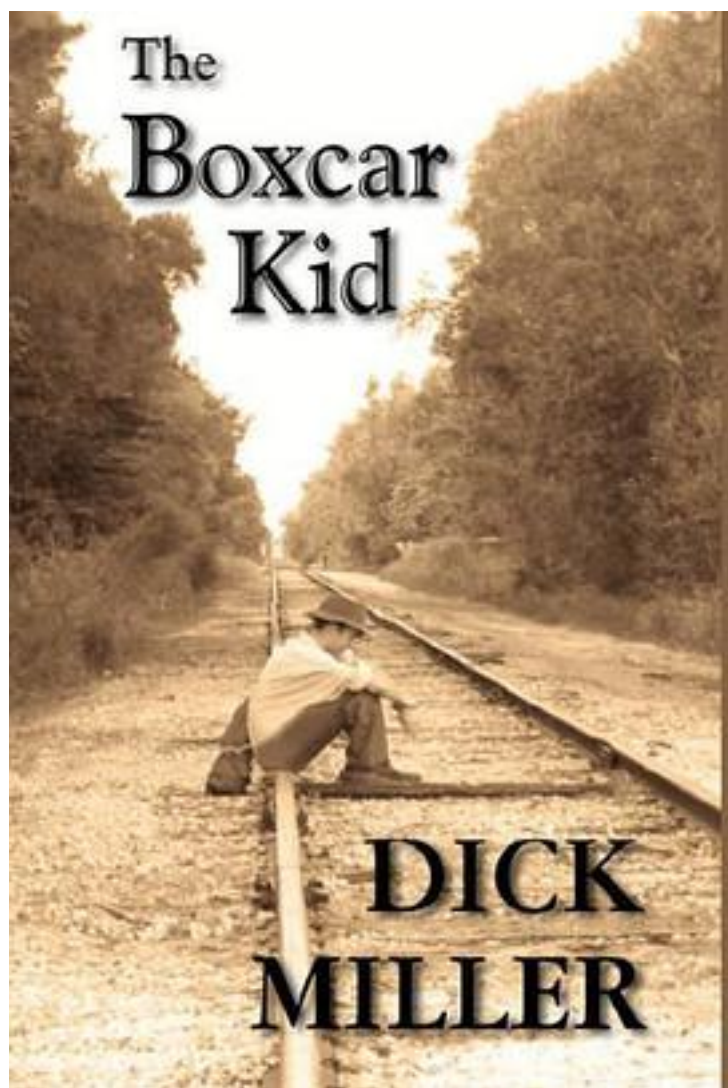


The Boxcar Kid



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At the onset of the Great Depression of the '30s, thirteen- year-old Bucky Ellis overhears two men talking at his mother's burial service and learns she died from a self-inflicted abortion with a knitting needle. He also hears their opinion that his father should "kick him out, as he's just another mouth to feed and is old enough to be out on his own." His perception clouded by grief, and motivated by his desire to do the right thing, Bucky leaves home and joins a quarter of a million teenagers riding the rails in search of a better life. Bucky becomes fast friends with "K.O.," the son of a Negro prizefighter whose career had been ruined by an unscrupulous manager. Together they face hardship, homelessness, near starvation and targeted abuse from "Crusher," an infamous railroad detective whose face is disfigured as a result of a skirmish with Bucky. In seeking vengeance, Crusher retaliates as the psychotic, obsessive stalker of Bucky, seeking not to kill, but to "ruin" him wherever he goes. In relentless pursuit, he inflicts chilling and punitive acts against his prey to the story's end, when the two meet each other for a final confrontation.

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