

# PINS BY JIM PROVENZANO



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### Review

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Dino is the real hero, as he fights hard to protect his first-born son from harm. The layer of Joseph's family life is real and sensitive. There are caricatures of coaches, jocks, reporters, and nosy neighbors all realistic to a fault.

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Readers will be proud of Joey Nicci, of his father Dino and even of Dink. No sensitive reader will make it to the end without giggling, anxiety, joy and tears. You'll be grateful to Jim Provenzano for sharing his novel with us. -- Eric Resnick, *Gay People's Chronicle*, Dec. 23, 1999

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Acclaimed sports columnist and fiction writer Jim Provenzano's novel PINS tells the story of bigotry in athletics, and one very short boy who stands up to it.

Set in Little Falls, New Jersey in 1993, PINS weaves the classic story of a Catholic saint into a compelling modern life -and near-death- account of Joey Nicci, a fifteen-year-old Italian-American wrestler.

After befriending Donald "Dink" Kohrs, Joey and his new posse get involved in pranks and partying that eventually get out of control, resulting in the death of a maligned fellow teammate.

The ensuing legal battle and media frenzy alter Joey's life and his self- perception as a gay teenager while shattering his fragile love for fellow teammate Dink. Like his patron saint, his battle against his own teammates forces him to suffer for his beliefs. His survival becomes a literary miracle.

A compelling story of a loving yet confused family, coaches and teachers struggling with multiple issues of violence and homophobia amid the clan-like world of teenage athletes, PINS brings together elements now frighteningly common in the media; bullying jocks, assaults on weaker students, faculty and families unwittingly allowing such behavior.

Called "prescient" and "heartfelt" by two of today's leading writers, PINS layers symbols from the worlds of animals and religion, yet while achieving a unique literary style, it remains accessible to the group for whom it speaks - gay teenagers.

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22 of 22 people found the following review helpful.

simply moving

By A Customer

i read about this novel in the magazine XY and went out in bought it not knowing very much about it at all. Pins was my first gay novel and im not sure if that is whats influncing my opinion of it, but i thought this book was amasing. as a highschooler who is active in school sports, i found this totally moving and touching. i completely connected with the characters and have been in many of joe's situations so i know how it feels. this novel comforted me and moved me in such a way that i started a gay straight alliance at my school and i couldnt be happier, all of my friend have read this book now and they are all better people for it. if you couldnt tell by this point....i highly reccomend this novel.

19 of 19 people found the following review helpful.

Completely amazing

By Mark A. MacDougal

I urge you to buy this book. I can't tell you how much I regret letting it linger on my "wish list" for so long. Mr. Provenzano's novel is nothing short of amazing. The writer's ability to describe the main character, Joseph, and his surroundings and feelings are brilliant. I found this story so moving that as I approached the ending I faced it with the same despair one feels knowing that their best friend would be moving away - forever. I miss Joseph and his family everyday since finishing the book. This is a real treasure of a book that I have urged all of my friends to read. If you enjoyed K.M. Sondheim's delightful, "The World of Normal Boys", then you will fall hard for "PINS".

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful.

An incredibly gripping story of family and love

By rick d.

PINS is an incredibly well written story about a young man who is forced to grow emotionally strong in a very short period of time. The themes of masculinity, strength, family, and religion all are addressed in this story of an Italian American high school wrestler. The writing is amazingly vivid, forcing you along with

Joseph Nicci and his family & friends. Jim Provenzano writes with unbelievable depth about issues facing many young men without giving easy answers. This book should be read by young athletes, parents of athletes, and others who would relate to this internal struggle of family, religion, and that burning first love.

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