant about it again a week or two ago. Plus, every once in a while I like to descend from hi-falutin snotty lit perch and read pop books and be reminded of the sort of thing so-called "general readers" like to read.

In general, for me, 3.5 stars rounded down since the ending seemed sentimental and unrealistic, particularly the bit cut from the film where the narrator winds up in North Philadelphia in front of the house of his "black friend Danny." (The narrator is touched, so he gets all sorts of passes a reliable narrator wouldn't -- also it's

clear that the author is aware of what he's doing with the narrator's voice and perspective on race etc.) North Philadelphia is larger than most cities in the United States. It's a Christmas miracle, sure, but totally unrealistic and sort of lazy. No wonder it was cut from the movie.

Other than a few stray descriptions of the Walt Whitman bridge ("hospital green") and the subway to North Philly (graffiti on the seats and half a cheeseburger in the middle of the aisle), Philadelphia itself isn't described much. Street names are mentioned -- he walks right past where I work and walk every day (Market Street toward the Delaware River) and they go to Pat's Steaks, two blocks from where I'm writing this now -- but he doesn't really describe what it's like. Philadelphia is sometimes referred to as "Negadelphia," since many folks really do excel at pessimism, especially sports fans, so the narrator's therapy-induced optimism makes a lot of sense in this part of the world.

Overall, I enjoyed reading it, wanted to read it, smiled many times and laughed a few times (mostly at the Eagles-related community stuff, particularly the Asian Invasion -- a gang of Indian men in #20 Brian Dawkins jerseys -- and when they shared chicken tikka with the narrator's friends I got a little verklempt), admired it as a guidebook for how to write a popular novel (see numbered list above), rooted for the narrator and the damaged eye-level love interest and also wanted things to work out for the mother and father. Memorable images throughout (running ten miles wearing trash bag, ordering Raisin Bran at the diner and giving a huge tip, brother playing piano in his high-rise apartment wearing Eagles jersey) but a forgettable ending, possibly in part because the traumatic episodes were spoiled for me by the film.

Also, again, unlike with most books, I came to this with chronically reduced expectations thanks to my friend and after having seen the movie. Having liked the movie just fine and expecting the worst when opening the book, I was surprised it wasn't a total piece of trash -- it had some emotionally affecting bits (particularly as the narrator learns about everything he's missed over the past few years as he's been institutionalized), some funny bits, and was clear and quick for the most part (although the last third or so felt rushed). Overall, a lot like the movie, it was perfectly adequate literary entertainment with some sadness and humor and light existential lessons (AKA mainstream pop). Do I generally expect more from novels? Totally. But I felt this did a good job doing what it wanted to do: it's an accessible, sad, sometimes funny novel involving sports fanaticism and obsession/mental illness, not to mention family, hope, longing, love, loss. Final verdict: reading stuff like this reminds me why I usually read stuff unlike it, but I'm glad I read it and feel like I learned something from it about how such novels are made.

Diane says

Update: I finished this book a day ago and it's really stayed with me. I've been thinking about the earnestness of Pat. He had such good intentions! He was focused on being kind instead of being right, which is an attitude that could help many of us. He was focused on improving his mind and on trying new things -- more positive attributes. He wanted to be nicer to his family and he exercised every day -- both good things. If he didn't have an anger problem, he would make a great friend! I increased my rating to 4 stars because of how much I have enjoyed the story, even after finishing it.

Original Review: This was a fun, fast read. I like books that cover psychological and sociological aspects, and this was an interesting take on a narrator who is anxious, obsessive-compulsive and who is recovering from a trauma.

It's the story of Pat, who was just released from a mental institution and is obsessed with getting back together with his ex-wife, Nikki. Pat is an optimist and only wants to hear about happy endings. He's convinced his life is a movie that will have a happy reunion with his wife if only he can improve himself enough. He exercises vigorously and has been reading classic literature when he's not working out -- he thinks Nikki will be impressed by how fit he is and how he's improving his mind. (His reactions to the plots of *The Great Gatsby*, *A Farewell to Arms*, *The Bell Jar* and the *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* are highly amusing.)

