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Yo, Miss: A Graphic Look At High School (Comix Journalism)



Synopsis

Yo, Miss: A Graphic Look at High School takes the reader inside Wildcat Academy, a second chance high school in New York City where all the students are considered at-risk. Through strong and revealing black and white images, the book tells the story of eight students who are trying to get that ticket to the middle class – a high school diploma. Whether they succeed or not has as much to do with what happens outside the classroom as in, and the value of perseverance is matched by the power of a second chance. It is a story that shows these teens in all their beauty, intelligence, suffering, humor, and humanity (and also when they are really pains in the behind.) A view from the trenches of public education, Yo, Miss challenges preconceptions about who these kids are, and what is needed to help them graduate.

Book Information

Series: Comix Journalism

Paperback: 160 pages

Publisher: Microcosm Publishing (March 17, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1621062198

ISBN-13: 978-1621062196

Product Dimensions: 5.7 x 0.6 x 8.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 9 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

“I just looked at a bunch of Yo, Miss, and it's riveting!...This is such an amazing project--I'm not sure how you have the energy to teach all day and do all this writing and drawing, but keep it up!â •Alison Bechdel, Fun Home, Are You My Mother? “lâ™ve read and been incredibly moved by your chapters – thank you. The story re. Oedipus is so powerful that lâ™ve been telling it to others.â •Deborah Meier, The Power of Their Ideas“…Lends a sense of realism too often lacking in Hollywood portraits of inner-city high schools… a brave and fascinating look at Wildeâ™s workplace realities.â •Comics Rack: Decemberâ™s Best Comic

BooksBrian Heater — Boing Boing“She succeeds at revealing the anxiety and the hope underlying her work at the school without soliciting cheap empathy for her or her students fighting against the odds…lâ™d recommend this zine on its merits as a comic and as a snapshot of inner city American education.â•Zine review of the month, April 2014Joshua Barton — Broken Pencil"For anyone who has ever had demanding experiences working in education Yo, Miss might trigger violent flashbacks... Oh, the humanity. Get it and get educated."Sean Arenas – Razorcake “Lisa Wildeâ™s black and white drawings explode with complexity, layered metaphors and gorgeous perspective…â•Joanna Clapps HermanAuthor of The Anarchist Bastard and No Longer and Not Yet“Reading your graphic novel was a transformative experience for me…It was at once completely true - a realistic portrayal of the challenges and day-to-day experiences of teaching, and also a work of art, in that it took the truth and made it universal and beautiful and painful and somehow more true than the day-to-day ever could be…â•Alexis Goldberg, Achievement Coach, The Urban Assembly; Fellow, Academy for Teachers"Inspiring and heartbreaking"Martha Cornog — Library Journal

Lisa Wilde: Lisa Wilde has taught at Wildcat Academy, a second-chance high school in New York City, for the past 16 years. Her work has appeared in Alive With Vigor, Kugelmas, Show & Tell, and WritingDisorder.

I got so much more out of Yo Miss by Lisa Wilde than I expected to. The drawings are rough and primary, but the story of these kids, this school, and this teacher, overrides that. Plus the drawing style took on some charm as I got further into the book, and she makes some clever layout choices. These are second chance students who haven't responded to traditional teaching methods, typically because of a difficult home environment, or other life circumstances. Lisa Wilde has taught English in this city school for 16 years, and she has the ease of experience to deal with the students' often unpredictable behavior. Real students are depicted in the story as composites, and periodically we're given something written by an actual student in her class. We end up rooting for the students to overcome the obstacles in their way - e.g., working to help their families, gang life, pregnancy, physical disability. If they make it, some will be the first in their family to graduate high school, or go to college. The author cares for her students, but is realistic, and the message in the end is hopeful. Fans of Alison Bechdel, who calls this book "riveting", should enjoy it, as should, I imagine, anyone who has taught or been involved in the schools.

Honest look at alternative high school.

This is the author's memoir of her first year of teaching English at an inner-city second chance charter high school in 1997. I'm a big proponent of all alternate schooling methods so, of course, found the topic very interesting. It's a good story and well-told. I really liked how the author brought in big subjects such as teen pregnancy, disabilities, gang members, a student on parole but never made an issue out of any of them. These were simply facts of the student's lives that the teachers/school worked with, not around, to make sure the students got an education. (I'm so sick of reading teen books which seem to be first and foremost about an ISSUE with a story woven around it.) A good job on the writing though I found about 2/3s of the way through my interest waning. The author makes clear early on some will graduate, but not all and I was getting tired with not much happening in the plot but repetition. The art is raw, hand drawn and lettered with a strange choice of changing the black and white drawings to ... maroon. This simply made the book hard on the eyes and hard to read, lowering the professionalism of the overall look. Good story, but could have been better with an edit and better final presentation.

It is a heartbreaking and well-written read, about the experiences of a woman teaching at a second chance high school. I didn't feel Wilde condescended to her students, and although it seems most of her students were of color I didn't get the "white savior" vibe another reviewer mentioned on GoodReads. My not-quite-perfect rating is because I can't see teens relating to it very well, and it is marketed to a teen audience. The writing gets into the head of the teacher (because it is by an actual person who worked in a second chance high school for 14 years) beautifully but I didn't get a good feel for the teens themselves. If I were a teen depicted in this book I would probably feel myself shrieking, "WAIT! I can explain!" For all her inability to get the feel of the students, the author clearly admires and worries about them. She makes some composite characters (perhaps for privacy reasons but also for ease of storytelling), but does let us know what happens (to the main inspiration for the characters, I think) in an afterward. Some jarringly nice moments included the pop quiz on what you have just read--which just might give you a little sense of the fear a student in school might have if he or she were unprepared--and the pretty much continual dialog Wilde has with the reader, showing the conversation with a troubled student is an edited one, calm and prepared when she is actually extremely worried and edgy about the well-being of the student. The story of the student sharing the story of Oedipus with cell mates is wrenching as well. I'll recommend it to my colleagues, to people who teach teens, often. To teens? Not so much.

Not a Hollywood feel-good tale, but rather a straightforward story from a 16 year insider at an at-risk high school in New York City. Yo, Miss follows a teacher, author Lisa Wilde, and a core group of her students as they attempt to cross the tightrope of high school and make it to their graduation day. The readers are in suspense as the students take missteps, stumble, and sometimes reach out a hand to each other despite their doubt that there is a way out of their world of neglect, abuse, and violence. Wilde's sense of humor keeps her balanced when her deep empathy for her students could sink her into depression or helplessness. Yo Miss covers topics aplenty to spark classroom or book group discussions. Read this book, you'll be glad you did.

I LOVED this book. As a teacher I felt like I could easily walk in the shoes of Lisa Wilde as she took us inside her teaching life at John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy in NYC. The book tells fictionalized accounts of 8 at risk high school students who have been considered failures. She takes us deep behind the street facade that often limits our understanding of many youth. I found myself pulling for these students and empathizing with this teacher more and more as the book went on. She nails the point that poverty has so much of an influence on the success or failure of people that most "privileged" people cannot adequately appreciate. She shows how standardized testing (and prep for it) can actually hinder the success of many students who are creative and smart but not 'test savvy'. I wish every teacher would read this book. Talk about 'windows' and 'mirrors'!! (YA-not for elementary or middle school students)

This was an illuminating, easily digestible book. It gives a raw look at a subject matter not many of us will ever be concerned with or exposed to. The story moves along at a good clip and you are genuinely emotionally invested in her students. Definitely worth the read.

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