



Yo, Miss: A Graphic Look At High School

Lisa Wilde

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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.

Yo, Miss: A Graphic Look At High School Details

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Author : Lisa Wilde

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From Reader Review Yo, Miss: A Graphic Look At High School for online ebook

Stewart Tame says

Lisa Wilde has been teaching since 1997. This graphic novel takes us inside John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy in New York City. It's a second-chance high school, aimed at providing at-risk teens with an opportunity to get their high school diploma. Although the school is real, and the book is drawn from Wilde's own experiences, the students are fictionalized composites. Everything rings true though, and the book is a fascinating look at just how complex and tough and, most of all, rewarding a teacher's life can be.

The art is on the crude side, sure, but the writing is more than strong enough to carry the book. I found myself deeply caring for these kids, and had to resist flipping to the end ahead of time just to see who graduates and who doesn't. There are triumphs and tragedies within these covers. Parts of it made me smile, and parts of it moved me almost to tears. This is an excellent graphic novel. Highly recommended!

Elizabeth A says

Education is a subject near and dear to my heart, and as a person who taught for a couple of years in an urban school system, I know that whether a student succeeds or not has as much to do with what happens outside the classroom as within it.

This is graphic memoir of a long time teacher at Wildcat Academy - a school in New York City where students are all considered at-risk, and are given their very last chance at graduating with a high school diploma. I liked the honesty of this book. The author takes an unflinching look at her students, their environments, and the education system, without giving herself a halo or wings. The black and white illustrations work well, though I did have a tough time telling some of the kids apart.

As a society, the education of kids affects us all, and every parent should feel comfortable having their kids attend any school. If we do not, we might ask ourselves why that is. I'd highly recommend this book to parents, teachers, and anyone interested in education.

Kate says

I think I was expecting more from this book, but I still liked it. There is a bit of a white saviour feel to it, which was not surprising considering it's a book about a "second chance" school written by a white lady. It's for sure going to have a white saviour feel to it. I didn't feel all that connected to most of the characters, and I'm not sure why. Maybe it was the art style, which wasn't my favourite. But in general, I liked it. It's definitely written more for adults who work with teens than for teens though!

Stef says

The art style made it difficult to differentiate between the students, but by the end, I was invested in all of them and their success. So much thanks to teachers like Wilde who go the extra mile and truly care and are able to help students in a real, life-changing way.

M. says

This was an interesting graphic novel about a teacher's first year of teaching in a school for students who are on the edge of dropping out. The characterization is excellent and I found myself rooting for the success of all of the students as well as the teacher. The graphic novel format is a quick read for reluctant readers.

Courtney says

This non-fiction graphic novel takes a look at a typical school year at Wildcat Academy, a school in New York City for teens for whom the regular high school setting hasn't worked. For many of these kids, Wildcat is a last-chance means of finishing high school and obtaining a diploma. Told through the eyes of one very dedicated English teacher, we meet a wide variety of students. Each of these students has their reasons for being in this school - learning disabilities, pregnancy, gang affiliation, rough home life, etc. Wilde's heartfelt narrative not only gives us insight into the challenging world of teaching; she makes the reader care about these kids nearly as much as she does.

As someone who works with teens, though not in a school setting, I found this particularly appealing. I cannot fathom the amount of work and dedication that would go into teaching at a school like this. My hat is off to all the hard-working and devoted teachers out there who see what they're up against and dive in head-first anyway. Without teachers like Wilde and schools like Wildcat, so many students would slip through the cracks. Yo, Miss is not only a great read, it serves as a valuable reminder that we need to support the teachers and schools that make a difference in the lives of their students. Every student is worth the effort.

Dinah says

It's hard to capture the chaos, triumph, and heartache of the day to day as a teacher in NYC. This graphic memoir has some moments of it, for sure.

David Schaafsma says

As a teacher of nearly 40 years, many of them in urban settings, I am of course a sucker for urban alternative school stories. Also, I'm usually skeptical: of such stories, white woman hero teacher stories, rescuing the poor kids of color. Stories that clean up and romanticize and simplify. Very few stories of urban classrooms are not Hero Stories, and I resent that. Teaching and learning is really complicated. We need to inspire, but we have to be real and show the real challenges that exist for kids and teachers and communities.