We don't learn why Pat was in the mental institution until later in the book, but we can guess it has something to do with his violent outbursts. He goes into a rage when he hears a Kenny G song, he attacks his mother and he gets into a brawl at a Philadelphia Eagles game.

His first week back home with his parents, Pat gets invited to a dinner party where he meets Tiffany, who is also struggling with a trauma, and the two slowly become friends. There is a fun storyline in which the two compete in a dance contest, and Pat hopes that Nikki will be impressed that he's trying new things.

I had seen the movie version, but I liked how the book fleshed out the characters and the thought processes of Pat. The writing is fairly strong and is done all in Pat's voice, so we really see his neuroses at work. We also get a better sense of the strained relationship with Pat's father, who has similar anger issues and seems to have obsessive-compulsive disorder.

I would recommend the book to those who like family dramas, psychological issues or stories of redemption.

K.D. Absolutely says

The movie is better than the book. Normally, it is the reverse but this is one of the exceptions.

The movie got nominated in the 2013 Oscars for Best Picture, Actor in a Leading Role, Actress in a Leading Role (won), Actor in a Supporting Role, Actress in a Supporting Role, Directing, Film Editing and Writing.

I finished reading the book yesterday and so I bought a pirated DVD copy and watched it today. The movie people made the dull book somewhat better. Dull because it is all a rehash. I've seen enough of the mentally-challenged people who have golden innocent hearts in the past. Think Tom Hanks in 1994 movie *Forrest Gump* and Logan Lerman in last year's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. The story of Pat Peoples here in *The Silver Linings Playbook* basically follows the same plot as those of *Forrest* and *Charlie*. People find them all adorable because we all have our own deficiencies and these fictional characters triumph over theirs despite the fact that they are more mentally-challenged than most of us.

The book is heavy on references to soccer and Pat Peoples's addiction to exercise. These were both toned down in the movie. Pat and Kitty did not dance to Bonnie Tyler's *Total Eclipse of the Heart* but to some remix of tunes that I and my family thought would make them win like in the book. The movie also injected many dramatic scenes that made the story more memorable at least for me. However, the believability of the ending is better in the book. The movie, being a movie, made it more like in the tradition of romantic comedy hits. (view spoiler)

The book is an easy read. The prints per page are few and the font is big. The language is very contemporary and the dialogue is simple and direct with the author probably trying to capture the simpleness of a lunatic

man's mind and thinking. Pat People believes that his life is like a movie. Again, not an original concept (not in the movie) but there is nothing original about this book so enough said. Oh, in the movie, there is a scene when Pat Peoples throws the book out of the window. I was thinking about doing the same but it's just that I love donating my used books especially those that I least appreciated and this book will surely be included in the next batch.

Overall, I don't hate this book. Just nice book to while away time especially during a long weekend like what I am having now.

Jason says

There are good books and there are bad books, period, that's the distinction.

Norton Juster

It appears that this book was structured, not around a plot but around a shamelessly badly rendered character. This idea could have been surprisingly successful, if in the hands of a author who knows his craft. 2d characters. You can almost hear the echo of their cries as they wither in a lack of creativity and the weight of their soul crush monotony.

The main character is a narcissistic, obsessed, child who had the cognitive abilities of a ten year old boy, pampered by a mother with low self-esteem and tremendous enmeshment issues. He seems to process information at an incredibly slow speed and perceives thing with such little competence that it is truly astonishing; think gold fish. Seriously, referring to a psychiatric facility as the "bad place" when he is a thirty something year old? Does he also sleep with a teddy bear and call his mom into his room, petrified of the monster in the closet?

His behavior has nothing to do with his diagnosis but completely and totally everything to do with a poor conceived central character. He demonstrates borderline tendencies, but these are so poorly constructed and demonstrated that it almost distracts the reader. In the movie they outlined a decent, although simplistic illustration of bipolar disorder. In the book he pops so many pills he is a walking drug store. Even when skipping his medication he doesn't demonstrate any significant symptomatology. So, are we just to assume that the author wrote a novel about a bloated, stereotypical man?

Cause Seriously that's been done.

We also have a therapist that acts in an unethical, immoral, and haphazard manner. This is dangerous in a climate that isolates those who seek out therapists, and in a dangerous time in history where mental health awareness is paramount to a functioning society. There is some serious misguided bullshit here.

