



## Adam Unrehearsed

by Don Futterman



Fiction - Literary

320 Pages

Reviewed on 10/22/2023

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## Book Review

**Reviewed by Grant Leishman for Readers' Favorite**

Adam Unrehearsed by Don Futterman is the poignant tale of a young Jewish boy coming into manhood in the tough, unforgiving streets of urban New York in the 70s. Adam Miller is on the cusp of entering manhood through the Jewish tradition of the Bar Mitzvah. When he and his friends are harassed by a street gang on the subway after returning home from Bat Day at Yankee Stadium, Adam is forced to confront the real fact that anti-Semitism is alive and well, even in America. The boys were saved from the gang by an unlikely hero in the form of an immigrant, Cantor, who will play a large part in Adam's upcoming Bar Mitzvah. As Adam prepares to leave boyhood behind, he discovers his world is rapidly changing all around him; his friends seem to abandon him, his older brother is embracing militant Zionism, the street gangs appear out to get him, and he is confused and lost regarding his ongoing feelings for his girlfriend from summer camp. Searching for answers Adam eventually finds the solace, acceptance, self-confidence, and peace of mind he so desires onstage in the theater.

Adam Unrehearsed is a satisfying read if only because adolescents of every stripe, not just Jewish boys, will be able to identify with and understand Adam's angst and confusion. Author Don Futterman has wonderfully imbued Adam with the right amount of every adolescent's desire to fit in, to blend, not to be too different, with the adult requirements of the culture or faith that their parents indoctrinate their children with. Adam wants to respect his parents and to do the right thing by them and by his faith, but he is terrified of his perceived lack of ability to do so successfully. Jason, Adam's best friend, was a fascinating character. With a Jewish mother and a non-Jewish father, it was the perfect setting when the members of the Jewish community turned up to mourn the death of Jason's mother, only to be met by anger and outrage from his father and uncle. The scene of Adam's Bar Mitzvah perhaps perfectly summed up the overall disarray and confusion yet ultimate triumph of that seminal year in Adam's young life. I particularly appreciated the roles that both the crazy Cantor and Mr. Selenko played in the young man's life as mentors, despite both of them being unorthodox and considered somewhat odd by many. This is a funny, deeply moving, thoughtful narrative that I enjoyed and can highly recommend.