



Scooter

Mick Foley

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A powerfully moving new novel from Mick Foley, filled with the same heart and imagination that made *Tietam Brown* so distinctive (“It makes you laugh so hard sometimes it makes you cry” —*Chicago Tribune*).

The time is 1969. Scooter Riley is a regular kid growing up in the Bronx, on Shakespeare Avenue, just north of Yankee Stadium. His father, Patrick Riley, is a New York City cop; his beat is Harlem, streets that are getting rougher by the day in the wake of the assassinations of Dr. King and Bobby Kennedy. Riley’s Spartan code of ethics and unwavering sense of duty to his neighborhood and the Force will carry him through; neither homicide nor drugs are going to get in his way, even if his wife does want them to get the hell out of the Bronx and for him to take a “safe” job somewhere in the suburbs. He’s happy with things as they are and wants to make time stand still, going to Yankee games in the neighborhood as he did growing up (as a boy he’d waited for hours to meet Joe D.—the great Yankee Clipper—and collected two decades of Yankee autographs of Yogi, Larson, Lopat, Mantle, too; on yearbooks, scorecards, ticket stubs, Spaldeens). Riley wants his son, Scooter—named after Yankee shortstop Phil Rizzuto, MVP, 1950—to have a childhood just like his own.

Scooter doesn’t get the same thrill his father gets from going to Yankee Stadium and watching the players “punch it through the hole,” or “spray it all around.” He loves his father but yearns for his own style—in baseball and in life.

His grandfather, a fireman for thirty years and horribly scarred, harbors a dark secret that has caused a deep rift between him and Scooter’s dad. Scooter’s grandfather sees the game of baseball as the game of life itself—to him all of life’s great lessons are explained in baseball lore, and he teaches Scooter to play the game in a way that’s different from how his father wants him to play. He teaches Scooter as well that life can be defined in a few extraordinary moments—moments of courage, of cowardice—when the ability to act, or not, defines who you are, and who you will become.

Into this world, a world that becomes increasingly less kind to Scooter, the defining moments his grandfather has warned him about come at a rapid pace, and as the years pass and Scooter grows up, it is through baseball, and its timeless rhythms, that the defining moments in Scooter’s life are played out—and that the boy he is now, and the young man he will become, are shaped.

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