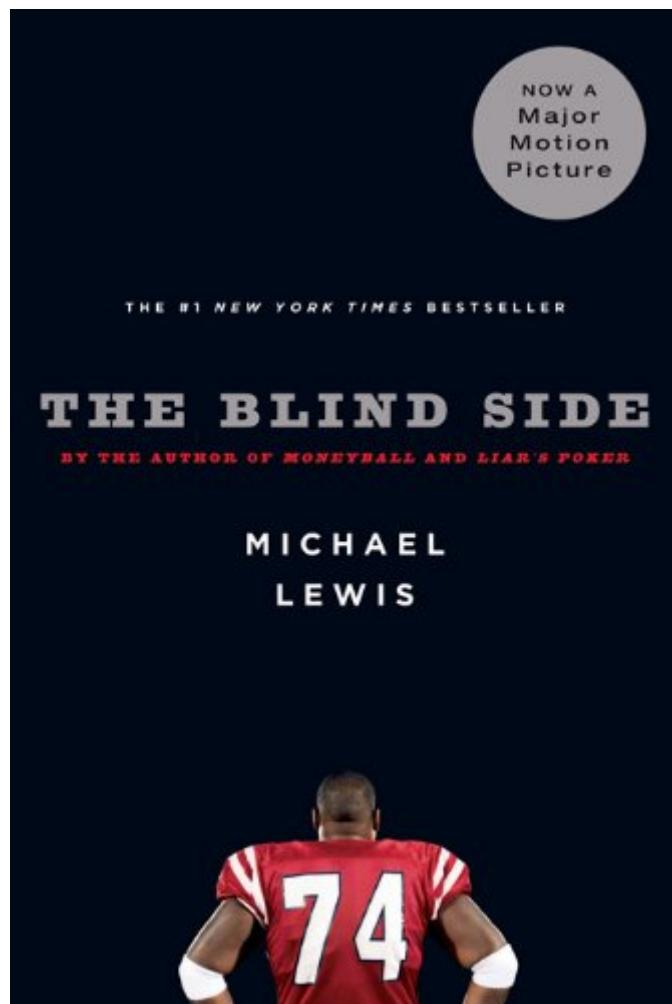


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The Blind Side: Evolution Of A Game



Synopsis

"Lewis has such a gift for storytelling... he writes as lucidly for sports fans as for those who read him for other reasons."--Janet Maslin, New York TimesWhen we first meet Michael Oher is one of thirteen children by a mother addicted to crack; he does not know his real name, his father, his birthday, or how to read or write. He takes up football, and school, after a rich, white, Evangelical family plucks him from the streets. Then two great forces alter Oher: the family's love and the evolution of professional football itself into a game in which the quarterback must be protected at any cost. Our protagonist becomes the priceless package of size, speed, and agility necessary to guard the quarterback's greatest vulnerability: his blind side.

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Customer Reviews

Love the book, you don't necessarily have to like football to like the book. I found very interesting how the book explains the evolution of football as a game.

If you're a fan of high school, college, or NFL football, this book is a great read. If you're interested

in discussions of class economics or discourses on race, this book is a great read. Or if you just want to read a book that will make you laugh, challenge you, and sometimes make you question the motives of the protagonists, this book is a great read. The only hesitation I have about the book is that I think it purports to be about Michael Oher, the high school and college phenom left tackle. In a lot of ways it is, but only to the extent that Lewis wanted to tell Oher's story. On the other hand, however, what Lewis is really exploring in this book is why and how a rich, white couple (Sean and Leigh Ann Tuohy) from one of the most segregated cities in America (Memphis) would become invested in a young black kid who is ironically simultaneously almost impossible to notice and impossible to ignore. In some ways, I think Lewis is interested in the Tuohys' investment in Michael as a person as is contrasted against the system's (Briarcrest High School Athletics Dept, Ole Miss University, and every other major college football program in the country, and the NFL). Everybody seems to want something from him, and that thing is immediately apparent and almost assured. But the Tuohys were invested in him long before they realized just how good a player he was. In that sense, his incredible success seems to make their investment both charming and sincere. Tough to admit (and Lewis doesn't address this at all, really) that I wouldn't have been interested in reading about the Tuohys' charity or Oher's luck had it not been for his incredible physical gifts. Maybe that's the real lesson of the book.

What a great book. Michael Lewis not only knows how to put together a captivating story, he does so with subtle wit and plenty of insight. His meticulous research is obvious; he'll casually mention a former player and then go into detail about that player's career and its importance to the history of football over several pages. It definitely adds to the scope of the topic. Born and raised in New Orleans before studying at Princeton and eventually trading bonds for Salomon Brothers, Lewis is a perfect candidate to tell this story because of his affection for the people of the American South. Although he goes into detail about the serious socioeconomic problems that divide up Memphis, and touches upon the shady dealings of college football recruiters, he shows us that the people associated with Briarcrest Christian School are huge-hearted people who love God and football and church, who treat their peers with respect and compassion. The Southern culture is completely different from the California bubble I've grown up in, yet I can't help but admire the Tuohy family, the athletic coaches, teachers, tutors, the principal, the social workers, and everyone else in the community who not only gave Michael a leg up but went the extra mile for their community in general, without any obvious personal gain. Another incredible thing about this book, at least for me, was how cool it was when Bill Walsh and Bill Parcells and Nick Saban and Ed Orgeron made

'cameos' in the story, because these are people I would read about in the news or see making formal announcements at press conferences but never knew. So when Lewis writes about Saban's sharp suits and impeccable manners, Orgeron's barely intelligible drawl and nonstop enthusiasm, about a frustrated and disappointed Bill Walsh who couldn't even look into the eyes of his players on the flight home from a playoff loss, I was starry-eyed. These guys are celebrities to me, whom I admire for their passion and dedication to their craft. Also, the occasional investment banking analogy was amusingly out of left field. Plus the book had a countless number of hilarious moments. These guys and gals may be serious business on the field and in the classroom, but they really know how to crack a joke or break the tension. I watched the movie after reading the book and I was surprised at how accurate the filmmakers were at capturing the spirit of the people involved. For a casual movie fan, the film is enough, but if you like both the movie and football I cannot recommend this book enough.

A multi-layered look at America through football. Michael Oher was pretty much a clean slate when his white adoptive family became interested in him as a prospective NFL player. The story details how, with no academic credentials at all and no family structure, he overcame his deficits (with a lot of help from his new family) in order to become the next Michael Jordan (of football). When I consider how virtually impossible it is to live on the streets the way he did and then crack the upwardly mobile ceiling into college and finally professional sports, I can't help feeling that he is proving himself far more worthy than someone who has had everything handed to him on a platter. Oher proves that all you need is unbending intent.

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