

# Whirligig



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From Publishers Weekly After a drunk teenage boy kills a girl while driving, his life is transformed by fulfilling a request of the girl's mother. PW's boxed review called Fleischman's novel "stellar." Ages 12-up. (Nov.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. From School Library Journal Grade 7 Up?Vapid, self-absorbed, status-conscious Brent attends a party at which he suffers a very public rejection by the girl he's been lusting after. Drunk, furious, and unable to deal with his humiliation, he tries to kill himself on the trip home, but his reckless driving kills a stranger instead: a lovely, talented, motivated, high school senior. Though Brent's parents would like to minimize his sense of guilt and his punishment, Brent himself is tormented and longs to make some restitution. The court arranges a meeting with his victim's mother, who asks Brent to "make four whirligigs, of a girl that looks like Lea....Then set them up in Washington, California, Florida, and Maine?the corners of the United States." The brilliant Fleischman has written a beautifully layered, marvelously constructed novel that spins and circles in numerous directions. Readers follow the creation of each whirligig and its impact on one or more observer: a young violinist, a Holocaust survivor, a Puerto Rican street-sweeper. They also follow Brent's journey by bus to the corners of the country and of his journey within himself to find a balance between recrimination and reconciliation. Though Whirligig has linear

movement, it impresses readers more with its sense of interconnected spiraling. Brent's skill and inventiveness grow with each whirligig. The emotional responses of those who see his creations likewise vary: some find joy, some peace, some equilibrium. There is enormous vitality and hopefulness expressed in this brief masterwork.?Miriam Lang Budin, Mt. Kisco Public Library, NYCopyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition. See all Editorial Reviews

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