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He Said She Said

Katie Irion

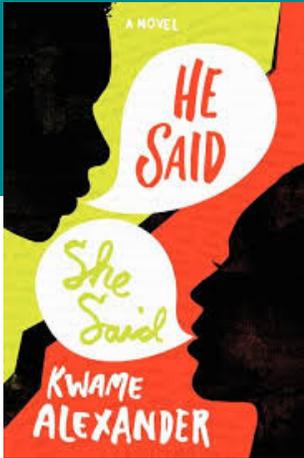
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Book Review

He Said She Said

Author

Kwame Alexander

Illustrator

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Reviewer

Katie Irion

Rating

Significant Shortcomings

Level

Young Adult

.....

Pages

330

Year

2013

Publisher

Amistad

ISBN

9780062118967

Omar “T-Diddy” Smalls, the star of South Carolina State Championship football team, has everything going for him. What he doesn’t have, however, is a cause. That is, until he meets Claudia Clarke. After meeting Claudia at a party, T-Diddy decides that she is the one for him. He quickly learns, however, that she won’t fall for his usual charms and decides the only way to “win” her is to invest in something she’s interested in: state-wide funding cuts for the arts programs in public schools. T-Diddy decides to rally his high school to protest the cuts. Between his charm and Claudia’s smarts, they successfully rally the school and inspire the community. Along the way, the two find out a lot about each other and begin to fall in love. Unlike other teenage romances, however, this one does not end with the two together. It ends with two good friends, however, who have strengthened and inspired each other.

Kwame Alexander’s *He Said She Said* is the story, told from two alternating perspectives, of a boy with no purpose and a girl that inspired him to find one. Unlike Alexander’s more poetic verse novels, this book has a very conversational tone that accurately depicts teenager’s language and slang. While Alexander is successful in portraying adolescence, the struggles young adults face, the emotions that accompany growing up and figuring out who you are, and conveying the underlying theme of justice, there are some shortcomings that make this book rather difficult at times to read. The main protagonist, T-Diddy, begins the book as a shallow and extremely vain youth who always refers to himself in the third person, and has a remarkable transformation that is rather unbelievable, considering the entire book only portrays three weeks. Most the characters are one dimensional and not worth rooting for. The constant slang, unlikeable characters, crude scenes, and unrealistic transformation take away from the overall potential the theme has to inspire youth. Alexander’s verse novels are far and away more readable and enjoyable.

*Contains mild language and mild sexual content.