Sport



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出版者:Thomas Dunne Books

出版时间:

装帧:Hardcover

isbn:9780312269944

Mick Cochrane follows up his critically acclaimed debut novel, Flesh Wounds, with Sport, the story of a boy s search for order and belonging in a world where the rules keep changing. It is 1967. Harlan Hawkins is a wise and wily kid with a passion for baseball. He plays first base on his summer league team, obsessively collects baseball cards, and avidly follows the fortunes of his beloved hometown Minnesota Twins. And then his world is suddenly, inexplicably shaken when his mother is diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, and his hard-drinking, explosive father abandons them. The Hawkins family quickly descends into a kind of awkward struggle for survival, for love and safety, for belonging and self-knowledge, through a series of adventures that are sometimes terrifying, sometimes funny, often both. At the center of Sport is the boy s mother, shrewdly, crankily intelligent, full of defiant

wisecracks and bitter wisdom, driven by her fierce love for her son. She introduces him to the pleasures of dangerous fun and implores him to swing from the heels and hit away, to make his mistakes loud and large. Harlan is cautiously befriended by George Walker, his baseball coach and neighbor, who does what he can to bring a measure of stability to the boy s life. And when Mr. Walker offers him what looks like a way out, the boy must take stock of what he s learned and make a decision regarding who he is and where he belongs. Sport is about the tension between two worlds: the world as we wish it to be and the world as it is-- frail and broken, dangerous and doomed, terrible and beautiful. Sport is about learning to love the broken world.