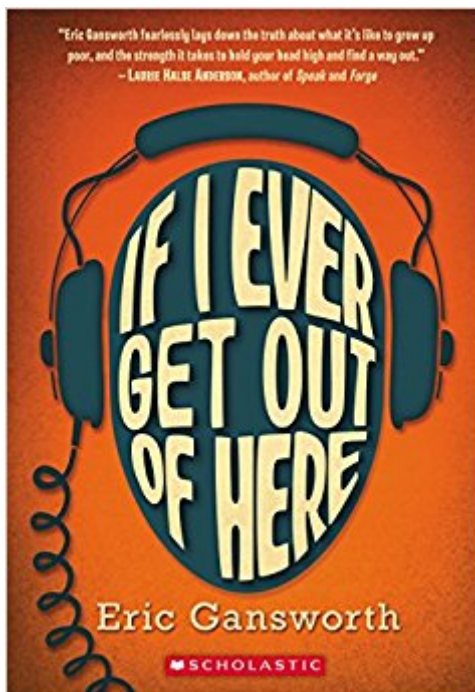


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# If I Ever Get Out Of Here



## Synopsis

Lewis "Shoe" Blake is used to the joys and difficulties of life on the Tuscarora Indian reservation in 1975: the joking, the Fireball games, the snow blowing through his roof. What he's not used to is white people being nice to him -- people like George Haddonfield, whose family recently moved to town with the Air Force. As the boys connect through their mutual passion for music, especially the Beatles, Lewis has to lie more and more to hide the reality of his family's poverty from George. He also has to deal with the vicious Evan Reininger, who makes Lewis the special target of his wrath. But when everyone else is on Evan's side, how can he be defeated? And if George finds out the truth about Lewis's home -- will he still be his friend?

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 870 (What's this?)

Paperback: 368 pages

Publisher: Arthur A. Levine Books; Reprint edition (April 28, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0545417317

ISBN-13: 978-0545417310

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.8 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 33 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #137,341 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #69 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Homelessness & Poverty](#) #86 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Bullying](#) #88 in [Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > United States > 20th Century](#)

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Gr 6-9—In 1970s upstate New York, Lewis Blake inhabits two separate universes: the reservation where he lives in poverty with his mother and uncle, and school, where the fact that he is American Indian (and his sardonic sense of humor) has made him an outcast and a victim of bullying. The seventh grader has begun to accept his status until a new kid shows up in his class. George Haddonfield grew up on air force bases around the world and doesn't seem to know or care about the divisions between the reservation kids and everyone else. Although Lewis and George

bond over their shared love of the Beatles, George's friendly overtures to visit are constantly rebuffed by Lewis, who isn't sure if their tentative friendship will be able to withstand the jarring differences between George's home and his own. Can a love of rock and roll overcome all? Lewis's relationships with his mother, his uncle, and even his peers ring true and draw readers deep into his world. Life on the reservation is so vividly depicted that scenes set elsewhere, such as the air force base where George lives, feel a little flatly drawn in comparison. Nonetheless, the overall tenor and wry humor of this novel more than make up for its weaknesses. --Evelyn Khoo Schwartz, Georgetown Day School, Washington, DC (c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

**\*Starred Review\*** Lewis Blake is bright and scrawny and the only kid from the Tuscarora Reservation tracked with the brainiacs at their county junior high in upstate New York. For the duration of sixth grade, he was invisible, but when burly, polite George Haddonfield arrives on the Air Force base and shows up in their seventh-grade class, Lewis might have found a friend. The boys bond over girls and music (the Beatles, Paul McCartney and Wings, and Queen -- it is the 1970s, after all), slowly letting their guards down, but when a vicious, well-connected bully sets his sights on Lewis, their friendship is sorely tested. Gansworth, himself an enrolled member of the Onondaga Nation, explores the boys' organic relationship with generosity and tenderness and unflinching clarity, sidestepping stereotypes to offer two genuine characters navigating the unlikely intersection of two fully realized worlds. All of the supporting characters, especially the adults -- from Lewis' beleaguered mother and iconoclastic uncle to George's upright father and delicate German mother, and a host of teachers and administrators who look right past the daily violence perpetrated on Lewis -- are carefully, beautifully drawn. And although Gansworth manages the weighty themes of racism and poverty with nuance and finesse, at its heart, this is a rare and freehearted portrait of true friendship. Grades 7-10. --Thom Barthelme --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

I heard an interview with the author on Indian Nation Radio and was intrigued enough to buy this book. I'm very glad I did. As a kid of mixed native descent and one who grew up in the 70's, this book spoke volumes to me. It took me back to places, both good and bad, that I lived and reminded me of things I had long forgotten about. This is supposedly is a book written for young adults or teens, but I think it is a book that can be enjoyed by everyone- whether you have any native

bloodline or not. Even if you were just a kid who enjoyed the rock of the day, this walk down memory lane will surely have you smiling.

I really liked this book. Lewis, the main character, is a kid with amazing self-confidence and wisdom. He stays centered even though the world around him -- esp his school -- is unfair, unkind, and sparse of hope for his own particular future. The circumstance of his making a true friendship with another of true character leads the reader into scenes which celebrate a warmth of human kindness, and the things that last. This book would be great for any high school kid, or any adult looking to believe in human integrity again. My favorite quote: "Friends are always worth the moments of joy you share, even if they don't last." Oh yeah, I love the Beatles too, so that was part of the fun.

A really spectacular book. I like the description on Gansworth's website: What do you do when you're American Indian, so nobody in your class talks to you; dirt poor, like snow-blowing-through-the-door poor; small for your age so bullies like Evan Reiniger make you their punching bag; and a Beatles fan, meaning your favorite band broke up years ago? Well, you make friends like George Haddonfield, a new kid in town, tell lies because what George doesn't know about your house won't hurt him, tell truths, 'cause someone's going to listen to you about Evan, right? And make your own music since in the end your friends and family are all you have. Really well done. Kudos to Gansworth. Debby Dahl Edwardson, National Book Award Finalist

This is a great story. I admit to knowing nothing about life on a Reservation, and this was eye-opening. I was really interested through the whole story. The pace is good, and being read by the author really helps meet the characters as he saw them. I had it in my car and I'd drive extra just to keep listening. I think this would be a good book for high school juniors or seniors to read - even though they may not relate to Louis's life as a Native teen, they would certainly understand some of his school struggles, family issues, etc.

This is a well written story about the angst, sadness and despair that can grip you when you are young, poor and don't see a way forward. And then it shows that there is hope, that work and love and faith can help one to a better place. I bought this for my granddaughters, but I enjoyed it very much myself.

I'm usually skeptical reading certain books for a class. However, our class being comprised of music, biology, math, history, and physical education majors, we were able to have amazing discussions, and share stories of how we related to the novel. Get it, read it, enjoy it!

son said great book about diversity and understanding others while growing up. appropriate for middle school early high school

Anyone who was a teen during the 1970's will love this book. Although it is about a Native American boy living on a reservation in Western NY, many of his experiences are universal. This book is about dealing with poverty, making friends outside of your circle of comfort, and of course, the music. This book is highly recommended!

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