



Rounding Third

Walter G. Meyer

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Rounding Third is the story of Rob Wardell, a seventeen-year old who feels like he doesn't quite fit in anywhere--not at home, not at school and not on the baseball field. The small, shy boy stays on the high school baseball team only to please his father since he knows he will never get to play. He's living his life alone until he finds himself drawn into a friendship with the team's new star pitcher, Josh Schlagel. The two boys hit it off instantly; maybe it's because Josh isn't exactly welcomed by the team either. But as Rob and Josh grow closer and start spending more time together away from the field, Rob realizes that his friend is hiding something. The bruises on Josh's body and his reluctance to let Rob know about certain parts of his life have Rob suspicious. When Josh's secrets are finally revealed and become life threatening, Rob and his family must step up to the plate.

Rounding Third is a page turner and I couldn't put it down once I started reading. You find yourself deeply caring for the fate of the characters and moved by their struggle to find themselves and each other. A unique, well written and wonderful novel." -- David Mixner, author of "Stranger Among Friends"

"Meyer weaves a brilliant story of jock culture with pertinent social issues of the day and has captured an important time in our country. Set in contemporary rural America, his novel highlights the way American society is changing. His characters will have you cheering and crying in empathy, and his story is sure to interrupt your sleep." -- Eric Anderson, PhD, author of "Trailblazing" and "In the Game"

"From the opening sentence, "Rounding Third" resonates with readers – all will find something to relate to, and learn from, in this compelling and important story." -- Dan Woog, author of the "Jocks" series

"I found myself rooting for these young men, wishing that I could enter the book and save them. Their journey is filled with hope, sorrow, joy--first love was never tackled like this." – Noël Alumit, Lambda Literary Awarding winning author of "Letters to Montgomery Clift"

Rounding Third Details

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Lena Grey says

Once I began reading 'Rounding Third' I started to sing the song 'It Gets Better, Better, Better' to Bobby and Josh, since it seemed their lives just kept getting worse and worse and worse. I kept thinking, Where's the cavalry? Why don't these poor boys have more support during this insanity? Surely things have got to turn around soon! Finally, about midway through the book, help arrives. It may sound as if I didn't appreciate 'Rounding Third', but nothing could be further from the truth. I was profoundly affected. At times I read with tears in my eyes, a lump in my throat and my heart pounding. I was so terribly angry, yet I simply had to know what would happen next even though the future seemed dismal.

I was especially impressed by Bobby and how he chose to face up to the abuse rather than letting it rule his life. He worked to incorporate his uniqueness, rather than reject it and listen to the inexcusable messages of disdain bestowed upon him for being different.

My heart went out to Josh. He lacked Bobby's self confidence and nurturing, therefore, he had no compass to follow. He wasn't able to defend himself and it almost destroyed him. Unlike Rob who was able to slide roughly, but safely home, poor Josh had struck out before he even got up to bat.

'Rounding Third' is definitely not for casual reading; it's intense and very worthwhile. Its bold message broke my heart, but perhaps that's what's needed. Maybe more hearts need to be broken. More people need to be unsettled because that's what it will take for things to change. Although it will be most appreciated by young gay men, anyone could benefit from reading 'Rounding Third'. It's my sincere hope that many people do.

NOTE: This book was provided by the author for the purpose of a review on Rainbow Book Reviews.

Viva says

This is a good book and keeps getting better like halfway through but the ending ticked me off. No spoilers but WTH kind of ending was that?? Like, I get that it was realistic but there's a reason fiction is different from real life. Don't get me wrong, I liked the book a lot, which I think is why the ending ticked me off. But still worth reading.

Karla says

While some parts of this book were good, the sum of its parts was disappointing. First off, the plot and the story itself were interesting and very compelling. Rob and Josh are both on the HS baseball team and become boyfriends. The book was strongest in the beginning as the author sets up what appears to be a teen romance story. About 2/3 of the way through, however, the story goes in a different direction, that was hard to read. A lot of not happy things were revealed and the story ends up with a sad ending. This would have been okay with me except there were many issues I had with the writing. There were no transitions between scenes. We

are dropped into a scene and I was frequently confused. The timeline was sketchy and I was never sure how much time passed. The sad events at the end didn't match the romantic tone at the beginning. The ending is rushed. The entire thing needed a strong editing.

Sadly, I cannot recommend.

Jason White says

Loved this book! So much I finished it in two days. It's amazing what gay teens go through and I truly hope the world becomes more open and accepting. It really sickens me hearing of the religious bigots who try to cure their sons or daughters. The world needs more people like Rob's family, the baseball coach, Brittany, Jenny, and the rest of the students supporting Rob & Josh.