The father/ son relationship can really be summed up by:

Homer (IE father Pat Peoples): Stupid boy. All you do is cost me money. Money I could be wasting." (on a TV after i threw the remote at the old one)...

"Albus Dumbledore (IE: Pat Peoples): Don't ignore me" ...

Chip (IE: Pat Peoples): [being spanked as part of Omega's initiation] Thank you, sir! May I have another?....

and repeat

Tension between father and son fell completely flat and was absolutely noteless. The very fabrication of this relationship was so poorly constructed that it surpasses expectations of how horrible a character's relationship with another major character could be.

The dialog is tone death, the relations between characters non-distinct. The characters so under developed it seems they are a carbon copy of one another, almost cartoony in an 80s retro before technology sorta way.

A rip off of about ten other books;see other reviews; <http://www.goodreads.com/review/show/...>

Trite, repetitive and under develop plot lines.

It appears that little effort was put into the majority of the plot and especially the smaller sub plots. Crazy ass bastard is totally scary obsessed with his ex wife (of whom he has NOT seen for four years); it's just really creepy; like restraining order creep fest. It echos the whole box plot device of *This is Why We Broke Up* ; switch out box for ex-wife. Yet, by some extraordinary means, this is even worse than *This is Why We Broke Up*.

A downright disgrace to a movie that, while completely and utterly flawed, at least held strings of suspense and character development. It at least had a twinkle of self respect and dignity. This book, on the other hand is the complete absence of those qualities and lacks craft, and exudes a lack of skill and sophistication.

If this was project runway I could hear Tim Gunn saying "Congratulations on this perfect example of an overworked, underwhelming piece"

Elaine says

Also posted on rabbitsfor tea

Warning: This book will spoil some classics if you have yet to read them.

1. The Scarlet Letter
2. The Great Gatsby
3. A Farewell to Arms
4. The Catcher in the Rye
5. The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
6. The Bell Jar

Alright, consider yourselves warned, now onward to my short review.

Silver Linings is one of those books that I wouldn't normally pick up and probably wouldn't if not for wanting to read it before I watch the movie. From the trailer, I expected a pretty light hearted book with quirky characters but what I got was really different, although not entirely in a bad way.

There were chapters that made me smile and chapters that made me teared but at the end of the day, I don't love this book. I saw a review on Goodreads saying that *Silver Linings* is like an adult *Perks* and I guess I do agree a little. So it's probably the case of 'it's not you, it's me' for this since I didn't exactly love *Perks* either.

Neil (or bleed) says

Here I am again to the part where I don't know exactly what to say about a book I loved.

Anyway, The Silver Linings Playbook is an engaging, poignant novel that touched a lot of things: mental health, silver linings (obviously), brotherhood, parentage, lies, friendship, love, betterment of oneself, etc. It also touched my heart, my soul, my kidney, my liver, my pancreas and ten of my vital organs lol. (Here's me doing my best to give justice on why this book is worth a read.) See, I can't articulate the right words. Hahaha.

Personally, The Silver Linings Playbook book made me happy (because Jennifer Lawrence is in the cover! "OMG Katniss what are you doing there?") and sad at the same time. Also, hopeful. I did smile a lot and chuckled with some parts I've read and be emotional whenever Pat is in the middle of something that can crush him. It's contagious, okay. I mean I can connect well with Pat Peoples so seeing him sad makes me sad, too. But, I really felt sorry for him when the truth has been revealed, not that his efforts will be wasted but because it was really devastating knowing the truth.

Besides, I love every character in this novel. They aren't one-dimensional characters because even they weren't fully fleshed-out, there are something intriguing about them that can affect the main character or even the story. Also, I didn't mind the football theme of the book. I'd rather witnessed and enjoyed the way Pat and others support their favorite team which is actually enlivening if you'd asked me.

My favorite part of this book is the dance. An interpretative dance of Total Eclipse of the Heart. Oh, gods. The feels. When I'm reading this part, I swear it was breath-taking and flawless and mesmerizing that I've become emotional and feel things beyond my comprehension.

With this kind novel, I don't exactly note every detail about everything. I just let the story grab and take me. I just let the words and sentences flow to its destination and enjoy or rather feel the ride. And I am thankful that it didn't disappoint.

