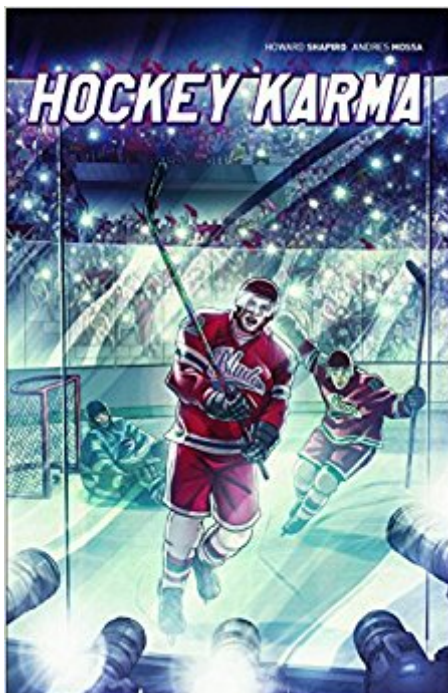


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Hockey Karma (The Forever Friends Series)



Synopsis

The highly anticipated sequel to the award winning "The Hockey Saint" taking place ten years after "Saint" ends. The legendary Jeremiah "Jake" Jacobson, now thirty two, has been the world's best hockey player over his fourteen year career because of his out of this world talent and his smart play. But he can't stay on top forever, and when he starts making mistakes on the ice, his career and family life start to crumble. At the same time, Tom Leonard, his agent and best friend, is completely overwhelmed by a project that he and Jake were supposed to be working on together. A project that could have a huge impact on people throughout their city in need of a helping hand. As Jake sinks deeper into a funk over his lost status due to his deteriorating play and the emergence of teammate and rookie phenom Barclay Pedersen, Tom realizes he's on his own. At the same time he rediscovers someone from his past who he never thought he'd see again. In that burgeoning relationship, Tom discovers the importance of taking chances and starts to believe in himself. Can Jake break out of his downward spiral and Tom finally find the courage to step out of Jake's shadow?

Book Information

Series: The Forever Friends Series (Book 3)

Paperback: 160 pages

Publisher: Animal Media Group LLC (November 1, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0986148938

ISBN-13: 978-0986148934

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.4 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 6 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,203,636 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #18 in "Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Sports > Hockey" #899 in "Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Boys & Men" #961 in "Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Coming of Age"

Customer Reviews

More than just a hockey story, "Hockey Karma" touches on themes that everyone deals with such as finding your voice, aging gracefully and maintaining personal relationships. The characters are all relatable and don't talk at the reader, they talk to the reader. A fitting conclusion to the "Forever Friends Trilogy." Bill Clement 2-Time Stanley Cup Champion,

Broadcaster, Author of "Everyday Leadership" - Howard - "We've done it again... another great book. We can all empathize with Jeremiah - wanting to stay on top as long as we can. And we're also a lot like Tom - needing to take risks to realize our full potential" Christine Lisi ESPN Radio Anchor and lifelong NHL fan In Hockey Karma, Jeremiah Jacobson would seem to be spiraling downwards, fast as he is facing the end of his career and dealing with a drug problem brought on by a hockey injury. But darkness doesn't engulf him, because he has hope to play again, to heal, and to succeed in an urban renewal project which will revitalize the city where Jake's Blades play. His reward? Hockey Karma that leads to renewal and triumph, both on and off the ice. Brian Kennedy, author of Facing Wayne Gretzky More than just a hockey story, "Hockey Karma" touches on themes that everyone deals with such as finding your voice, aging gracefully and maintaining personal relationships. The characters are all relatable and don't talk at the reader, they talk to the reader. A fitting conclusion to the "Forever Friends Trilogy." Bill Clement 2-Time Stanley Cup Champion, Broadcaster, Author of "Everyday Leadership" - Howard - "We've done it again... another great book. We can all empathize with Jeremiah - wanting to stay on top as long as we can. And we're also a lot like Tom - needing to take risks to realize our full potential" Christine Lisi ESPN Radio Anchor and lifelong NHL fan In Hockey Karma, Jeremiah Jacobson would seem to be spiraling downwards, fast as he is facing the end of his career and dealing with a drug problem brought on by a hockey injury. But darkness doesn't engulf him, because he has hope to play again, to heal, and to succeed in an urban renewal project which will revitalize the city where Jake's Blades play. His reward? Hockey Karma that leads to renewal and triumph, both on and off the ice. Brian Kennedy, author of Facing Wayne Gretzky

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his past who he never thought he'd see again. In that burgeoning relationship, Tom discovers the importance of taking chances and starts to believe in himself. Can Jake break out of his downward spiral and Tom finally find the courage to step out of Jake's shadow?

