The Good Luck of Right Now

by Matthew Quick



About the Book

From Matthew Quick, the *New York Times* bestselling author of THE SILVER LININGS PLAYBOOK, comes THE GOOD LUCK OF RIGHT NOW, a funny and tender story about family, friendship, grief, acceptance, and Richard Gere --- an entertaining and inspiring tale that will leave you pondering the rhythms of the universe and marveling at the power of kindness and love.

For 38 years, Bartholomew Neil has lived with his mother. When she gets sick and dies, he has no idea how to be on his own. His redheaded grief counselor, Wendy, says he needs to find his flock and leave the nest. But how does a man whose whole life has been grounded in his mom, Saturday mass, and the library learn how to fly?

Bartholomew thinks he?s found a clue when he discovers a ?Free Tibet? letter from Richard Gere hidden in his mother?s underwear drawer. In her final days, mom called him Richard --- there must be a cosmic connection. Believing that the actor is meant to help him, Bartholomew awkwardly starts his new life, writing Richard Gere a series of highly intimate letters. Jung and the Dalai Lama, philosophy and faith, alien abduction and cat telepathy, the Catholic Church and the mystery of women are all explored in his soul-baring epistles. But mostly the letters reveal one man?s heartbreakingly earnest attempt to assemble a family of his own.

A struggling priest, a ?Girlbrarian,? her feline-loving, foul-mouthed brother, and the spirit of Richard Gere join the quest to help Bartholomew. In a rented Ford Focus, they travel to Canada to see the cat Parliament and find his biological father...and discover so much more.

Discussion Guide

1. Bartholomew Neil fears he is a failure. Is he? How does society determine success or failure in life? Do these measures work for those who are different, like Bartholomew?

2. At the beginning of the novel, Bartholomew has just lost his mother, and everyone is concerned for his emotional wellbeing. Are their fears misplaced? Do you think Bartholomew is handling his loss well?

3. Bartholomew tells us that his mother ?could make small things seem miraculous.? As you come to know about his life, do you agree? How can all of us make the small things in our own lives feel momentous?

4. Why does Bartholomew decide to write to Richard Gere? How does writing to the actor affect his understanding of his life and the people around him? Who would you ?correspond? with if you needed help?

5. Do you believe in fate, or synchronicity, or acts of God? Do you think the universe has a rhythm or that God has a plan for each of our lives? Consider the series of events that leads Bartholomew from the beginning of the story to its end. How does the journey affect him?

6. Bartholomew admits that ?pretending has always been easy for me. I have pretended my entire life.? What has he been pretending about? Why was it easier for Bartholomew to pretend when his mother was ill? What does pretending offer us emotionally? Does it allow us to run away from our problems, or is it simply a coping mechanism?

7. Bartholomew?s grief counselor, Wendy, tells him that he is ?emotionally disturbed? from having lived in a ?codependent relationship.? Do you agree with her assessment? Did Bartholomew?s mother raise him well or did she hold him back?

8. Describe Bartholomew?s relationship with Father McNamee. What does the priest offer him that his mother cannot? Why does Father McNamee leave the church?

9. What does Bartholomew learn about life and love from his mother? Do you think she?s an unrealistic Pollyanna, or does her attitude help her and her son overcome the inevitable hardships and occasional cruelty of life? What is ?the good luck of right now??

10. Bartholomew muses, ?What is reality if it isn?t how we feel about things?? How do you answer this? Can we create our own reality?

11. What draws Bartholomew to Max and his sister Elizabeth, the Girlbrarian? How are the three of them alike? How do they help one another?

12. When Bartholomew, Max, Elizabeth, and Father McNamee arrive at the Canadian border, the customs agents asks them a host of questions. Later, Bartholomew thinks about the inquisitive agent. ?Are those types of questions able to define us as people --- measure our worth, our goodness, and whether or not we are safe visitors*? Where are you going? What do you do for a living? Business or pleasure?*? Why do we often ask these kinds of questions and do they ultimately matter? Do you agree with Bartholomew?s viewpoint? What, in your opinion, defines a person and his or her character?

13. Do you think people focus too much on the negative in the world and, as a result, overlook the good? How can we help ourselves and others to see beyond the bad --- to see the all that good in our lives and around us?

14. What three adjectives would you use to describe THE GOOD LUCK OF RIGHT NOW? What did you take away from reading the novel?

Author Bio

Matthew Quick is the *New York Times* bestselling author of THE SILVER LININGS PLAYBOOK --- which was made into an Oscar-winning film --- and eight other novels, including WE ARE THE LIGHT, a main selection of the Book of the Month Club.

His work has been translated into more than 30 languages, received a PEN/Hemingway Award Honorable Mention, was a *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize finalist, a *New York Times Book Review* Editors? Choice, a #1 bestseller in Brazil, a Deutscher Jugendliteratur Preis 2016 (German Youth Literature Prize) nominee, and selected by Nancy Pearl as one of Summer?s Best Books for NPR. *The Hollywood Reporter* has named him one of Hollywood?s 25 Most Powerful Authors.

Matthew lives with his wife, the novelist Alicia Bessette, in Beaufort, South Carolina.

Critical Praise

?Original, compelling, uplifting. Quick celebrates the power of ordinary, flawed human beings to rescue themselves and each other. His writing is shot through with wit and humanity and an ultimately optimistic view of people, without ever becoming sentimental.?

? Graeme Simsion, author of THE ROSIE PROJECT

?Quirky, feel-good fiction?.A whimsical, clever narrative.?

? *Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

?Quick, the author of THE SILVER LININGS PLAYBOOK, provides another offbeat gem populated with eccentric, fallible, intensely human characters?.Humor, pathos, and quirky bends in the road define they odyssey, making it increasingly clear that it is all about the journey, not the destination.?

? *Booklist*

?A quirky coming-of-age story?.Quick writes with an engaging intimacy, capturing his narrator?s innocence and off-kilter philosophy, and the damaged souls in orbit around him.?

? *Publishers Weekly*

?[Quick] has a rare skill in portraying characters with mental illness, which, when coupled with his deft hand at humor, produces compelling and important prose?.fans of Wally Lamb, Mark Haddon, or Winston Groom will appreciate.?

? *Library Journal*

?Funny, touching, wise, and ultimately life-affirming, THE GOOD LUCK OF RIGHT NOW is quite possibly the greatest feel-good misfit-road story I?ve had the good luck to read. If you loved THE CURIOUS CASE OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME, this book is for you.?

? Garth Stein, author of THE ART OF RACING IN THE RAIN

?THE GOOD LUCK OF RIGHT NOW has everything I relish in a story: a flawed but sympathetic protagonist, a page-turning plot, and a cast of emotionally scarred characters for whom I rooted wholeheartedly. I loved this novel from its quirky and unconventional opening to its poignant, tear-inducing conclusion.?

? Wally Lamb, author of WE ARE WATER and WISHIN' AND HOPIN'

?A knockout of a book that has something for everyone: humor, wisdom, plot twists, wholly original characters and Richard Gere.?

? *BookPage*

?A deeply nuanced portrait of an unconventional family unit, friendships of necessity, and life?s give and take.?

? *Nylon Magazine*

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