My only complain is that The Silver Linings Playbook spoiled a lot of good classic books. Oh gods no.

Andrew Smith says

Pat Peoples has suffered a mental breakdown following a traumatic event in his life. He's been institutionalised for some time but is about to go home. He dreams of being reunited with his estranged wife, Nikki, and in the meantime he's working out (endlessly) and following his favourite American Football team, the Philadelphia Eagles.

The story has already been made into a successful film it's therefore not surprising that the book very much has a film script feel. I suppose it's also an ok holiday read, which is a good thing as I got through the whole thing whilst lounging on a beach bed. It's not very long, not particularly taxing but it is reasonably entertaining. As time progresses we watch Pat struggle with his condition, become re-united with family and friends and meet a woman who is similarly recovering from a traumatic event.

It's pretty clear where this one is headed from early on and despite a number of small surprises along the way it does travel the predicted path. I admire the attempt to deal with the difficult subject of mental illness but my main grumble is that the message seemed a little over-earnest for my tastes – e.g. 'try to be kind not right' was the much repeated mantra Pat had adopted from his therapist. Also the attempt to follow a successful season for the Eagles along side the main narrative felt a little overdone (I lost count of the number of times the team chant was recited!)

Probably more a 2.5 than a 3 – but after a good day on the beach I'm feeling generous.

Lotte says

The book is SO much better than the movie! I'm actually kind of shocked how much they changed or left out in the adaptation. If you liked the movie, you should read the book and then maybe reconsider! :)

Amy Cane Dolzine says

Well, thank god that's over. I don't know what's wrong with me, considering everyone else seems to think this is a good book (4 stars). Me - not so much. I can see how I would like the movie though. I should just stick with that. Maybe you just can't go from Pat Conroy's "Lords of Discipline" and Herman Koch's "The Dinner" to this ... I mean, I understand the construct - but I kind of felt like the "diary style" writing limited

the author's ability to let me really feel the story. I was so distracted by how many times he said mundane and pedantic things like "what felt like hours" and "I ran fast in that MAN gear - not because I am a MAN but because I am very good at running" and the fact that HE NEVER USED A CONTRACTION. I mean, he would NOT use a contraction. It was so very irritating and stilted and annoying!! I have to say that the best part of the book was the trip through American Lit. I think my brain needs some good literature at this point after suffering through this. I'll go back now and read some Great Gatsby, The Scarlet Letter, A Farewell to Arms, Huck Finn. Yep...moving on.

Marion Hudson says

I read many, many, many books. I am happy to read anything from classic fiction to pure escapist chic lit. I don't mind mediocre writing, gratuitous sex scenes or weak predictable plots since the authors allow me to enter another world for one or two hours every day, and for that I am grateful. Even if their books are easily forgettable, for the time that I am reading them, they are a fun way to spend my time. But every now and again a book comes along that makes me rethink my strategy of reading everything and anything. A book that is not forgettable, that is well written and that has characters I would like to meet. The Silver Linings Playbook is such a book, and as soon as I complete this review I am going to search for other books by Matthew Quick.

The book is told from the perspective of Pat Peoples, intentionally named, I am sure, to be representative of all people. Since he is definitely not mentally stable, his perspective is simple and almost childlike. He has an unshakeable belief in a happy ending and is determined to take responsibility for creating his own happy ending. Through him we meet a cast of characters who are neither good nor bad, but just ordinary people who make mistakes and try to fix them. It is about the love of family, the loyalty of friends, the need to put right what is wrong and most importantly the search for happy endings.

I could spend hours talking about each and every character, but that would spoil the book for you. However, Pat's mother deserves a special mention. As a mother I completely identified with her unconditional love of her son. I loved that she bought him trendy clothes and an entire home gym and know exactly why she did it. If you can't fix your child inside, then you will try to fix the outside. What you absolutely cannot do, as a mother, is nothing!

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Greg says

The reductive takeaway: The adult Perks of Being a Wallflower.

Sometimes I wonder if I read the same book as other people. That's usually when I hate something that other people love. It's rarer when we both like the same book, but for vastly different reasons and have vastly different interpretations. But of course, the power of literature is interpretation, so it's to be expected.

