

The 57 Bus: A True Story of Two Teenagers and the Crime That Changed Their Lives

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Two teenagers of the same age are from Oakland, California, but live completely different lives. The only connection between the two is the 57 bus. Sasha is agender, meaning Sasha does not identify as any gender; the pronoun used in this case is they instead of her or him. Sasha rides the bus every day and doesn't face any problems until their skirt, which Sasha wears to add a little femininity to their outfit, catches the attention of a group of teenage boys. Among one of these boys is Richard, a once troublesome boy who aspires to turn over a new leaf. The boys mess around with a lighter and try to make Sasha's skirt smoke as a joke. This joke turns into a seriously horrible accident, in which Sasha gets severely burned. Richard ends up being charged with two hate crimes and gets charged as an adult, even though he is only sixteen years old. He is normally a good kid who likes to joke around and ultimately has good intentions, but this one mistake has the potential to ruin his life forever. As the media gets ahold of what Richard has done and who he is, he faces an endless amount of hate and racism. After the incident, Richard goes through numerous hearings before he is even sentenced and Sasha endures a painful and difficult recovery, physically and mentally. Throughout the story, these two teenagers learn about discrimination, accountability, redemption, and forgiveness, and just how much it impacts their lives.

Personally, I really enjoyed this book and did not want to stop reading it. The author was really descriptive and gave me a feel for exactly what was happening throughout the story. The book was easy to understand and was very relatable to today's society. It taught me the different perspectives of every situation and I also learned about the hardships of teenagers' lives, especially from the judgmental society we live in today.

There was nothing from this story that I disliked. It got emotional in some parts of the story and was ultimately a really interesting read. This book was actually very long, so the reader should take that into account before reading it. I feel that this book would be the most appropriate for readers in the age range of 13 or older. It had some heavier concepts which may be a little more difficult for younger kids to fully understand. Whether you buy this book for someone as a gift or get it from the library, I believe the reader will be captivated by this story as I was.

Recommended Titles:

The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas

Dear Martin by Nic Stone

Monday's Not Coming by Tiffany D. Jackson