This story is both inspirational and real from a nearly twenty year vet of alternative education. And it's not condescending or overt romantic or (in my opinion) covertly racist in its assumptions about what white teachers can do in working with students of color. We get to know and care about students; not enough to my

liking, but we do get to know them. I like the sketchy, not too fancy artwork from Wilde; it fits the content. And many pages reveal that she knows comics artistry. Each chapter features a key image and terrific quote from literature that shape what follows.

And it's really a story of her, a good and caring teacher, so I am going to recommend it get used in urban teacher education classes (where Wilde has also taught classes to prospective teachers). This is not a perfect book, but it will be good to help education students visualize and read about real kids struggling and sometimes surviving and sometimes thriving. None other than comics guru Alison Bechdel is quoted on the cover as calling this comics teaching memoir "riveting." Well, I don't know about that claim, but the more I read, the more I liked this story of a teacher's year in the classroom of a NYC urban high school. Teachers, check it out!

David Thomas says

A graphic memoir depicting a school year in the life of a teacher at a "second chance" high school, somewhere devoted to at-risk kids who just weren't succeeding at traditional schools. I was genuinely happy to see some of the troubled kids succeed, even if a few of them could be buttheads at times. Sadly I have to dock it a full star for bad art.

Liralen says

This one grew on me. Wilde takes the reader through a fictionalised year in the life of a teacher at a second-chance high school in NYC. This was shelved at my library as YA, but I suspect it's a better fit for an adult audience. Perfectly appropriate for a YA audience, though.

While I wouldn't have minded a bit more complexity to the art—not that it was simple, mind, just that it took me a while to be able to tell some of the characters apart visually—there *is* complexity to the characters, and compassion in the way Wilde writes about them. Even the characters who make for a difficult teaching experience for Wilde are multifaceted, sometimes surprising both her and the reader. I loved that the focus really does stay on the school and the students; although Wilde's home life and family make cameo appearances, they're not the stars of the story. Wilde is in turn exasperated and encouraging, but it's clear that while a good teacher can make a *huge* difference, it's ultimately the students who have the make-it-or-break-it moments.

The ending is a little ambiguous—the characters have plans, but whether or not those plans will be realised is uncertain. A little frustrating, perhaps...but then, true to life.

Christiana says

This is technically shelved and cataloged in teen, but I think young teachers and teachers in lower income neighborhoods are the real audience. Much more about a year in a teacher's life (and that point of view) rather than from the student's point of view. Still, an interesting look at something I know very little about!

Kerfe says

I actually first read this book a few years ago, but for some reason I never reviewed it. I enjoyed it just as much the second time around.

The graphic novel is a perfect format for a story about teenagers. Simultaneous action, intensity, immediacy—all easy to convey. Based on her experiences teaching in a last-chance high school in NYC, Lisa Wilde has created vivid characters and stories (composites of those of her actual students) that accurately reflect the highs and lows, the complications and obstacles, that these young people deal with on a day-to-day basis. Little things can loom large when you and your family are already living on the edge.

It's an emotional roller coaster, funny and sad at the same time.

Wilde's delicate balancing act as a teacher is also important. The federal, state and city governments each have their own agendas. The students need to pass not only their classes, but their tests. But they also need to find meaning in their studies, a reason to keep on when it would be so much easier to give up. They need to learn to think for themselves, to create and speak with their own voices. That can't occur in an atmosphere of test prep all the time. But they need to pass the tests...

As a middle class parent, I assumed high school graduation as a given for my children, a step on the way to higher education. For the students in Wilde's school, a high school diploma is a real cause for celebration, a hard-won accomplishment. It's clear that all of these young people, even the most troubled, have unique gifts to offer to the world. Are we paying attention?

"Yo Miss" is a wonderful place to start.

Jill Adams says

Teachers will especially love this--

Martha says

I'm a teacher, so a teacher's story is perhaps more likely to speak to me than it is to others, but Wilde tells her tale magnificently, with humor and complexity and unwavering sensitivity to the students she portrays. Moving, funny, and wonderful.

Jennifer Henschel says

I am not usually much for appreciating graphic novels. They're just not my thing, however, this was an amazing book. I believe all teachers should read this book to help them understand that not all students come from a background that makes education easy. There are so many walking wounded in schools. Great book!