For some reason, people keep calling this book "fun" and "entertaining." I'm sure someone probably called it a "light-read" at one point.

Huh?

I really liked it, but this is some depressing stuff. It has quirk and black comedic moments, but no one said sad couldn't also be funny. I also don't understand why everyone isn't shouting "*adult Perks of Being a Wallflower*" over and over again. That was my first thought when I started reading and my first thought when I finished. Yes, the circumstances are different in that Charlie is 16 and Pat is 34 and Charlie is quietly crazy, while Pat is crazy crazy, but I see a lot of similarities. The crazy, the crying, the "secret," the narrative style, the voice. I'm sure there's more, but that's all I can think of at the moment. Both characters have some mental illness. Both cry in public...a lot. Both have a "secret" reason as to why they are the way they are. Both are written in 1st person and take the form of written communications. Charlie exclusively writes letters. Pat writes journal entries and letters, although we also see a few letter's in Nikki's voice (view spoiler). Both Charlie's and Pat's voices are remarkably childlike for their ages. Both are unreliable narrators. However, for all their similarities, they are quite different books. It's like Chbosky and Quick took the same central conceit and ran in complete opposite directions.

Perks is jewel-like in its surreal isolation. It is so all about Charlie and his voice and his experience and his life. Chbosky is an instinctual writer who I can imagine wrote *Perks* very fast in a fit of apocryphal epiphany. He doesn't spend a lot of time pondering the whys of things because teenagers don't care. So why should we. We put too much of a premium on knowing the backstory, knowing the genesis of every action we take. *Perks* delights in the unknown, even so far as to shove the big reveal to the epilogue, as if that event and the discovery and the hospitalization are not the story.

Silver Linings Playbook has a totally different philosophy. It is set in the adult world, where events are not isolated, where what happens now resonates, where what happened then paralyzes. Pat's story has context. Where *Perks* ends with Charlie coming out of the hospital, *Playlist* begins with Pat coming out of the hospital. *Playlist* is about the consequences, about how we move on. Quick knows that these character's backstory and their relationships matter. He likes the whys of things and doesn't delight in the present, preferring to wallow in the past, like most adults I know.

The narrative conceit of Pat writing down his thoughts of the day works well here. Because of the length of Pat's stay in the neural center and his powerful sedative cocktail, his memory leaks. He has to write everything down to remember everything. To Pat writing is more than putting pencil to paper, it is almost identity itself. It is how he remembers who he is. We see an example of this when he first starts to write to Nikki and he sends her two hundred pages of his journals. Maybe I'm reading too much into a one sentence explanation, but I found it moving.

Pat's voice is a little hard to grasp at first. Much like Charlie's it is very child-like and naive. I think Charlie's voice comes from teenage selfishness, but Pat's voice is willful ignorance. Like his belief in silver linings and the happy ending to his movie, Pat has no room for negativity ("practice being kind, not right"). Pat reminded me of Poppy from Mike Leigh's *Happy-Go-Lucky*. Obviously Pat is far more fucked up, but Poppy also used her optimism to fight the negativity of the day. To Pat and to Poppy it is clear that happiness is a choice. And if you choose to be happy, then one day you will be. I make it sound kind of depressing, but these both are supposed to be comedies!

One note on all the football talk. I come from football crazed Texas. Football talk doesn't bother me. There is a lot of it, but football is how Pat connects to his brother and father, and in some ways, to much of the world around him. It allows him to see himself as not this fucked up individual, but one member of a clan. Where his actions aren't a result of improper dosage or anger issues, but pissed-off fans.

Another note on football. We don't see this level of specificity much in contemporary fiction, especially when the specific time is not the point. We're made to believe the always resetting present is the optimum setting. Quick talks about a specific Eagles season (I remember it, the events are real!). Pat identifies with the up and down Eagles so it was important for Quick to write about that specific season. Although the Eagles are pretty up and down as a whole, so he could have written about a lot of seasons. That specific season does follow the narrative thrust of Pat's story. They start off strong, then taper off and seem out of it, but then burst to life and make the play-offs. I think the specific can be universal, so I liked this. It gives his life context.