Another polished and well-produced comic book/graphic novel by Howard Shapiro focusing on the game of hockey. Hockey is, of course, just the centerpiece of the book. The real focus here is on the lives of the characters, as is the case in *The Stereotypical Freaks* (where music plays a larger role) and *The Hockey Saint*. I can easily think of students I had over the years who would have loved to read this book. Some of them would search for books about sports that could engage them, and usually just read the same thing year after year, depending on what the library offered. Shapiro's books would be a welcome addition to the classroom shelf, merging a love of sports and a love of the comic book medium. I also want to note here how cool it is that each chapter in this graphic novel is complimented by a recommended listening list of musical tracks. This is an interesting feature to me that makes the book all the more unique.

I am not a huge reader of graphic novels. But, having previously read *The Stereotypical Freaks* by this author, when he contacted me and asked if I would be willing to read this graphic novel, I quickly agreed. He sent me a complimentary copy of this book in return for an honest review. Jeremiah "Jake" Jacobson is a very troubled character. I felt for him as he dealt with issues that affect us at one time or another. Unfortunately, I didn't like him as much as I thought I would. Being a professional ice hockey player, he has had to deal with his fair share of injuries and pain. However, he is now faced with dealing with his potential replacement, who is a lot younger and eager to prove himself, which makes him jealous. His best friend and agent, Tom Leonard, meanwhile, has problems of his own. I really liked him. He really wants to make a difference to the local community, but when he meets an old flame, he must decide whether to follow his head or his heart. Because I hadn't read *The Hockey Saint*, I was worried that I wouldn't be able to follow the story. However, I needn't have worried as it takes place ten years later. As I mentioned above, I am not a huge reader of graphic novels, nor am I a follower of ice hockey. I must admit that it took me a while to get into this story, as I am out of practice reading this genre of books, which includes comics. However, I enjoyed the story as it unfolded. The author has included a play list to listen to whilst reading this book. However, I didn't have any of these songs available to read to on hand, so persevered without them. The illustrations are excellent and show the progression of the story; this made it easy for me to picture the scenes. I did find the story a little

lacking dialogue wise, but this is because I am used to reading novels written in text, where the author has to use words to describe things in more detail and there is more interaction between characters. The story, once I got into it, gripped me and I found myself emotionally involved. I felt for Tom as he wrestled with his commitment to a community project and his love for an old flame. However, I didn't have the same emotional tug with Jake, even though he's going through a tough time himself. Maybe this is because, although I could empathize with him, I haven't been through the same problems he faced. I congratulate Howard Shapiro on a fantastic tale that touched me deeply. Because this is a graphic novel, his writing style is difficult to judge but I would say it's evenly paced. The flow is also difficult to judge, though the illustrations made the scenes flow seamlessly. Although I enjoyed reading Hockey Karma, I find that graphic novels are not my cup of tea. However, I highly recommend this book if you love reading them, or are an ice hockey/sports fan. - Lynn Worton

Disclaimer: I received a free ecopy via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. This is the third book in the Forever Friends trilogy (The Stereotypical Freaks and The Hockey Saint are the other two books). The book is a progression from the previous stories and is set about 10 years after The Hockey Saint. It follows two friends, Tom Leonard and hockey player Jake Jacobson. Jake is near the end of his career and battling with replacement and drug addiction. The creators did a great job of showing how these affected other aspects of his life. While Jake's life is deconstructing, Tom is working on building things up. He starts a relationship with his high school crush and develops plans to improve the community where the book is set. These events unfold over the course of the hockey season, which works nicely to pace the story. The art is markedly different from the previous books. Mostly this is in the characters, which makes sense because they are a bit older now. I enjoyed it in general. There were a couple panels where the angle of the illustration combined with the character design made it look a little odd. The action shots on the ice are well done. I think this is an excellent conclusion to the series. Although the characters are older now, it should appeal to teens that might have read the first two books or anyone that enjoys hockey stories.

I received this book from the author in exchange for an honest review. This in no way influences my opinion, and all of the words below are my own. Hockey Karma gave the point of view of a hockey player that you usually won't see in a graphic novel, especially one not entirely aimed for adults. We got to follow the story of an older hockey player nearing retirement, rather than someone breaking into the sport or discovering their incredible talent for it. I enjoyed this perspective in that it was more

unique, and an interesting way to cover some serious topics. I always find that graphic novels are one of the best ways of addressing serious topics in fiction, and this was no exception. I also love graphic novels because they are such quick and easy reads, but graphic novels are (usually) purely dialogue leaving only the images to fill the rest in. I absolutely loved the artwork, but I didn't feel entirely satisfied with how it told the story. I can also see where Howard Shapiro could easily write a full length novel based on this and I would gladly read it to fill in the gaps. That being said I also have not read the two novels that took place years earlier in the same universe, and reading those might fill in the gaps for me as well. Hopefully I will be able to read them soon, and they will help to make Hockey Karma even better for me!

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