I talked to the author and he is working on a sequel that is close to being finished. He has a few chapters posted on his website, but I'm going to wait till the book is out. I'm hoping it will explain what happened to Rob and Josh.

He is also a speaker/writer on bullying, which I think is totally awesome. Its nice that this topic is getting the attention it deserves.

Laura Davis says

Rounding Third is the story of Rob Wardell, a high school senior who feels he's a misfit, no matter where he is: home, school, or baseball team. He's suffered years of bullying from classmates and has done his best to make himself invisible to avoid further torment. As he develops a friendship with teammate, Josh Schlagel, a new student with a dark secret, Rob begins to outgrow his childish notions of what it means to be confident. He starts to understand that walking through one's fear makes the difference between success and failure.

As the story takes a heart-wrenching turn, Rob is faced with a real world test of his new understanding. A life is on the line, and it's up to Rob to decide whether to take action and damn the consequences, or do the safe thing.

Mayer's insight into family relations, friendship, and teen angst in general give a view both warm and stark into the workings of small town life. His characters are so realistic, they are bound to make the reader cringe and laugh at turns.

The novel is a poignant demonstration that bullying takes many forms, comes from a surprising number of sources, and isn't limited to schoolyard fights among hormone-addled youths. It's a painful reminder of what happens when people decide to segregate a group of others and dehumanize and demonize them by labeling "Them." In this case, "They" are gay, but could just as well have been women, blacks, Native Americans, or Japanese Americans, as in some of the more shameful points in our history. Bullying affects everyone, and the hopeful message of this novel is that we are not doomed to repeat history. Every one of us has the ability to bring change...if we only choose to use it.

Jim says

This is a Difficult review to write.

To Explain, Firstly I loved this book from the start. A clever and thought provoking story with some great light hearted moments mixed with some extremely disturbing realities. Meyer tells the story of 2 lovable characters who are deeply in love with each other, however Josh comes from a family who is blinded by religion and Rob by his own prejudices and fears. Both work to overcome these challenges, however Josh is frequently distant with some obvious demons that he finds powerless to exercise and unable to discuss with Rob. Things finally come to a shocking head and both are forced to confront the issue together.

The reason though I found it difficult to review this objectively was the ending. The story had been building from the first page and was at a crescendo, when all of a sudden it just felt like the air was let out of it and you are left feeling deflated and robbed of a potentially stunning conclusion. Indeed it felt as though the writer had just run out of steam and didnt quite know how to finish the story.

In the Dedication at the end of the Book the writer explains that the story is basically true, calling on his real life experiences, and maybe the ending is more to keep faithful to his experiences, but from the perspective of a reader it just felt as though the huge build up was for nothing. The Story could have been so much more if the writer had just left out the last dozen or so pages.

However, I think it would be wrong to give the Book a negative review because of this as the vast majority of the story was excellent.

Randomr says

It was a wonderful book, and up until the last few pages, I was planning on giving it a 5 star review. And then the ending punched me in the stomach. It may be more realistic than the usual HEA, but to be honest, I don't read books for their realistic ending, real life can be harsh enough as it is. So this is my own problem, I'm aware of that, and I'm happy to see that a lot of people enjoyed the ending. I just couldn't. It broke my heart, and not in a good way. I'm very sorry to say that I can't give it more than 3 stars, because it could have had such a wonderful ending (not realistic, I know, but just wonderfully heart-warming), and it didn't.

Dallison says

This book did not have a HEA but it was a perfect end for me. Life does not alway have a happy ending and for these two young men, this was the best end for them. Maybe later on in life they may get back together, but Josh needed to move on to heal and Rob needed to move on to grow and live. GREAT YA BOOK.

Sara says

The ending was so cruel, made me hate Rob so much. Poor Josh he really deserved a HEA.

wesley says

I found myself clenching my fists, angry, all throughout the whole reading experience. I cannot seem to grasp the capability of man to harbor that much hate to last a lifetime and yet, there it is, slapped right in your face. I am just angry. No other word for it. Angry that these sort of things happen in the world right at this moment and here we are, doing nothing about it. I mean, sure, things have changed over time, but still to see bigots, ignorants, and bullies get what they want is depressing.

Sure, I've had my fair share of being bullied and publicly humiliated but not to the point of driving me to fear for my own life. I was always able to defend myself, although not physically, but rather I was always able to do and say the right thing to get these people out of my hair. It appalls me that a lot of gay teens wake up everyday feeling like shit and that they don't deserve to live at all. This book has helped me open my eyes further and fight for what's right. This book has urged me to do something that will change the state of things.

This book holds so much power. But it's so sad that it was given a sort of Romeo and Juliet kind of feel to it. A lot of issues were left unresolved and hanging. For me as well, maybe because the author wanted to encapsulate incidents happening in real life and include them in the book, I found a lot of inconsistencies with certain facts and events in Rob and Josh' lives. Transitions in between chapters left me confused at times too because so much has time has gone by already, the story now had gaps and holes that needed to be filled in. Overall, I'd give this **3 stars**.

