

AMAZON EXCLUSIVE

every day



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Every day a different body.
Every day a different life.
Every day in love with the same girl.



From the co-author of
Nick & Norah's Infinite Playlist and *Will Grayson, Will Grayson*





AUTHOR'S NOTE



Every morning, A wakes up in a different body and a different life. The novel *Every Day* starts on Day 5994 of A's life. For this story, I wanted to go back to a day in A's life before *Every Day*. Think of this as A recounting a few passing moments from his past.

DAY 5909

Hamilton Keyes wakes up at 4:44 in the morning. At first I don't believe it when I see the clock—the alarm is definitely going off, which means he must have set it this way. The question I have is why.

As soon as I get a feel for the body I'm in, I have my answer.

Hamilton Keyes wakes up at 4:44 every morning in order to work out before school. This is his routine.

A strong body is unlike a regular body. Your movements become more precise, and your mind is more attuned to the body. The mind lets you know the force with which the body makes its way through the world. And the mind will also let you know when you are letting the body down.

I don't feel I have a choice. Even though part of the body desperately wants more sleep, another part is awake, ready to go. It wants to be worked.

There's a weight room in the basement. I quietly make my way down, accessing to discover the particulars of Hamilton's routine. I've learned the hard way that just because a body is strong, it doesn't mean that it can do anything. I warm up, stretch out, feel the muscles waken.

The worst thing for me about exercise is the boredom. I need to concentrate on what I'm doing, make sure I don't slip up and catch the body off guard. Were Hamilton here, there would be a satisfaction alongside his exertion, a progression that he could chart and take meaning from. But for me it's like driving a car and trying to get something other than a secondhand satisfaction from the speed.

I lift weights. I run in place. I sweat and towel myself off. Upstairs, I can hear footsteps, voices. But everyone leaves Hamilton alone here. This is

his domain. These are his body's hours.

I am tired for the rest of the day. My movements may be forceful and precise, but they're blunted by the cloudy nature of my mind. My blood cries for caffeine, and I supply it. But this only gives me little flashes of wakefulness, short moments of being present in my life.

Were I a different person, I'd be able to fuel myself on admiration as much as caffeine. I'd like it when the girls call me Abercrombie. Or even the way the guys look at me; if this body is a car I'm driving, it's a model that they want. Even some of the teachers give him admiration. Others write him off, or resent him. I read it all on their faces.

I am defensive on his behalf. I want to answer every teacher's question, just to show them that they should not judge a person based on a body. But if I do that now, Hamilton will only have to uphold it in some way tomorrow. It may feel, in the moment, like I am doing him a favor, but really I'll just be chaining him to an aberration.

So I sleepwalk through the day. To some, it must look like a sexy languor.

But really, I'm just tired.

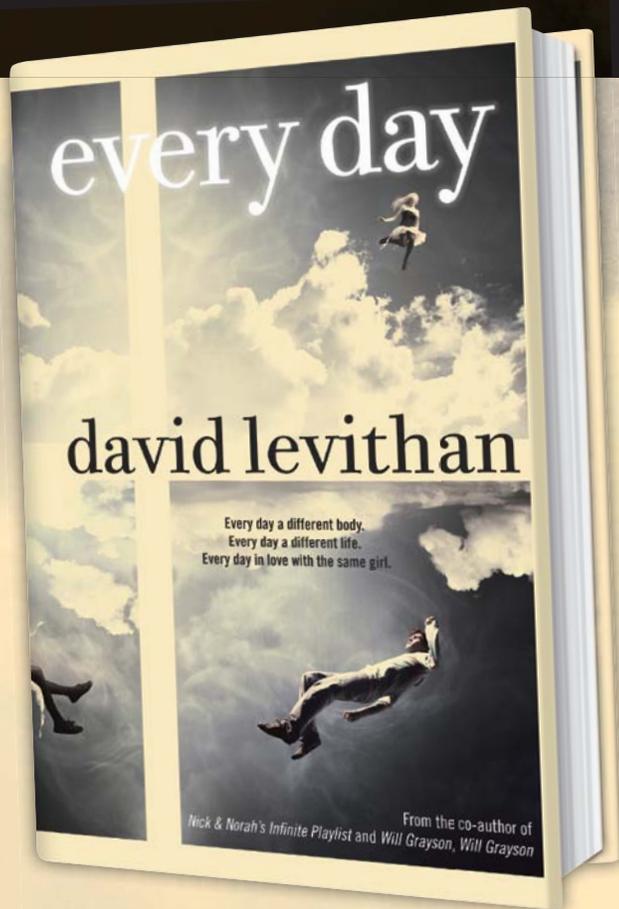
At lunch, I try to eat reasonably, but the body wants more.