God I've written a lot. Let's do the rest quick-like. The plot is good, familiar, but good. It's not as predictable as you think it would; I guess that makes it unpredictable. No, it's familiar, with some twists. The characters feel real in their oddness and quiriness and craziness, not manufactured. When Pat's dad complains about Pat's mom spending so much money on Pat and then busts their TV and buys an expensive new TV, his character becomes rounder. Like a lot of family, he does a million tiny things wrong, but always gets the important one right, that he loves his family. It takes him a while to get there, but we do. I'm not writing quick-like. Characters good. Story good. "Secret" reveal expected. Ending, expected with one wrinkle.

I liked the ending a lot actually. No happy endings. No swooning strings and ending on a romantic interlude. Pat doesn't get all the answers he wants. He doesn't get all his memory back. He's a little worse for wear, but he survives. That's his silver lining.

ETA: I'm not a very good self-promoter. I should have linked to my previous review. Duh!

Ben says

What a fun book! I'm sure it's enjoyable for anyone that doesn't have a stick up their ass, but it's the kind of book that even non-readers will love, too, because it's an easy read, and the chapters are short, and it's entertaining the whole way through, and it's funny as hell.

Our narrator, Pat Peoples, is pretty crazy by society's standards. He's been in "the bad place" for years, and once out, with the help of his sweet mother, he's trying to get his life back on track so he can reunite with his wife, who everyone else knows won't be coming back.

So Pat knows he has to be good, and he has to be careful not to hit himself in the head, or break things when he's visited by his arch nemesis, Kenny G, or punch out Giants fans in the parking lot of Lincoln Financial Field. (Although, as a diehard Giants fan, I can still tell you that the fan in this specific scene really did deserve to get punched in the face.)

And Pat's struggles are exacerbated, because it seems like nobody understands him. And when it comes down to it, aside from a "crazy" girl in his neighborhood, most people don't. He gets frustrated with all those chemicals within him that make him different from others. And he even knows he's different and that his head's a little skewed, but all those chemicals are so impossible to control.

Yet Pat Peoples remains childlike in his optimism. He's convinced that the movie of his life will work out. If he stays good, his wife will come back and "apart time" will end. They can even have a daughter, because he's learned and he's going to treat his wife like gold now, and he misses her so much that he kisses her

picture every night before he goes to bed. And coping mechanisms like humming and counting to ten every time he sees Kenny G, help, but Pat also needs an actual *outlet*. He runs and works-out all day, because before he went to the bad place for a part time he let himself get to the point where he was “maybe ten to seventy pounds overweight.” And putting his full self into rooting for the Eagles helps create a way to bond with his brother and his former best friend, and -- sometimes fleetingly -- his father.

But of course this book isn't about football. It's about the slow, difficult growth that takes place from someone who's been through a lot of pain, and has a lot against him, not only because of his lost loves and difficult past, but because of the sickness he can't control. And it's clear that Matthew Quick knows mental illness. He's worked in the field, and is open enough to admit that he's struggled with depression himself. This is refreshing: he knows what it's like, and it shows. It's a nearly impossible feat -- making a character with such a funny outlook on life, allowing us to laugh so hard at someone who is disturbed -- all while making this same character lovable and real, and not some kind of comical caricature, but a fellow human-being open to sympathy, in need of sympathy. But somehow Quick does it.

But what I *really* can't understand is how this Matthew Quick guy can be from the Philadelphia area -- and even worse -- root for the Eagles. He seems so nice in the e-mails we exchanged. It makes me think that maybe he's not really from the Philadelphia area at all, but maybe his publisher or someone made him change all the references he originally had in his manuscript that were about the Giants -- who must be the team he actually roots for -- to “Eagles” and all their corresponding players, and switched their stadiums and everything else for commercial reasons or something. Because everyone knows that people from Philadelphia don't reply friendly to e-mails, especially when they're big shot authors of books that are being turned into movies. And everyone knows that the only two things Philadelphia people do well is boo at kindergarten graduations and root for evil teams like the Eagles.

But I digress.

