



## Losers by Matthue Roth

**Losers** is a short, funny novel about a quirky Russian kid who can't fit in with the rest of his high school. Russian immigrant Jupiter Glazer has been a target for bullies since he came to Philadelphia when he was seven years old. Jupiter hopes for a clean start at his new high school but his first day, Jupiter Glazer finds himself completely ignored by his classmates or being shoved into a locker. His growing suspicions are confirmed: he's a loser. Maybe it's his Russian accent, maybe it's the fact that the only place he and his immigrant parents can afford to live is in an almost-defunct elevator factory in the worst neighborhood in town, or maybe it's his friendship with fellow émigré and science nerd Vadim. Everything changes when he manages to crash a party being held by the hottest girl in school; a few semi-accidental witticisms and an accent makeover later, Jupiter is ascending, if not to popularity, at least to a comfortable slot in the high school social hierarchy. He seems to have a special gift for connecting with people, and this gift serves him in good stead as he begins to understand his family, his high school, and himself. From the first day at a new school, Jupiter's life is changing. As our story progresses, Jupiter isn't exactly the out of place, practically invisible, foreign outcast that he used to be, and he's not always sure if that's good or bad.

Roth's wry, lighthearted touch lends this novel and its protagonist tremendous appeal, it's a fast, funny read with teen appeal and musical references that will delight fans of '80s and '90s rock. Outsiders everywhere will rejoice with Jupiter as he finds a place for himself in a world that often feels as foreign to him as he does to it. It's more than a little crazy, yet manages to ring true despite the insanity.

Teens will forgive the rather convenient solution to Jupiter's housing problem and will focus instead on the honest views of popularity, parental disappointment, and self-image. This is a coming of age story that also falls into the madcap adventure category occasionally, and the result is a lot of amusement minus the brain rotting that often accompanies comedy. This is a short novel (easily read in one sitting) that packs a lot of punch and will provoke a lot of muffled laughter.

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