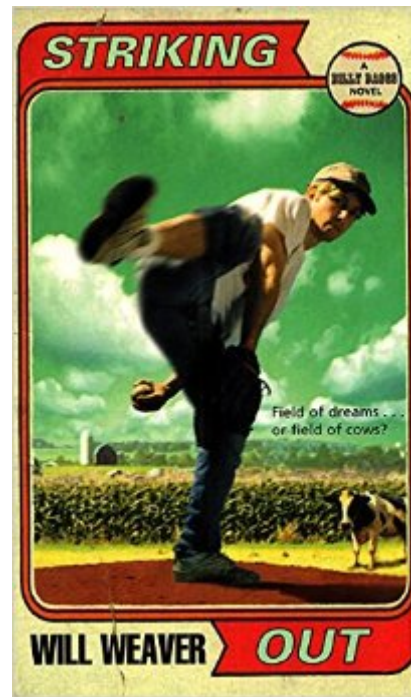


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Striking Out



Synopsis

Up until now, Billy Baggs's life has been loaded with nevers. Never been to a movie. Never played baseball with a real team. Never got over feeling guilty for the loss of his brother. But change is in the air. Billy discovers he has a natural talent for baseball, especially as a pitcher. Maybe, just maybe, there's more in store for him than life on the farm. But can Billy convince his father of that? Or is he destined to spend the rest of his life pitching nothing but hay? Teenager Billy Baggs is desperately needed on his family's struggling dairy farm, but he's also an extraordinarily gifted natural baseball player. How he struggles to reconcile his father's desire to keep him on the farm with his coach's interest in getting him on the field is at the heart of this *meaty story*. | The complex characters grow and change in profoundly real ways."K. *[With] flashes of humor, a wealth of lovingly recounted details evokes the difficult daily life on a small dairy farm.*"Publishers Weekly. 1994 Best Books for Young Adults (ALA) 1994 Books for the Teen Age (NY Public Library) 1993 "Pick of the Lists" (ABA)

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Customer Reviews

After five years of trying to fill his dead brothers' shoes for his father, Billy Baggs begins the struggle to forge his own dreams. In his first novel for young adults, *STRIKING OUT*, Will Weaver uses his memories of growing up on a farm in Minnesota to shape the setting and plot of this book. Will Weaver now lives in Bemidji with his wife and two children, where he teaches Creative Writing and English at Bemidji State University. I think male or female teenagers who enjoy realistic fiction will

enjoy this book. Although it seems like this book is mainly directed at teenage boys who enjoy baseball, I think it's a book that will attract both baseball, and non-baseball fans alike. The book deals with all problems that young adults face with their parents when they take their first steps towards independence. Billy wants to begin playing baseball, his father is against it, finally Billy and his mother take a stand, and he begins playing. The book is written in the third person, although it focuses mainly on Billy, it occasionally takes on the view of his baseball coach. The effect is interesting, throughout almost the whole book you see what Billy sees, feel what Billy feels, and then suddenly you switch to what the coach sees in the boy, or what other people would think when they saw Billy; a tough, gap-toothed farm boy who is good at baseball. I think the main purpose of this book was to teach readers the value of family, and finding your place in the world. Throughout the book Billy's family is arguing, or ignoring each other. Each one is haunted by the past; the book starts during a turning point for the family. The title of the book STRIKING OUT is very important since Billy and his mother are both starting to take a stand, and strike out against his father living in the past. At one point in the book his mother, pent up with emotion, starts yelling; "things have to start changing around here!" Will Weavers' strength in writing is character. Each of the characters is well defined, they all have their weaknesses, they are not good, or bad. Although he is writing in the third person you still understand how Billy feels, and when you switch to the Coaches' point of view, you understand what other people see in Billy. When you take on Billy's point of view farmers are described as the normal people, and other higher-class members of the town, are looked on as being snobby. When the coaches' point of view is taken on, Billy is described in a somewhat ragged fashion, as a person of higher class would see him. Billy, and his father both have complicated characters, Billy's father is strict but sensitive, a deep and emotional character that somehow seems believable. Weaver's writing is raw and powerful when it comes to writing about Billy's family. You understand the hurt each member felt when his brother died, and how much it has impacted their lives, Billy's father especially. When I first started reading the book, I didn't realize that Billy was only thirteen, he seemed much older, I thought that the author wasn't very good at capturing the character of a thirteen-year-old, but I soon realized that I was wrong. The reason Billy seems older is because he's a farm kid, he has more responsibilities, and therefore seems older. Weaver subtly explained this in parts of the book, and made me understand. Weaver painted a fairly detailed picture of the setting, a small town in rural Minnesota, home of farmers and the "upper class"; suburbans. The plot of the book is engaging, the trauma of Billy's home life, trying to get on the baseball team, and the memories of his brother all add up to a large amount of excitement. There are some baseball scenes, but even if you are a non-baseball type person, you will still be able to

understand what is going on, mainly the competitiveness of Billy and the other members of the team. I would highly recommend this book to anyone over the age of thirteen, there are some adult themes, but otherwise I think most people who enjoy realistic fiction, and don't mind baseball, would enjoy this book.

