

The Freedom Writers Diary

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When I think of the word “choice” I think of the word “freedom.” Why? Because freedom is choice. As a blind student in college, I have the choice to either sit around and whine or make my life better with tiny, life altering choices. Choices to turn your life around from bad to better is an inspiration all by itself. I believe that's what first drew me to *The Freedom Writers Diary*.

I positively adore people who make really good choices. When I heard about *The Freedom Writers Diary* I just had to give this book a chance, having glimpsed the movie while perusing my local blockbuster. After all, a new teacher decided to give some troubled kids a second chance so I decided to give them the courtesy of traveling through tragedy to triumph with them.

The Freedom Writers Diary, completely heartening and attractive with beautiful motivational real life stories of failure to achievement, centers around the minority teenagers of room 203 at a California high school as they account their lives, hatred for school, teacher, and each other. Compiling of 150 entries from each student, the subtle shifts in self-doubt to genuine pride are weaved in between pages of tragic accounts of survival as these students, deemed hopeless by the board of education, struggle to stay alive in an ongoing gang war and struggle to battle their own daemons of drug addiction, abuse, rape, and many more hardships with the help of a new energetic teacher named Erin Gruwell.

There's no doubt that this book will pump you with inspiration. The entries, all very well written and with a piece of their heart on every page, had me trapped in the attic of their darkest points, eager to read how they were all going to get out.

With the accuracy and raw hit of a bullet the entries plainly break down the thoughts of the students, the transformation of hopelessness to empowerment, and the wonderful victory afterward. The matter of fact way each word is printed won't have you flipping in the dictionary. This is a good thing.

It is a bit challenging to get really connected with the students because you don't know anyone of their names. Each journal entry is titled only by a number, so the readers are left to engage in the overall story of making it through high school, meeting new people, such as Miep Gies, the courageous Dutch woman who sheltered the Frank family, and the overall crash of the stereotypical view about these teenagers. Still though, the collective victorious outcomes make the reader appreciate the class as a whole. While it would have been nice to connect just a bit more, the dashing storytelling and raw real sentences make the collective journal entries worth reading.

Gripping, popping with triumph, and shooting bangs of awesome feeling and storytelling, the freedom writers will definitely leave you remembering the story until you grow old. I'd give this book four pencils out of five. While the personal connection to the writers doesn't exist in this story the collective enjoyment in watching these writers grow out of stereotypes about race is awesome, even if borrowing from the library.

This book definitely shows the power of choice, and what it can do in a hard cruel world where choice is limited. It's raw, rocking, and radical. If I ever see Erin Gruwell I'll be sure to

give her a red apple for all her hard work.

Recommended Titles:

Sent: The Missing, book one by Margaret Peterson Haddix.

Don't You Dare Read This, Mrs. Dunphrey by Margaret Peterson Haddix.

Before I go to Sleep by S. J. Watson.