

★ *"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" with his friends, 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 trauma-informed, emotionally precise account of coercive control in an adolescent male friendship: manufactured dependency, identity erosion, and the slow dismantling of a boy's sense of self. By the end, Charlie doesn't defeat Mark with a fight — he chooses who he wants to be when he finally holds the power.

WHAT THIS BOOK IS REALLY ABOUT

Most bullying stories focus on the punch, the shove, or the cruel post. This one is about something harder to see: the friend who controls what your son wears, how he talks, when he showers — and convinces him this is what friendship looks like.

Getting What I Deserve names this pattern coercive control and shows exactly how it works on a boy who is lonely enough to accept it. It is the book for the child who can't explain why a friendship feels wrong, and for every parent who sensed something but couldn't find the words.

WARNING SIGNS TO WATCH FOR

These are the signals Charlie shows — and that real children show — when a friendship has become controlling:

- He apologizes without knowing why
- He changes how he dresses, talks, or acts around one specific friend
- He seems relieved when plans with that friend get cancelled
- He describes himself using the other child's words about him
- He becomes anxious, withdrawn, or less like himself after time with that friend

HOW TO START THE CONVERSATION

- Ask about **feelings**, not facts — not "what happened" but "how did that feel"
- Name what you observe without judgment: "You seem different after time with this friend"
- Read the book together and let Charlie's story open the door
- Reach out to your child's school counselor if you suspect a controlling friendship

BOOK DETAILS

Author:	Rich Samuels
Genre:	Realistic Fiction / YA
Age Range:	11–15 Grades 6–10
Lexile:	690L
Themes:	Friendship, coercive control, resilience
Content:	Trauma-informed; sensitive themes handled responsibly
Format:	Paperback & Kindle
Where:	Amazon — search title and author name
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

IS THIS BOOK RIGHT FOR MY CHILD?

This book is especially well-suited if:

- Your child is aged 11–15 and reading at or near grade level (Lexile 690L)
- You have noticed a friendship that leaves your child anxious, withdrawn, or unlike themselves
- Your child has experienced bullying and may benefit from seeing their experience reflected
- Your child responds better to stories than direct conversation about difficult topics

CONTENT ADVISORY FOR PARENTS

No graphic violence, no sexual content, no profanity. Written with a trauma-informed approach. The book addresses suicidal ideation: a character discloses that sustained bullying made him feel he didn't want to live. This is handled with care — presented as a disclosure to a trusted adult, not depicted graphically. Mental health resources including crisis lines are printed in the back matter.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

After reading together, try these:

- Have you ever had a friend who made you feel bad about yourself?
- What would you do if a friend told you that you were acting immature for something that felt normal?
- Is there anything going on with your friends right now that feels confusing or unfair?

HOW TO GET THE BOOK

- Available on **Amazon** in paperback and Kindle — search "Getting What I Deserve Rich Samuels"