



East Side Dreams

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East Side Dreams is the debut memoir of Art Rodriguez, a Latino American who survived growing up on the rough side of life, often at odds with his dictatorial father. Rodriguez spent time as an inmate of the California Youth Authority—a prison system for young lawbreakers. This book reflects on the happy and the miserable times of his childhood—growing up, maturing, and finally making a comfortable life for himself. Highly recommended reading for young adults, East Side Dreams has earned the distinctions of being named the "Best First Book of the Latino Literary Hall of Fame", and has been honored as one of 200 Best Teenage Books in the United States by the New York Public Library System.

East Side Dreams Details

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From Reader Review East Side Dreams for online ebook

Davina says

Reformed hero.

Harsh EVHS Shah says

This is a great book by Art Rodriguez. He talks about his childhood and the troubles that he had with the law. He talks about how he went to prison a couple of times and his experiences in prison. He also talks about how he changed his life. Towards the end, he talks about how he turned his life around and doesn't have any more trouble with the law. He talks about having to learn to read and write in order to write this book. He got the courage from his wife, who helped him through everything. Overall it was a good book.

Pam says

I read this book because some of my students, particularly the guys, found it compelling. It takes place in East San Jose, where I work, so it started to hold my interest. But it's all plot and action moving forward without any sensory detail or even much details into the inner thoughts and feelings of the narrator.

Gerardo says

This book East Side Dreams by Art Rodriguez is telling us what was going on in his life. I liked this book because i grew up close to where he lived and i went to the same middle school that he went to. He should have talked about what happened when he was in the streets more. If he talked about what he would do in the streets and at home the book could have been a little more interesting. He sometimes adds too much details throughout the book. I give him credit because he didn't really know how to write but he wrote i think three books or more.

Jason Esquivel says

I just finished reading this book, and I thought it was great. I am from San Jose so I felt I could relate to his story. I recommend this book to anyone who is from San Jose or just looking for a really inspiring, Emotional book.

Karissa says

I thought this book was amazing! Its crazy to see what Art Rodriguez went through in his life. I love reading

true life stories cause its so fascinating to see what totally different lifestyle people have than mine. This is my favorite book of all times and i cant wait to read the rest of his books.

Diego says

i thought this book was very interesting to me i like the fact that this book takes place in the city i was born San Jose california this book makes me think about my decisions in this book arthur the main character he does not think about the decisions he makes he get's in trouble at home he get's in trouble with the police he gets locked up in juvenile 3 different times this first time was when he only 13 years old because he got in a fight with a kid at school the second time was when he ran from the cops because him and his friends had drugs on them the third time was when he was at a party and he got in a big brawl with some guys at the party and accidentally ran over some guy and he charged with murder.after all this was a good book.

Carolina EVHS Quiroz says

I really enjoyed reading this book, especially since it took place here in San Jose, ca. It was great reading the book with great descriptions of where they were, and I could actually picture where it was and how it looked. I enjoyed well the plot was written and the dialog was very understandable.

Brian says

This book is about a young teenager who experiences a lot of difficult obstacles throughout the book. He ends up spending time in jail in the CYA for a good time for being accused for murder with his friends. He grew up in san jose was happy and unhappy at times this book is like a emotional roller coaster. He reminisces a lot and then changes his future and adapts to a new life. I recommend this book because it shows how a teenager can fall and stand up back on his feet.

Nestor says

This book is about a young boy name Art Rodriguez who lived in San Jose's east side. I chose this book because it is about a man who left his delinquent childhood behind for a better future. As a kid he lived with his mother, his two brothers and his siter after his father left to mexico when the company he was working for closed its doors. He was always finding ways to get into figths and parties with his friends. His fun in the streets ended when he and his friends were accused of murder and sent to the California Youth Authority (CYA). He talks about how it was while he spend his time in CYA. This book is more like a man vs. society, as he doesn't always respect the la and goes agaist it. I think that the main theme of this book is that no matter how hard life can be at the moment, if you chouse to better your life and make rigth choises you can create a better future for yourself and others. I would definitely recomend this book to everyone sence it is a great book and has language that everyone can understand. It just keeps you wanting to read page after page. I recomend it if you want to read how this young man deccided to leave his dilinquent life to move into a promising future.

