

About a Boy

About a Boy is actually about two boys – Marcus - a 12-year-old boy and Will - a 36-year-old boy. Will lives in a cool flat, wears cool clothes and coasts through life trying to avoid emotional commitment and distracting himself with booze, TV and casual sex - whereas Marcus sings aloud without realising it, has a terrible haircut wears a lot of hairy clothing and is heavily influenced by his eccentric mother – Fiona.

Will meets Marcus by chance at a picnic. The pair bond over an unfortunate incident with a loaf of bread and a duck.

Will drops Marcus off at his mum's house only for them to find Marcus' mum, Fiona, has tried to kill herself.

Marcus starts going round to Will's house after school to avoid going home. The pair bond over *Countdown* and Will helps Marcus increase his coolness levels – so the kids at school don't bully him so much by pulling hilarious practical jokes like stealing his new trainers.

Will falls in love with a single mum called Rachel. Marcus too becomes engaged in a friendship with a cool girl at school called Ellie. By the end of the book;

'Will had lost his shell and his cool and his distance, and he felt scared and vulnerable, but he got to be with Rachel; and Fiona had lost a big chunk of Marcus, and she got to stay away from the casualty ward; and Marcus had lost himself, and got to walk home from school with his shoes on.'

In *About a Boy* Nick Hornby, the author, is making a point about how damagingly individualistic modern society can be. Despite all his cool stuff - at the beginning of the book Will lives an isolated existence;

'You had to live in your own bubble. You couldn't force your way into someone else's, because then it wouldn't be a bubble any more.'

However, as he gets more engaged in Marcus' life – initially against his will – he begins to appreciate how meaningless his existence was before. Opening himself up to Marcus also opens him up to Rachel – and a brave new world called 'being an adult'.