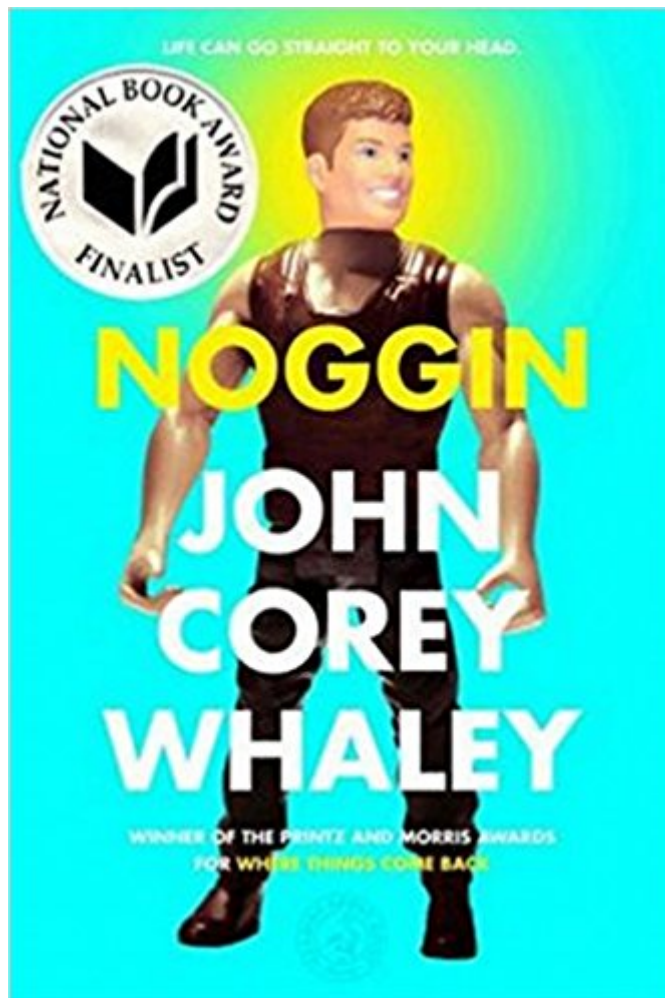




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# Noggin



## Synopsis

2014 NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALIST Travis Coates has a good headâ on someone elseâ 's shoulders. A touching, hilarious â œtour de force of imagination and empathyâ • (Booklist, starred review) from John Corey Whaley, author of the Printz and Morris Awardâ "winning Where Things Come Back.Listenâ "Travis Coates was alive once and then he wasnâ 't.Now heâ 's alive again.Simple as that. The in between part is still a little fuzzy, but Travis can tell you that, at some point or another, his head got chopped off and shoved into a freezer in Denver, Colorado. Five years later, it was reattached to some other guyâ 's body, and well, here he is. Despite all logic, heâ 's still sixteen, but everything and everyone around him has changed. That includes his bedroom, his parents, his best friend, and his girlfriend. Or maybe sheâ 's not his girlfriend anymore? Thatâ 's a bit fuzzy too. Looks like if the new Travis and the old Travis are ever going to find a way to exist together, there are going to be a few more scars. Oh well, you only live twice.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Upâ "Travis Coates, 16, is dying of cancer, so he accepts an offer from a cryogenic group to have his head removed and frozen with the hope that it would be attached to another body in the future and he could be reanimated. Five years later, he "wakes up" with a new body and is still 16. There are a few minor problems with his new life-he is a celebrity/freak and gets more attention than he wants, he has to get used to a body that has different abilities than his old one, and he has to go to school with kids he doesn't know. The biggest problem is that Travis's best friend and his

girlfriend are now 21 years old and have moved on with their lives while he feels like he has simply taken a nap. Cate is engaged and not interested in in a relationship with a teenager. Travis is obsessed with the idea that he can win her back and won't accept her repeated "no." He tries various means to convince her that he's still the one for her: some hilarious, some touching, some inappropriate, but all definitely sophomoric. The premise of the story is interesting although far-fetched. The author does a good job of describing the emotions and reactions of all of the characters, but Travis's fixation on Cate becomes tiresome and a plot twist at the end feels like it was thrown in just to make the story longer.â Nancy P. Reeder, Heathwood Hall Episcopal School, Columbia, SC --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

**\*Starred Review\*** Travis Coates has lost his headâ "literally. As he dies from acute lymphoblastic leukemia, his head is surgically removed and cryogenically frozen. Five years pass, and, thanks to advances in medical science, it becomes possible to reanimate his head and attach it to a donor body. Travis Coates is alive again, but while his family and friends are all 5 years older, Travis hasnâ t agedâ "he is still 16 and a sophomore in high school. Awkward? Difficult? Puzzling? You bet. In the past, the two people he could have talked to about this were his best friend, Kyle, and his girlfriend, Cate. But now theyâ re part of the problem. Kyle, who came out to Travis on his deathbed, has gone back into the closet, and Cate is engaged to be married. Stubbornly, Travis vows to reverse these developments by coaxing Kyle out of the closet and persuading Cate to fall in love with him again. How this plays out is the substance of this wonderfully original, character-driven second novel. Whaley has written a tour de force of imagination and empathy, creating a boy for whom past, present, and future come together in an implied invitation to readers to wonder about the very nature of being. A sui generis novel of ideas, *Noggin* demands much of its readers, but it offers them equally rich rewards. **HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY:** Whaleyâ s sleeper debut, *Where Things Come Back* (2011), won both the Michael L. Printz Award and the William C. Morris Award, so readers will be eagerly awaiting this second effort. Grades 9-12. --Michael Cart --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

I had to force myself to turn each page to keep reading. The main character is so self-absorbed and boring. I didn't feel like any of the characters or themes were compelling or fleshed out with any depth. The events that should have been suspenseful didn't really work. It was so hard to feel sympathy for any of the characters. I would summarize this book as having a plodding pace, predictable events, under-developed characters, weak storyline, and a dissatisfying ending. I am

discussing this book with my daughter and was hoping to find a few positive things to touch on. I found three worthwhile pages in the final chapter. I am a regular reader of adult literature, children's literature and YA literature contemporary and classic.