Because right now I'm thinking that maybe Pat Peoples isn't so crazy. While he's experienced a lot of pain, he's actually more attuned to the moods and sensitivities of others than your average person on the street. I think that's part of what makes Pat Peoples so freakin' lovable: he knows he's crazy and even calls himself mentally deranged, but he has such a soft spot for everyone. He knows how difficult life can be, and because of that awareness, he understands the struggles of others. Because of his illness he's put up with a lot of shit that most of us will never have to. But the goddamn guy remains so positive. And with therapy and medication, and friends and family, he improves. Pat Peoples made it out of the bad place, but he's not the only one who's better off because of it.

Those who are different from “normal”, with their outsider view of life, can wake us up from the day-to-day world we get lost in, even opening us up to bizarre humor in the most unlikely of circumstances. And I think they can teach us that “crazy” isn't something to be afraid of at all; that “crazy” only means that someone doesn't fit into our norms, and is mainly just straight-up misunderstood.

So I dug this book. It tickled my funny bone the whole way through, *and* it contained valuable messages.

So: 5-stars. Minus one star because I hate the Eagles, and when they came back and beat the Giants this year in the second “Miracle in the Meadowlands” it made me start to cry in front of my girlfriend's brother and spun me into a minor depression that only got worse the following week when I flipped-out during my layover at Atlanta International Airport as the shared communal TV showed Brandon Jacobs fumbling just as the Giants were starting to come back against the Packers and their playoff hopes were diminished right in front of my eyes as I screamed the f-word in quick succession, and wailed and got up spilling my dinner all

over my lap and onto the floor and shouted and stomped, and it scared some children and I think it made two of them cry, and I had airport security eying me up and walking towards me in case I needed to be taken away.

So four stars it is.

Brigid ☆ Cool Ninja Sharpshooter ☆ says

After spending a long time in a mental health facility, Pat Peoples returns home and is ready to get his life back together. Pat is convinced that his destiny is to become more physically fit and to read more classic literature so that his estranged wife Nikki will come back to him. But now that he's at home, things aren't quite right. His family refuses to talk about his wife, his favorite football team (the Philadelphia Eagles) keeps losing games, and now a strange woman named Tiffany is starting to show interest in him ...

This is one of the rare cases in which I saw the movie before reading the book. It's also one of the rare cases in which I think the movie did a better job with a lot of aspects of the story ... but more on that later.

I see I'm not the only person who thought of this book as kind of being an adult version of *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. The narration was very similar, I thought—very simple and to-the-point, with a lot of little philosophical tidbits frequently thrown in. And it deals with some of the same issues—particularly mental health. (The stories are quite different, though.)

For the most part, I thought it worked ... but there were times when I was kind of confused by the structure of the narration. I think it was mentioned a few times that Pat was writing this story down, like a journal type of thing. But then a lot of it was in present tense, which felt kind of odd for a journal format. And ... I don't know. It was just unclear for me.

I liked the story for the most part. I think there's an important message about how things don't always turn out the way we anticipated, and sometimes it's better to just let things fall into place rather than to fight to get to an implausible goal. There are numerous "happy endings" that could happen, and not all of them are what we expect.

However, there were some things in the execution of the story that bothered me.

Probably the biggest problem for me was that I didn't feel most of the characters were very strong. Pat has a distinctive narrating voice and is a pretty good character over all ... but I didn't feel like anyone else in the book was that interesting or memorable. (I don't want to constantly compare the book to the movie, but I felt the movie did a better job of characterizing everyone, even the minor characters. I thought Tiffany in particular was a much stronger character in the film.)

There were also a lot of little "quirks" that I just didn't like. For one, I got kind of tired of Pat constantly talking about how he thinks of his life as being a movie. It's the kind of thing that could have just been mentioned once and that would've been fine. But the constant "my life is a movie, my life is a movie" got pretty annoying for me.

Also, there was Pat's tendency to keep mentioning his (token black) friend Danny in a kind of ... offensive

manner. For example:

"He is also wearing a watch with diamonds all over the face, which Danny would call Jake's bling-bling."

... *Cringe*

There was also a point in the book where the narration was written in letters, which might have been okay if it had just been like, two or three letters ... but it was like, ten. And that got rather tiresome in my opinion.

Also, I really hate football so ... the numerous football parts were very boring for me.

But other than that, I thought this book was a fairly good read. I didn't think it was amazing, but it wasn't bad either. It's not executed perfectly, but it's a cute story.