Vanessa says

East Side Dreams is an autobiography about Art Rodriguez. I chose to read this book because it is about a young kid around my age whose life was not going in a straight path; he overcomes this and betters himself. Art is his own conflict (man vs. man) because he makes it tough for him self to stay out of trouble. He is from the East Side of San Jose, it is really close to where I am from this was another motivation for me to read this book. He lives a troubled life with a lot of action in it because he likes to fight sometimes for no reasonable cause this started at a very young age and become his favorite pass time. One day a fight which he used to get in all the time just for fun “he said I was one of the best fighters that he had locked horns with” (Art Rodriguez45) went bad and he was sent to prison. This became his biggest life experience but he sure made a good thing out of it by graduating high school in a very original way. Art was sent to prison even though he was a minor because he was tried as an adult for a double murder many of his childhood friends were caught too like Ceasar who was the leader in the situation that happened, Robert, Tino, Roy, Redhead and Phillip. His older brother Eddie was also caught and was out a month before Art. Arts father was a big if not the biggest influence he had while growing up he induced his kids to be violent by the ways he showed them discipline. A while after he left Arts mother and moved to Mexico he would come back for his job once in a while. When both of his kids were out of jail the three of them got closer up to the point where he was proud of his kids.

Prison was probably not the toughest place for Art it was getting out and staying out. There is a saying that prisoners from Preston state jail consider a lot when leaving. There is an old building which looks like a castle and if a prisoner leaves they’re not suppose look back if they do it means that they are going to be back. “I could see the castle from the corner of my eyes” (166). When Art was out he encountered many close calls where he could be going back to prison the first day he was out, he went with some friend and they did some illicit things but with a lot of luck they left Art out of the problem. Also his family wasn’t much help because his uncles were trouble makers. Art applied at many places and actually got hired at a place right in front of his house with the help of his mother, father which came back to his life but mostly personal will he worked hard, changed habits, and started his own family. Years go by and Art starts his own business in the waste and trash industry but one day he forgets to lock the cab to the back of the dumpster truck. He crashes the only thing he remembers before the accident happened was seeing kids in the back seats of the car that is in front of him.

Art’s writing through out the book is clear and all his experiences are well detailed. He talks about his life and then goes back to his childhood and what was similar or what drove him to think that way. His fathers influence was the cause of many of the choices he would take. His fathers love never actually left his mind and as he grew he would understand him more and more. He wanted to discipline them but didn’t do it the right way instead he showed them to be violent. I would recommend this book to young kids specially teenagers because it makes you think twice and consider the consequences of your acts and what they are going to cause. Also how much people can influence other people’s lives and sometimes it’s not for the better.

Lisa A says

"East Side Dreams" this book I give it a 3 star . It tells us about some guy named Art Rodriguez how his life was back in his days . It was written in the east side where he was from. One Thing i liked about this book was how he talked about when he was young the carsy things he wouuld do with his friends. Somethinq else i liked was how he was sayinq in the book how he was raised and he regreted everything he was doing as a young kid. Art Rodriguez wrote his book good , i really liked it too.

Patsy says

I am reading this book for the second time, having read it first five years ago with another group of students. It is definitely a story young delinquents and gang bangers relate to, but it is just not very well written. Art's insights come after the fact, usually after some violent fact. He is abused as a child by a violent alcoholic father. My students say, "Ms. T., this is just the way Mexican fathers are." "But does it work?" I ask. "What is the desired result here?" That they all beat their kids with straps so they can turn out to be violent like their dads, like them? One thing we know for sure about Art is that he sure likes to fight.

He does get out of the system and establish a business and write several books, so this discussion is just beginning.

Adriana says

East Side Dreams by Art Rodriguez, has been Honored as one of the 200 "Best Teenage Books" in the US by the New York Public Library, and it also won 1st place for Cover Illustration and Best First Book by the Latino Literary Hall of Fame. The author Art Rodriguez was born and raised in San Jose, California, and he present an autobiographical book about his early days growing up in the East Side of San Jose. The theme of the book is that of change, even though things seem bad there is always a chance to make thing better.

The book starts off with a party, which would change Art Rodriguez's life, as he would know it. During the party a riot breaks out and a person is killed and Art and his friends are arrested for murder, they spent time in jail, but are released after being found innocent. The book is a reflection of Art's life, as he spends time in jail as his trial takes place. In the book, Art reminiscence on his past experiences within his family, school, friends, and community. The book takes you on a realistic journey of the struggles that adolescents face in the East Side of San Jose. The topics covered by the book include but are not limited to: gangs, violence, prison time, abuse, and perseverance. Young adults can relate to this book, because of the real life obstacles that Art faced have affected many lives prior to and after this book was written. If a reader has never experienced such obstacles, this book will enlighten them on some serious social issues.

Judi says

Simple style makes this book readable. It's fun to hear about San Jose at an earlier time when I was living on the southside - very different worlds. I can see why the kids on the eastside like this book. I just wish Dominguez would have been able to articulate what helped him decide to turn his life around and the ways he changed his everyday choices. How did he learn to control his anger? It would help other readers caught in a similar cycle.