Brian says

One indicator of a fine novel is a set of characters that readers can connect with. Walter Meyer certainly succeeded in creating characters like that in *Rounding Third*. Rob Wardell and Josh Schlagel are the sympathetic, well-developed, realistic stars of this book, and their joy, sadness, and serious problems tug at the reader's heartstrings and worm their way into the reader's head.

In a number of ways, I found myself identifying with Rob. While I was never on the baseball team or even that into baseball in high school, I was a short(ish), skinny, nerdy kid who was bullied relentlessly for many years. Though Rob berated himself throughout the story for not being "strong enough," I knew early on that he was wrong about that because of my own experiences. Even with his flaws and his weaknesses, he was probably the strongest character in this book because he survived, he rose above abject adversity, and he retained his kindness, his sensitivity, and his clear willingness to help others in need.

The story itself is, to put it mildly, an emotional roller coaster. The traumas Rob and Josh are subjected to are maddening at best, utterly horrific at worst, and the violent bullies in the book are some of the most vile

characters you'll ever encounter. A few times, I found myself so angry about what was happening to Rob and Josh that I wanted to yell out loud, and other times I almost burst into tears because the storyline was incredibly heartbreaking.

The major flaws in this book aren't found in the story itself, but rather in the writing. There were a lot of sentences and paragraphs that could have been vastly improved, and some abrupt plot shifts were distracting. Hopefully, the long-awaited sequel will be more carefully edited.

Overall, though, this is a powerful book and a fast, intense read.

Josh says

I'm torn about this novel, which is why it only received 3 stars from me. It reminds me too much of the LGBTQ films of the 80s, meaning the gay characters only suffer from the minute the movie opens until the final moments before the credits. There's no happy ending, there's no peace, and there's no joy or a bright future for the characters. I wanted a book that transcends that message that you can only have a miserable life if you are an LGBTQ teen or adult. I realize this book has some great aspects, but, overall, they weren't enough to balance the unrelenting grimness, sadness, and despair. I also understand that for some this is a reality, but I also know that for many others, it is not and there is a future worth looking forward to. Yes, the two main protagonists end the story still alive and with the potential to experience wonderful lives, but it sure didn't feel that way after 200+ previous pages.

This story is about two teenage boys who play baseball and end up falling in love. That, in of itself, would have been remarkable and would have made a terrific story. Instead, the author piles on self-loathing, religious bigotry that crosses into child abuse, bullying, rape, assault, and so much more. It just becomes too much. It's just one thing after another and, at times, I just wanted to stop reading and pick up a more happier book.

I also only gave this book 3 stars for how poorly edited it is. There are sentences with words missing or misspelled. There's punctuation errors, and other little things that routinely took me out of the story. Who proofread this thing before sending it out into the world? That's unacceptable to me as a reader.

I really tried to fall in love with the book and the characters, and I really wanted to agree with all the superlatives thrown at this book by others, but I couldn't because of the story and the final copy.

J says

3.5 stars rounded up to 4 stars. A very depressing look at being gay in high school. This book has terrible bullying, horrifying physical violence, holier than thou parents preferring to destroy their child's and his siblings lives rather than loving them even if they are "different."

There are some bright and loving spots (the family that takes their gay son's lover in) and even a few hard truths about gays not wanting to be around others deemed to be "too gay" and falling out of love in a gay relationship because one party wasn't the strong and resilient person you originally thought he was and you're tired of the burden. It sounds cruel but it's life, and life goes on no matter what. Everyone just needs to keep

love and forgiveness in their hearts, not hate.

Sheeraz says

This book gripped me, disturbed me, and sometimes made me wanna stop because I didn't want to know about some of the bad things that happen to the characters. But I guess it's the mark of the book's success to elicit those emotions. If you think homophobia, bullying, cruel/misguided parents are some of the things you can't stomach then maybe this isn't for you. However, if you are ready to be introduced to the reality of gay youths in some parts of the nation/world, I recommend you read it. Albeit fictional, the book touches on things that happen around us, and hopefully information and awareness can lead us to a better future.

Trisha Harrington says

The only reason I didn't like this is because it didn't have a happy ending. After everything that happened in this book, I wanted a happy ending. There wasn't here. And that's on me. I know this is YA and that not every couple lasts, etc... But I do like to know beforehand. As well as that, I need a happy ending (it doesn't have to be HEA, but happy!) and when there's not and I'm not warned it's hard.

I think this book will go down better with others, and I know there's a free sequel for anyone who's interested. I just can't go there.