I recommend this book to anyone who loves baseball and is 13 years old and up. I think it a great and interesting book because it has a good description of life on a poor farm in the 1970's. For example, "Besides, who else is gonna help me buck bales?" Abner said. "We can't afford to go out and pay nobody." When the coach talked to Billy, he said, "You ever think about playing summer baseball?" "Some kids got to work in the summer," Billy said. I wanted to keep reading to see if Abner will allow Billy to go town. In conclusion, if you are interested in baseball books, read this awesome book.

Striking Out Up until now, Billy Baggs's life has tired and bored him out. He has never had any real friends or played baseball for an actual team, and has never gotten over feeling guilty for his brother's death. Billy works almost all day at his father's farm, and rarely sees the outside world. One day he goes into town with his dad, to help purchase the animal feeder. Across the street from the Farmhouse is a baseball diamond where a game is in play, a homerun is hit and the balls rolls near Billy. He picks it up and tosses it back, with ease, it goes all the way to home plate. The Coach for one of the teams is amazed, and rushes over to Billy and his father. The Coach offers Billy a spot on the team, but Billy's dad argues that he has too much work, and no time for such games. Billy is disappointed, but ends up getting to play after talking to his mom, who settles it with his dad. After attending his first practice ever, Billy and his teammates realize that he is a natural born player, and an amazing pitcher. He makes many friends, and learns things about himself that he never realized was there. His new friends teach him that life is full of disappointments and let-downs, and that with family and friends, you can make it through anything. For once in his life Billy is having a blast while leading his team to the championship game. Everything is seeming to fit into place for Billy Baggs, until a surprising misfortune happens, and Billy is left with a serious choice, to give up his new friends, and the game he loves so much, or to let his family down. Will Billy figure out his predicament, or is he destined to pitch hay the rest of his life. In my opinion this book was really good and very interesting! I thought that it had an excellent plot, and an amazing ending! I was able to feel like I was in the book a lot, I could easily relate to the situations and characters in the story. Thanks in large part to the fact that, the author used a great deal of

description, when describing the setting and characters. I was really into the main conflict too, since I love baseball, and that was what the whole story was pretty much based around. I thought that characters were realistic because I could relate to their emotions in the types of situations they were in. I believe that the ending was extremely satisfying and easily the best part of the entire book, it was exciting, and I never expected what happened and it worked out great in this type of story. Will Weaver's voice in this book, is 3rd person. The author did not really use vocabulary in interesting ways, aside from the slang "southern" draws in the dialogue. I think that the authors vocabulary and writing style were pretty easy to read. Will Weaver used dialogue but didn't really use enough I believe, If there was one thing I could change about the authors' writing style it would be for him to add more dialogue. I thought that Will Weaver did an excellent job describing the characters and their emotions, which made the story a lot more fun to read. If I had to rate Striking Out, I would probably have to give it an 8 out of 10 possible points. It was honestly that good,. I enjoyed the book so much I will probably end up reading it again sometime. I thought that the descriptions in the novel were superb, and the characters were like everyday people that I have probably met before, and that's how realistic they were. All in all, I enjoyed the book a lot! I thought that the entire book was well paced, and extremely exciting throughout. The author did a phenomenal job, and I would recommend this book to anyone and everyone, especially someone who enjoys baseball, and likes to read about it. This is totally the book for you!

A boy and his brother live on a farm with their parents in a small town. One day the main character goes and works in a field on their farm. His little brother wants to join him so he comes and gets on the tractor with his older brother. The little boy wants to drive but his older brother won't let him so he tries anyway. He falls backwards off of the tractor and dies because he gets tore up in a plow. A while later the boy goes to a baseball diamond that's near his house. He finds other boys about his age playing and thats when he falls in love with baseball. Some things I liked about the book was that it starts right off with action when the boy is thrown from the tractor. Some things I didn't like were that the story is not totally focused on baseball right from the start like I was hoping, but that isn't such a bad thing and that is why I gave it a four-star.

This was definitely one of the best books of the year. It's about a little boy and how he has a lot of nevers in his life and finally gets the chance to play baseball in a league. He and Heather have a fine relationship. If you know what I mean. Overall this was a fantastic book!

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