One of the things I love so much about reading is what different books do for me. Some entertain, some manipulate my emotions (this is not necessarily a negative), some teach, some infuriate, and some make me think. I love when a book surprises me and does more than I expect. Such was the case with John Corey Whaley's spectacular second novel, *Noggin*. I enjoyed it tremendously (despite its offbeat premise) and it really made me think. Travis Coates was a gravely ill 16-year-old who was tired of dying, but he didn't want to keep living the way he was. He and his family agreed to participate in an experimental program in which his head (the only part of his body not riddled with the cancer that was killing him) was removed from his body and, when medical and technological advances made it possible, it would be attached to another donor's body. Deep down inside, everyone had a feeling this would never happen, but it was a good thing to imagine occurring years into the future. One morning Travis woke up, his parents by his side, to find that his head had been reattached to another teenager's body (a better body, if anyone's counting). For Travis, it only seemed like a few hours had passed since he said goodbye to his family, his best friend, Kyle, and his girlfriend, Cate, but for everyone else, it was five years later. Five years in which so much had changed. "I want to tell you a story about how you can suddenly wake up to find yourself living a life you were never supposed to live. It could happen to you, just like it happened to me, and you could try to get back the life you think you deserve to be living. Just like I did." Travis has to return to his high school and repeat sophomore year. (While he should be 21, his body and his mind are still 16, and he didn't get enough credits while he was sick to become a junior.) Beyond everyone wanting to get a look at his really cool scar where they attached his head to the other boy's body, it's weird being there without Kyle and Cate, although he is able to make a new friend. But as similar as that aspect of his life is, things are really different where Kyle and Cate are concerned, as their lives moved on, much differently than Travis would have expected. Travis can't seem to understand why they can't seem to pick things up where they left off, and runs the risk of alienating the people who matter the most to him. It's truly hard to reconcile his gratitude at being able to have another chance to live with his frustration that his life can't be the way he wants it to be. *Noggin* is tremendously thought-provoking, because while the procedure that gave Travis a new lease on life is certainly difficult to grasp, it raises some interesting questions. If you thought a person you lost would come back to you, should you keep your life in a holding pattern until it was confirmed that it won't

happen? What obligation do we have to those we leave behind? If this procedure existed, should it be used, or is it one step too far? I really loved this book. I loved the fact that Travis wasn't any wiser than he was before he died, and if anything, he's more confused. I loved all of the characters and how they were flawed, just like real life. And I love the way Whaley tells a story, which is just one reason why his previous book, *Where Things Come Back*, was one of my favorite books of 2012. If you can get past the procedure on which this book hinges, you'll really enjoy this, and it will move you if you've ever had to face the loss of someone you wish could still be with you. As Travis says, "It made me realize that no matter how often you see or talk to someone, no matter how much you know them or don't know them, you always fill up some space in their lives that can't ever be replaced the right way again once you leave it." *Noggin* might be that way for me.

This book is a YA masterpiece. Travis is a character that you instantly love and then hold in your heart as he takes his new, strange journey through life. This book is wildly emotional, intensely truthful and humorous beyond your expectations. I'd give it ten stars if I could. I hope all my students read this someday.

An absolutely wonderful YA book. No spoilers here, but you should know that the protagonist was reanimated. Due to cancer, 16 year old Travis died but not before a new medical procedure removed his head, which was cancer free, and kept in a cryogenics lab. Five years later, they reattached his head to a healthy body. By this time, all of Travis' friends, including the girl he loved, have graduated and move on with their lives, but he is still just 16. For Travis, it was as if no time had passed, but so many things had changed. His girl friend is engaged to be married and his friends have college degrees and jobs. While many consider Travis to be a miracle of science, others think he is an abomination. Travis must navigate a world where he no longer fits in, where his friends are adults and the love of his life considers him a child. Filled with humor, pathos, heartrending grief and determination, *Noggin* is a novel that poses the question: What if? I wonder how any of us would deal with coming back to a changed world and would we want to?

Spoilers!!! just found this book weird. The whole premise of it was so strange. Coming back from the dead is one thing, but one person's on another's body? It was an oddity that I couldn't seem to get past, especially since the book seems to be set in present time. And because of the strange situation, I found that the situation of Travis Coates is not a situation that I (or anyone) could relate to. I found myself frustrated with the fact that Travis could not get over Carte, and could not realize

the fact that she was not interested in him anymore. And proposing to her?!? How selfish is that? Her put her between a rock and a hard place with that proposal. One last thing I did not enjoy was how Travis seemed to be WASTING his second chance at life chasing a girl that was engaged, and then faking into a state of depression when she did not drop everything and run to him.

NOGGIN was such an amazing book. Not only does it relate to teenagers in an emotional way, but it also speaks to kids trying to find themselves and/or going through a rough time in life. The raw emotion and understanding in each word throughout the novel will bring tears to your eyes in both happy and sad ways. It always leaves you wanting more and you won't be able to put it down. It's a wonderful book for anybody who loves to get thrown into a whole new world.

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