



## Getting The Girl

By Markus Zusak

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Cameron Wolfe's life gets very complicated when he falls for his brother's girlfriend in this winning, wise novel from the dynamic author of **FIGHTING RUBEN WOLFE**.

Cameron Wolfe is the quiet one in his family, not a soccer star like his brother Steve or a charming fighter with a new girl every week like his brother Rube. Cam would give anything to be near one of those girls, to love her and treat her right. He especially likes Rube's latest, Octavia, with her brilliant ideas and bright green eyes. But what woman like that would want a loser like him? Maybe Octavia would, Cam discovers. Maybe he'd even have something to say. And those maybes change everything: winning, loving, losing, the Wolfe brothers, and Cameron himself.

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## Getting The Girl By Markus Zusak Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 8 Up-Cameron Wolfe, first introduced in *Fighting Ruben Wolfe* (Scholastic, 2001), wants a girlfriend. He wants sex. He wants to separate himself from his brothers' shadow. He wants to find himself and be something more than the underdog in the family. And he doesn't know how to go about getting what he wants. He is attracted to a girl who treats him horribly so he stands outside her house at night, hoping for glimpses of her. He likes his brother Ruben's girlfriend-and she treats him like a human being. When she and Ruben break up, Octavia shows an interest in Cameron and even though his brother already has another girlfriend, he beats up Cameron and Octavia walks away. Ruben has some bigger problems, though, and violence is once again his method of solving them. However, this is Cameron's story, and he discovers that he is much more than he ever thought he could be. His sister is the first to recognize her brother's strengths and helps give him the courage to face himself and his demons. The interaction of the characters is a real strength of this novel. It is a story of family dynamics and coming of age, interspersed with the protagonist's poignant poems and observations. The book, which was first published in Australia, should appeal to readers who want strong male characters such as those in Chris Crutcher's books.

*Janet Hilbun, formerly at Sam Houston Middle School, Garland, TX*

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 9-12. In this sequel to *Fighting Ruben Wolfe* (2001), the Wolfe family has settled into a kind of "okayness." For Cameron's brother, Ruben, that means "one girl after another, one fight after another." Only Cameron, who's in adolescence's high season, seems to feel restless and alone as he wanders the streets, pines over disinterested girls, and begins to discover his passion for writing. Then Ruben brings home beautiful Octavia, who, when Ruben predictably dumps her, surprises both brothers by turning to Cameron. Zusak interrupts Cameron's first-person narrative with excerpts from Cameron's writing that, as does much of the book, reads like what it's supposed to be: the words of a talented teenage writer, including some heavy metaphors, self-consciously experimental style, and fresh, inventive images. The authentic emotion behind the words and Cameron's raw experiences are powerful, and teens, especially boys, will easily connect with Cameron's intense yearning to define himself within his family and to discover what romance is all about--to explore, as he puts it, "the edges of words, the loyalty of blood, and the music of girls." *Gillian Engberg*

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### Review

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books July/August 2003

Cam and his older brother, Rube (from *Fighting Ruben Wolfe*, BCCB 3101), return in this examination of the nature of love, romantic and otherwise. Rube hasn't changed since the last book; he's still a love 'em and leave 'em kind of guy. Cam, on the other hand, is figuring out the kind of guy he wants to be, and it isn't Ruben. Currently a loner ('You're a bit of a lonely bastard aren't y?' his brother says), Cam is as desperate for human contact as he is for an emotional outlet, and he finds that outlet through a form of self-expression that is almost the antithesis of Ruben's bloody battles in the boxing ring. He writes. On scraps of paper he keeps stuffed in his pockets, Cam evokes his world in smears of words that manifest his longing. When Rube and Octavia (a young woman Cam sees as a cut above the rest of Ruben's previous girlfriends) break up, Cam emerges from his solitude into a world with Octavia in it; he reveals himself to her, and she has the intelligence to welcome that revelation. Zusak rides his prose as if taming something wild, giving a sense of Cam's emotional upheaval without losing control of the momentum and pace. Solid characterizations ground

the action, with Cam's personality artfully limned in a first-person narrative interspersed with his own writings; clipped staccato language, concrete and minimal, evokes the power and complexity of his yearnings. The relationship between Rube and Cam is the cohesive element in a novel that explores Cam's growing, passionate connections to the world. Readers making their own connections, passionate and otherwise, will revel in Cam's success. JMD

Booklist May 15 2003

In this sequel to Fighting Ruben Wolfe (2001), the Wolfe family has settled into a kind of "okayness." For Cameron's brother Ruben that means "one girl after another, one fight after another." Only Cameron, who's in adolescence's high season, seems to feel restless and alone as he wanders the streets, pines over uninterested girls, and begins to discover his passion for writing. Then Ruben brings home beautiful Octavia, who, when Ruben predictably dumps her, surprises both brothers by turning to Cameron. Zusak interrupts Cameron's first-person narrative with excerpts from Cameron's writing that, as does much of the book, reads like what it's supposed to be: the words of a talented teenage writer, including some heavy metaphors, self-consciously experimental style, and fresh, inventive images. The authentic emotion behind the words and Cameron's raw experiences are powerful, though, and teens, especially boys, will easily connect with Cameron's intense yearning to define himself within his family and to discover what romance is all about-to explore, as he puts it, "the edges of words, the loyalty of blood, and the music of girls."

(Middle School, High School) Since Cameron and Ruben have quit boxing (Fighting Ruben Wolfe, rev. 3/01), Cam is no longer losing to his older brother in the ring. But he still can't measure up to Rube when it comes to getting a girl. "My brother never really had to say or do anything. He just had to stand somewhere or scratch himself or even trip up a gutter and a girl would like him." Cam, on the other hand, spends his evenings standing silently outside the house of the girl he likes, an action--or inaction--that causes Ruben to observe, "You're a bit of a lonely bastard aren't y'?" But when Ruben callously discards his latest girl--a street performer named Octavia--Cameron begins to forge his first serious relationship with the beguiling harmonica player. This story of first love complicated by a serious case of sibling rivalry lacks the blustering narrative voice of its predecessor. Cam has now taken an interest in writing, and each chapter ends with a sampling of his often overwrought work ("If her soul ever leaks, I want

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