



# Slot Machine

*Chris Lynch*

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"If you don't have a slot, what are we going to do with you?"

It's called Twenty-One Nights with the Knights. But for Elvin Bishop--fourteen, overweight, and a self-proclaimed nonathlete--this summer sports "retreat" is more like the twenty-one trials of hell.

As everyone around him, including his best friends, slips smoothly into athletic "slots," Elvin is pounded on the football field, slammed on the baseball diamond, and tortured on the wrestling mat--always coming out a complete failure. But appearances can be deceiving. Sometimes real strength comes from breaking the rules rather than playing the game. And sometimes finding acceptance is less about fitting in than about making your own way--with grit and humor.

All incoming freshmen at Flagship Academy's summer program are suppose to find an athletic 'slot' for themselves. But there is no slot for Elvin, a wise-cracking, overweight sports incompetent who bounces from one humiliating game to another. How he discovers his own place for himself—with grit and humor—makes for "a funny, poignant coming-of-age story...[A] wry, thoughtful book [that] speaks with wisdom and heart to the victim and outsider in us all."—BL.

Bulletin Blue Ribbons 1995 (C)

1996 Best Books for Young Adults (ALA)

1996 Best Books for Reluctant Young Adult Readers (ALA)

Books for Youth Editors' Choices 1995 (BL)

1996 Books for the Teen Age (NY Public Library)

Young Adult Choices for 1997 (IRA/CBC)

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