

★ *“A hard-hitting and ultimately insightful tale”*
— Kirkus Reviews

ABOUT THE BOOK

Charlie is thirteen, isolated, and desperate for a friend. For a full school year, Mark humiliated him publicly, ran a weekly “Charlie Day,” and left Charlie believing the cruelty was somehow his own fault. Then, the first day of summer, Mark shows up at Charlie’s door — to apologize, and to be friends. What follows is a precise, emotionally honest account of coercive control in a male peer friendship: manufactured dependency, identity erosion, and the slow dismantling of a boy’s sense of self. The novel ends not with a fight or a rescue, but with Charlie choosing who he wants to be when he finally holds the power.

THEMES

- Bullying and peer coercion
- Unhealthy and controlling friendships
- Anxiety and emotional manipulation
- Self-worth and identity under pressure
- Resilience and recovery of agency
- The complexity of forgiveness

POTENTIAL CLASSROOM USES

- Independent reading, grades 6–8
- Literature circles and small-group discussion
- Advisory periods and SEL-focused guided discussion
- Whole-class read-aloud or guided reading with discussion guide
- Paired reading alongside informational text on peer coercion or healthy relationships

STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

- **ELA:** First-person unreliable narration, character development, theme, inference, and text evidence
- **SEL:** Self-awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making (CASEL aligned)
- **Health / Advisory:** Recognizing unhealthy peer relationships, help-seeking behavior

AT A GLANCE

Author: Rich Samuels
Genre: Realistic Fiction / YA
Grades: 6–8 | Interest Level: Grades 6–8
Lexile: 690L
Themes: Bullying, friendship, identity, resilience
Content: Verbal & emotional abuse (see advisory)
Format: Paperback & Kindle
Order: Amazon & IngramSpark
Rating: 4.4 stars · 66 verified reader reviews

“An honest and unabashed look at the dynamics of bullying.”

— Suzanne Rogers
Founder, Hill View Montessori Charter Public School

CONTENT ADVISORY

No graphic violence, no sexual content, no profanity. The novel depicts sustained verbal and emotional abuse between peers: public humiliation, coercive control of behavior and appearance, and identity manipulation. One character discloses that bullying made him feel he didn’t want to live — presented as a disclosure to a trusted adult, not depicted graphically. Mental health resources are in the back matter. Recommended with teacher facilitation, grades 6–8.

CLASSROOM RESOURCES

- First two chapters and book info:
richsamuelsauthor.com/product/getting-what-i-deserve/
- Free Discussion Guide at RichSamuelsAuthor.com (19 questions, 6 thematic sections)
- Guide supports independent response, literature circles, and Socratic discussion

WHY THIS BOOK WORKS IN THE CLASSROOM

- Authentic first-person male voice at 690L — accessible to most grade 6–8 readers, including reluctant ones
- Boys frequently describe it as the first book where they recognized their own experience
- Morally complex ending without a tidy resolution — ideal for discussion and written response
- Grounded in recognizable middle school social dynamics — no fantasy, no melodrama

HOW TO ORDER

- Available via **IngramSpark** for school and institutional ordering
- Also available on **Amazon** — search “Getting What I Deserve Rich Samuels”
- Complimentary copy for educators on request — contact rich.samuels@richsamuelsauthor.com