



Barely Missing Everything

Matt Mendez

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In the tradition of Jason Reynolds and Matt de la Peña, this heartbreaking, no-holds-barred debut novel told from three points of view explores how difficult it is to make it in life when you—your life, brown lives—don't matter.

Juan has plans. He's going to get out of El Paso, Texas, on a basketball scholarship and make something of himself—or at least find something better than his mom Fabi's cruddy apartment, her string of loser boyfriends, and a dead dad. Basketball is going to be his ticket out, his ticket up. He just needs to make it happen.

His best friend JD has plans, too. He's going to be a filmmaker one day, like Quentin Tarantino or Guillermo del Toro (NOT Steven Spielberg). He's got a camera and he's got passion—what else could he need?

Fabi doesn't have a plan anymore. When you get pregnant at sixteen and have been stuck bartending to make ends meet for the past seventeen years, you realize plans don't always pan out, and that there some things you just can't plan for...

Like Juan's run-in with the police, like a sprained ankle, and a tanking math grade that will likely ruin his chance at a scholarship. Like JD causing the implosion of his family. Like letters from a man named Mando on death row. Like finding out this man could be the father your mother said was dead.

Soon Juan and JD are embarking on a Thelma and Louise-like road trip to visit Mando. Juan will finally meet his dad, JD has a perfect subject for his documentary, and Fabi is desperate to stop them. But, as we already know, there are some things you just can't plan for...

Barely Missing Everything Details

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From Reader Review Barely Missing Everything for online ebook

Sasha says

This book is full of pain. The pain of rejection, the pain of disappearing, the pain of failure and the unknown and the physical and, sharpest of all, the pain of disappointing yourself, over and over again, until you forget how to hope for yourself. It's relentless and difficult to read, with tiny rays of sunshine tantalizing enough to make the rest of it hurt more than before.

I super get it, there are no novels about brown lives matter and the voices of boys like Juan and JD and humans like Fabi, Mando, and Grandpa are drowned out in the world that simply doesn't give a shit about them enough to even spit on them, so this is incredibly important. But it is a very difficult novel, and I don't know how many kids would pick it up. I hope that this book finds its way into the hands of a kid just like Juan and JD and gives them a tiny bite of agency that makes a difference.

T.J. Burns says

I received a copy of this book from Simon and Schuster Children's Publishing via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Kari | Books For The Living says

I'm not crying you're crying ?
Full review to come

Disclaimer: This author is represented by the agency I work for. While this didn't affect my opinion of the book, I wanted to be transparent.
