Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass by M. Medina

Rachel Wild

DOI: https://doi.org/10.20361/G2788M

Abstract


Piddy Sanchez has only been at Daniel Jones High School for five weeks when a classmate tells her “Yaqui Delgado wants to kick your ass”. Unknowingly and inexplicably, Piddy becomes the target of the fierce Yaqui Delgado and her gang.

A winner of the 2014 Pura Belpré Author Award, Meg Medina creates an unflinching portrayal of Piddy as she struggles to maintain her identity and dignity in the face of extreme bullying. Medina’s depiction of Piddy is honest and readers will readily identify with the everyday adolescent problems she deals with; self-image, school, family and relationships. Medina addresses the topic of bullying in a manner that is realistic and does not provide easy solutions for Piddy or the reader.

A 2014 Top Ten Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers, this book is a well-paced read, divided into short chapters making it highly accessible to a variety of readers. The book is rich in dialogue and Medina does an excellent job of creating fully-developed characters who struggle with all-too-human flaws and foibles.

Some students may struggle with specific references to Latino culture, but the themes and topics in the novel are universal issues that the majority of adolescents will connect with. Because it addresses difficult topics such as bullying and adolescent sexuality this book may not appeal to all readers and should be considered a mature read.

This book should be considered an excellent addition to any high school library or classroom, particularly for students or educators who are searching for a book that depicts the issue of bullying in a manner that is honest and realistic.

Highly recommended: 4 out of 4 stars

Reviewer: Rachel Wild

Rachel Wild is an English teacher at Parkland Composite High School in Edson, Alberta. She is currently enrolled the Teacher Librarianship Masters degree program through distance education. Reading and reviewing a plethora of young adult novels has renewed her interest in and passion for this genre.
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About the Journal

The Deakin Review of Children's Literature is an electronic quarterly review of contemporary English-language materials of interest to children and young adults. Of particular use to librarians, parents, teachers and anyone working with young people, we also publish news and opinions relevant to children's literacy.
Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass is a 2013 award-winning young adult book by Cuban-American author Meg Medina. The book was first published in the United States on 26 March 2013 through Candlewick Press and is the winner of the 2013 Cybils Award and the 2014 Pura Belpré Award. The book has been challenged in some schools due to its title and language, and deals with the theme of teen bullying and its effects on the individual and their lives. If you're wondering why Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick your Ass is on the banned/challenged list, it's mostly about the title (the author talks about the situation on her blog.) Ass is not a word unfamiliar to middle school students and it's silly to keep this important book out of the hands of the very students that need it. I think this book could help someone in Piddy's situation feel less alone and is something that should be carried in school libraries. A highly recommended read for students, educators, and parents. Book Info: Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass by Meg Medina, Candlewick on If Meg Medina came to your school and talked about her book, your kid might want to actually read it. And then, next thing you know, they read the book, they like it, and suddenly they want to read other books. It's all, "Mom, can we go to the library?" or "Dad, I want a Barnes and Noble giftcard for my birthday!" Before you know it, they're hanging out in their rooms reading books instead of texting or twerking or getting pregnant or building a meth lab or whatever it is that teens do. Yes, the more intellectually curious students of Cumberland Middle School will seek out Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass on their own (you know they will. Don't even try to stop them. The smart, outside-the-box thinkers always find a way), but what about the other children?