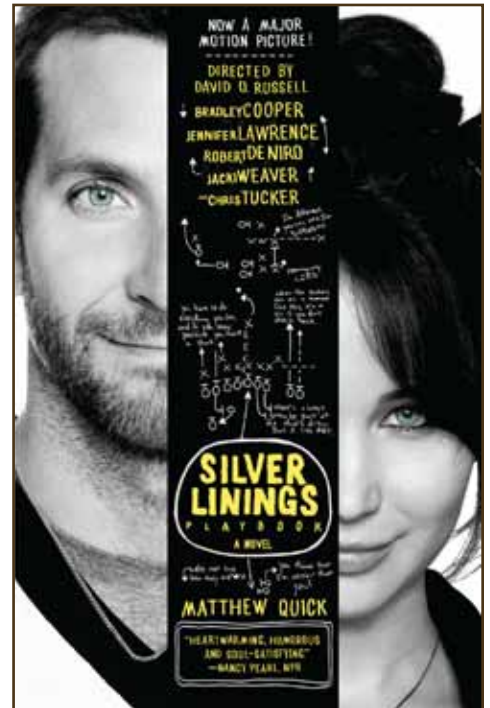


Reading Group Gold

The Silver Linings Playbook

A novel

by **Matthew Quick**



ISBN: 978-0-374-53357-1 / 304 pages

For Pat Peoples, despair is not an option. Recently released from a neural health facility and still recovering from a traumatic event that has been blocked from his memory, Pat is sure that he can find a silver lining in even the most challenging situation. He also believes that his life is a movie produced by God, and that if he can get himself in tip-top shape physically and emotionally, he will be reunited with the love of his life, his estranged wife, Nikki. Keeping Pat on the road to recovery is an unconventional therapist named Cliff Patel, whose obsession with the Philadelphia Eagles rivals Pat's. Along the way, Pat tries to understand why his family seems to be hiding something from him, why Kenny G's "Songbird" is one of the few things that makes him want to hit something, and why his new friend Tiffany thinks she can lure Pat away from Nikki. Tragically widowed and clinically depressed, Tiffany challenges Pat's view of the world, raising poignant questions about hope and love.

The discussion topics that follow are designed to enhance your reading of Matthew Quick's *The Silver Linings Playbook*. We hope they will enrich your experience of this inspiring tale.

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How does the book redefine happy endings? What makes Pat so determined to believe that every cloud has a silver lining?

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2. As Pat heals from his brain injuries and trauma, in what ways is he sometimes more mentally stable than his family and friends? Is his optimism—combined with his belief that God is a filmmaker—a sign of his sanity? How was your reading affected by the fact that the “bad place” was a neural health facility rather than a psychiatric hospital?
3. Discuss the relationships Pat and Jake have with their father, Patrick Senior. What does their father teach them about being a man? Why is it so hard for him to show emotion?
4. How does Cliff use the Eagles’ playbook to teach Pat about the real world? How do the Eagles bring unity to Pat’s family? What makes Hank Baskett the ideal rookie to serve as Pat’s inspiration?
5. In “A Hive Full of Green Bees,” what does Pat discover about himself during the violent incident with the Giants fan (Steve)? How did you feel about Jake while he was taunting Steve?
6. What keeps Pat’s obsession with Nikki alive? What does Cliff ultimately help him understand about the nature of love and attraction?
7. Tiffany and Pat’s mother, Jeanie, have different approaches to his recovery. Tiffany believes that direct confrontation is best; Jeanie wants to protect Pat from anything that might upset him, including his brother’s marriage to Caitlin. Which approach is better?
8. How did your impressions of Nikki and Tiffany shift throughout the novel?
9. Did Dance Away Depression have any healing effect on Pat? What did Tiffany want him to hear when she chose “Total Eclipse of the Heart” as their song?
10. What role does Danny play, along with Aunt Jasmine, in rescuing Pat emotionally on Christmas Day? When have you had a similar encounter with a friend who appeared at exactly the right moment?
11. How did you react when Pat finally remembers why Kenny G pushes him over the edge? What does his trauma have in common with Tiffany’s?
12. Discuss Pat’s take on literature, particularly *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Bell Jar*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and *The Catcher in the Rye*. How does his approach to literature change as his worldview changes? What would it be like to have Pat as a member of your book club?
13. In “An Acceptable Form of Coping,” Cliff and Pat disagree about whether sad books should be required reading for students. Pat says that such books teach kids to be pessimistic. Cliff says, “Life is hard, Pat, and children have to be told how hard life can be . . . so they will be sympathetic to others.” What’s your opinion? What books were you drawn to when you were younger?
14. Discuss the book’s closing scene. How has *The Silver Linings Playbook* inspired you in your life?

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PRAISE FOR *THE SILVER LININGS PLAYBOOK*

“Quick fills the pages with so much absurd wit and true feeling that it’s impossible not to cheer for his unlikely hero.” —Allison Lynn, *People*

“Compelling and fascinating . . . A tour de force . . . From the beer-soaked bacchanalian tailgating to the black holes of despair into which Iggles fans plunge themselves after a defeat, Quick is dead-on.” —Bill Lyon, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

“Charming . . . It is hard not to be moved by the fate of a man who, despite many ordeals, tries to believe in hope and fidelity, not to mention getting through another day with his sanity intact.” —Stephen Barbara, *The Wall Street Journal*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

In addition to his debut novel for adults, *The Silver Linings Playbook*, **Matthew Quick** is the author of three novels for young adults: *Sorta Like a Rock Star*, *Boy21*, and the forthcoming *Forgive Me, Leonard Peacock*. His work has received many honors, including a PEN/Hemingway Award Honorable Mention. A former English teacher, he earned his M.F.A. in creative writing at Goddard College. A native of Philadelphia, Quick now lives in Massachusetts with his wife, the novelist Alicia Bessette.

For more information, visit www.matthewquickwriter.com.

Reading group guide written by Amy Clements / The Wordshop, Inc.