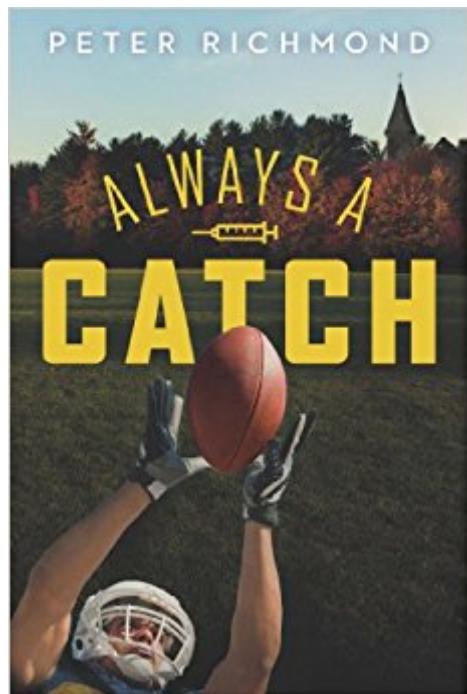


The book was found

Always A Catch



Synopsis

A ripped-from-the-headlines story about teens and steroids. From a New York Times best-selling sports writer comes the story of one boy's quest to stay true to himself without letting down his team. Jack and his father have never seen eye to eye until Jack's dad gives him the chance to transfer to Oakhurst his junior year. His dad sees it as a way for Jack to get into a good college; Jack sees it as refuge from his dad. Oakhurst is more than an escape—it's a chance for Jack to do something new, to try out for the football team. Once Jack makes the team, he's thrust into a foreign world—one of intense hazing, vitamin supplements, monkey hormones and steroids. Jack has to decide how far he's willing to go to fit in—and how much he's willing to compromise himself to be the man his team wants him to be. Perfect for fans of Mike Lupica and Tim Green. Praise for *ALWAYS A CATCH*: "Richmond has written an above-average story that will appeal to fans of the genre and authors, such as Mike Lupica and Tim Green."—School Library Journal "A dynamic but thoughtful novel of self-discovery."—Kirkus Reviews "Richmond skillfully delivers scene after scene of gridiron grit while maintaining Jack's wit and charm, and pulling off a winning story, on and off the field. Readers can only hope that this isn't Richmond's last young adult novel."—Publishers Weekly "This is a quick and easy read that leaves the reader with hope for Jack's future."—Library Media Connection

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 5 customer reviews

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

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Peter Richmond is the *New York Times* bestselling author of six books of non-fiction for adults and is the co-host of a public radio show about the New York Giants called "Tangled Up in Blue," which airs on WHDD-FM. He has also taught high-school English and drama on and off for the last decade. You can visit him online at www.peterrichmond.com or follow him on Twitter at @peterbrichmond.

If you are, have, or have ever been an adolescent male struggling with a misguided yet well meaning father, powerful peer pressure, emerging sexuality, developing athleticism, or undefined musical identity, then you'll find *Always A Catch* a great read. Richmond delightfully details young Jack's coming to identity challenges throughout the first semester, junior year, at Oakhurst, a prep school for future movers and shakers. Jack's growth from disaffected, unengaged teen at great odds with his father, into a capable, compassionate and thoughtful young leader is at once elegantly told and has the right amount of bite and edginess. *Always A Catch* is always honest; and a fun, rare read that should be required reading for young men and their parents.

This is a terrific coming-of-age tale about football, music and finding yourself, suitable for any teenager. Sent to a stodgy prep school by his dad, Jack finds a way to overcome the many challenges, from old-world faculty to teammates on steroids. And he gets the girl. Great YA. A must-read.

When your dad's too wrapped up in himself and your mom skipped out to save heathens in Central America when you were little, that doesn't leave you much in the way of parental support or

communication. That's the situation high school junior, Jack finds himself in as the new school year approaches. Dad has pushed him to get into a prestigious private school in New Hampshire, remote and far from the familiarity of New York City. Rather than fight what he sees as a losing battle, Jack reluctantly agrees. Oakhurst seems creepy at first look, but Jack likes his roommate and has an instant attraction to Caroline, a pretty, but shy flute player. His passion is playing the piano and one of the reasons his father pushed him to come here is the concert featuring a piano competition in front of alumni and this year possibly TV cameras that happens just before the Thanksgiving break. After signing up for piano tutoring, Jack acts on an impulse and signs up to play football. It's a life-changing decision. True, back in New York, he was pretty good at catching passes in pick-up games, but he's never experienced anything like the intensity his new teammates exude as practices progress. There's an urgency to win the prep league championship and for some of the players, that means using whatever substance will get them to peak performance. Jack must tread a fine line in order to keep his own values without angering the more rabid team members. Add in a passing interest by the quarterback's girlfriend, a growing 'something' with Caroline, his gradual realization that not only is football fun, but it's more important to him than he ever imagined, coupled with a personal crisis about the piano competition and you have a story that's tight and very well crafted. This is a book that teens who love sports, who have parental issues, who have struggled with the whole performance enhancement dilemma, or who like music can enjoy a lot. It's certainly worthy of being added to both school and public library collections.

This book reminds me of what most people think private schools are like, somewhere, isolated out in the country. Peter Richmond knows football and the world of private schools. He also knows music and how much both require sharp focus, forgiveness and creativity. Some of the story will get you to cheer out loud. I liked the way 'Jack' can play football and play the piano. Football and piano both require good hands and a lot of heart. Richmond delivers a page turner. If you like sports and music and going against the odds and realizing that dreams can come true even if you're just in high school, you will read this book a second time just to feel good when you're feeling bad.

A look into the life of an upper class teenager who is coming of age and thinking on his own.

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