Anyway, I think the book and movie are both worth experiencing. (But unlike me, you should all probably read it before watching it ... haha.)

Florence (Lefty) MacIntosh says

A darkly comedic novel, fresh and just plain fun. Ignore the screaming chick-lit cover & book blurb, obviously the marketing department was calling the shots. Recently released from a 4 year gig in a mental institution, Pat People is fixated on reconciling with his ex-wife. With heartbreaking tunnel-vision he believes as long as he has an uber-positive attitude he'll win her back. It's a great debut, a quirky story that grapples with an eclectic mix of subjects including mental illness, the dynamics of a dysfunctional family, love, rejection, football & dancing. Pathos & humour brought to you by a truly jaw dropping glimpse into the cult like fanaticism of seriously obsessed sports fans and the lunacy of a "Dance Away Depression" competition.

For a good 1/3 of the book I was thinking give me a break, enough with the 'behind every cloud is a silver lining' shtick. That is till the sheer force of Pat's personality won me over. Imagine Forrest Gump with a major attitude problem prone to fits of rage.

Yes it's a bit predictable, I didn't care. Plus any book with an uplifting message seems to get pegged as lightweight. Disagree - it managed to avoid the cheese factor with a reality check. Life can be brutal – but in a good way.

For originality and pure entertainment value **4 ½ stars. Made me feel good, I'm rounding up to 5**

Not spoilers just Pat's thoughts on classic American literature and offered as a taste of the humour. If you're not amused doubtful you'll like the book, I'd say give it a pass.(view spoiler)

Kemper says

Pat Peoples has been confined to the 'bad place', but he finally gets to leave and live with his parents until he can get back on his feet. Pat's main goal is to continue on a path of self-improvement including working on

being kinder, strenuous exercise and reading books so he'll be a better husband when he finally sees his beloved wife Nikki again after their 'apart time'.

Pat likes being home, but his moody father refuses to talk to him unless the Philadelphia Eagles win. Plus, his mother and his therapist are both encouraging him to spend time with Tiffany, a very strange woman who was recently widowed. It's almost like no one understands that he's still married to Nikki. As he works on becoming a better person, Pat gets to attend the Eagles home games with his brother and makes a lot of friends at the pre-game tailgates. As they start winning, the superstitious fans think that Pat is good luck, and even his father becomes much friendlier. As long as he can control his temper and continues to work hard, Pat is sure that he'll get the kind of happy ending you see in the movies.

Since this is about a guy whose life has been shattered and he doesn't even realize it, you'd think Pat's story would be incredibly sad. Instead, the bittersweet humor that Mathew Quick has laced the book with makes it a pleasure to read instead of a depressing slog. Pat's devotion to the cause of reuniting with Nikki can be simultaneously infuriating and endearing, and while we only get his usually slightly bewildered view point, you can also completely understand how those around him are feeling.

Quick also does a particularly nice job of detailing the highs and lows of sports fandom. Pat bonds with his brother and becomes part of a community while tailgating. The team provides him a link to his emotionally distant and stubborn father. Even his therapist is a rabid Eagle's fan, and this helps Pat to trust and like him. While the games provide great entertainment and instant connections, there's also a big downside to them. An ugly incident with a rival team's fan in the parking lot illustrates how sports fans can be merciless and brutal. (It also shows that wearing a rival team's jersey to a game in Philly is a spectacularly bad idea.) Pat's dad is so wrapped up in the Eagles that a loss can make him even harder to live with. When Pat makes a commitment to Tiffany that causes him to miss some games, everyone begins blaming him for the losses.

(However, I couldn't be too critical of the characters being superstitious because I wore the same red t-shirt on game day when the Kansas City Chiefs started their season with 9 straight wins. After they lost 3 in a row, I decided the shirt had run out of mojo and switched to a gold one. Since they won the next 2 games, it's obvious that the shirt I wear has a profound impact on the team.)

I also very much enjoyed the movie version of this. Even though it's a fairly faithful adaptation there are also several big differences that made reading the novel surprising in several ways so this is one of those incidents where it's well worth checking out both versions.

***TANYA* says**

I laughed the majority of the time with this book.
