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The Complete Maus

Natalie Hatch

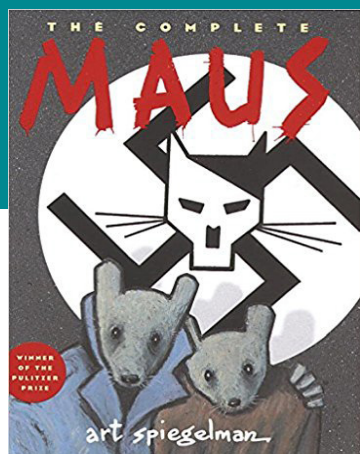
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Book Review

The Complete Maus

Author

Art Spiegelman

Illustrator

Art Spiegelman

Reviewer

Natalie Hatch

Rating

Excellent

Level

Young Adult

Pages

296

Year

2011

Publisher

Pantheon Books

ISBN

9780439395625

Art Spiegelman is trying to come to terms with his Auschwitz-surviving father and the realities of what happened to him and the world under Hitler's power before he was born. Never having got along with his father and always feeling like his older brother, killed during WWII when he was still a young boy, was the ghost that he could never live up to, Art feels trapped in his life as a designated failure. Using his cartoonist mindset and skills, Art slowly uncovers stories about his father's past, illustrating them and sorting the realities and stories into something he can understand. He learns about his mother, Anja, and the terrors his parents faced in the war. He also tries to use these story-sessions with his feather to build a relationship he never felt he had.

Based on a true story about the author and cartoonist Art Spiegelman, *The Complete Maus* received national acclaim and revealed human truths about the past. The author reveals personal struggles through his sketches and deals with hard topics like depression, suicide, the horrors of war, death, disease, broken relationships and difficult marriages. The book includes mature content, details about hangings, gas chambers, the incinerators, and the sicknesses like typhus that killed so many in the concentration camps during WWII. The illustrations are in black and white, the Jews being portrayed as mice, the Nazis as cats. Rife with symbolism and assigned characteristics, Spiegelman uses the characterization of animals to try and simplify a difficult reality.

*Contains moderate violence, mild sexual content, and mild language.