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Rose Sees Red



Synopsis

Partly based on the author's own experiences at the famous Manhattan high school for the performing arts, this novel explores friendship, freedom, and the art of challenging convention. Set in New York in the 1980s, this story of two ballet dancers (one American, one Russian) recounts the unforgettable night they spend in the city, and celebrates the friendship they form despite their cultural and political differences.

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Customer Reviews

Rose lives next to a Soviet Russia compound in New York. Everyday, there are men in suits outside, KGB or CIA (you can tell by their eyebrows). When Rose chose dance at The Performing Arts School instead of following her friend Daisy to Bronx Science, she lost a friend and was shunned from the group. She is too shy to really open up and be vulnerable at her new school and therefore hasn't made any friends. That is until the girl from across the street (in the compound) decides to befriend Rose because Yrena feels trapped over there. And then, one day Caitlin and

Callisto (two out of a set of triplets) beckon her over outside of their school, this is the beginning of something new for Rose and even if she can't feel it today will change her forever. Oh, to be young and carefree again! This book takes place mostly during one long and glorious day. As you read the words you are really watching a movie it's so easy to see the scenes play out before you. You can hear the rise and swell, and eventual fade out of the soundtrack. Cecil did an amazing job writing so vividly as to really make you feel like you are alive and there. I really loved this book, it was realistic but oh so amazing. It takes place in 1982 which I had assumed from the way they talked and dressed. It was very early 80's. This was a great little one night in the life of some kids trying to find out who they are. Cecil writes in a clear and perfect voice, about dancing, about emotions, about being a kid in a big city. Though really, this story could take place anywhere. Sure New York has all these sights to see, but a big point in this story is being able to see how beautiful your city is through somebody else's eyes (especially if you squint). A definite coming of age story that rings true through many generations. I say if you like realistic fiction, if you're trying to find out how to be yourself, or if you are a YA librarian, this is a must read for you. First Line: "I was black inside and so I took everything black." Favorite Line: "We all breathed in and out as one as we watched them become smaller and smaller until they were impossible to see in the sky." Disclaimer: I was sent this item to review. This does not influence my opinion.

The Russian history class I took in the latter half of my freshman year of college was my favorite of the year, and since its end I've been mourning the loss of my semiweekly acquisition of knowledge of the country. For that reason, I'm glad I kept *Rose Sees Red* unread until after the class was over, since my newfound knowledge of the Soviet era made this book even more interesting. However, I do prefer this book for giving insight into the lives of such normal people during the time, rather than just a history lesson. From the outset, when Rose and her brother obsess over the mysterious Yrena, it's clear that there's a strange sort of tension between the characters, but because they carry on with their lives as normal, the tension takes more of a backseat. I love that it did, because while the popping up of other Soviet characters makes their adventure more dangerous, their interactions throughout the night really are the best part of the story. I love books that take place over a short period of time, but I miss New York City an unspeakable amount, so reading about the girls' late-night adventure was rather bittersweet. I loved seeing all the stuff they went around doing, especially since even the politically-charged events never managed to overshadow Yrena's awe of the city or Rose's awe of being around a new group of friends. However, like all books set over a short amount of time, I do so wish there was more. The time before the night began never managed

to fully convince me of why Rose was such an outcast at her high school or show me the extent of her damaged relationship with her old friends, which became a rather important detail. Plus, because some people show up so late or sporadically in the adventure, I didn't get a good chance to see their relationship with Rose and Yrena develop beyond the promise of something greater after the book ended. I love that this book provided such a brief but powerful look into the lives of two girls who were never meant to befriend one another, but its brevity still meant that so many characters and relationships weren't developed to their fullest potential, and I truly wish I got to see the friendships blossom into even greater things.

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