I feed it.

Gym class is a release. I make volleyball a contact sport. Not with the other players—I don't start body-slammng my teammates. But I feel like I am in contact with my body again, with what it can do. *I'm wasted in the classroom*, the body seems to be telling me. *I wasn't made to be sitting down*.

Then I return to the classroom—two more periods until the end of school. I fall asleep briefly, both times.

After school I commune with my like-bodied,



like-minded friends. It's off-season, so the only sport we can play is preparation. I feel more at home here than I did alone in the basement this morning. Here the routine expands. It feels like teamwork. And teamwork can't help but engage the mind as well as the body.

I have been in the bodies of people who I suspect would give almost anything to have this body, to be this person. I'd be more hesitant, if I had a choice. Because over the years I have become wary of tinkering with nature in this way. A body like this is rarely natural. A body like this must be created and maintained. And when you give so much energy to the body, there ends up being very little energy for much else, at least when you are sixteen and just starting to form it. Perhaps if I could feel the satisfaction and admiration as my own, I would feel differently. Or if I needed this strength for anything other than its own display.

At dinner, Hamilton's mother feeds him enough for the whole family. His father, whose body looks like Hamilton's, only with a layer of time on top, talks nonstop about the game he was watching on TV last night. Hamilton's little sister looks bored, and Hamilton's little brother looks eager. When dinner is over, I understand why: He asks Hamilton if he can lift some weights tonight, too. Hamilton's mother shakes her head, but his father says it's no big deal.

"A five-pound weight never hurt anyone," he says.

"Unless you smash someone in the skull with it," Hamilton's little sister chimes in.

"I don't know, Charlie," I say. "I really don't know."

"C'monnnnn," he pleads. He can't be older than ten.

I relent. We head to the basement and I give him the lightest weight to curl, telling him to be careful. He sticks his tongue out in concentration as he lifts it up and down, making his little biceps burp up rather than bulge.

"Your turn! Your turn!" he calls out after ten repetitions.

I'm sure this is part of what they do, and I respect the glee that Charlie feels being in his brother's domain. I know I should do what Hamilton would do. But I'm just so tired.

"Not tonight," I tell him.

"Why not?"

"Because," I say, choosing my words carefully, "it's okay to take a break. You can't push yourself too hard."

"Why?"

"Because you could push yourself to a place you can't get back from."

Charlie looks at me quizzically. “I don’t understand.”

I mess up his hair a little, playfully. “You don’t need to. All you need to know is there are all kinds of strong.”

I know he still doesn’t get it, but that’s okay. Maybe he’ll remember these words later on, and maybe he won’t.

I decide to speak his language a little better.

“Ice cream,” I say. “We definitely need ice cream.”

The body thinks it’s a waste to be lying on the couch, watching Nickelodeon. But the body is also a little relieved. And the mind? Well, the mind is happy with this kind of teamwork: two brothers with matching ice-cream bowls and matching ice-cream scoops, laughing at a talking sponge.

The heaviest thing I’ll lift for the rest of the evening is Charlie, when it’s time to go to bed.

But I still make sure the alarm is set for 4:44 the next morning. Because that shouldn’t really be my choice.

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