



Lunch with Lenin and other stories

By Deborah Ellis

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OLA's Red Maple nominee 2010

Deborah Ellis's first collection of short stories explores the lives of children who have been affected directly, or indirectly, by drugs. Sometimes touching and often surprising, the stories are set against backdrops as diverse as the remote north and small town America to Moscow's Red Square and an opium farm in Afghanistan.

This is an unforgettable collection of stories that will elicit discussions about the toll drugs take on the lives of teenagers and their families.

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Lunch with Lenin and other stories By Deborah Ellis Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 9 Up—This short-story compilation focuses on drugs and addiction. Selections vary in perspective, from the sister of a drug addict in rehab to a family in Afghanistan growing and harvesting opium to survive. Many of the stories are fleshed out and well written, including the title story. Valerin is left at Lenin's grave by his mother when he is five, leading to life in an orphanage. There he meets Squid, a boy to whom he opens up and trusts. When Valerin leaves the orphanage, he heads back to Lenin's grave where he sees Squid as a soldier. Squid has turned to drugs and Valerin tries to reason with him, to no avail. However, there are also stories that are cut short, leaving questions and a sense of incompleteness. Such is the case with "Through the Woods," in which Matthew buys marijuana to take to his grandmother's rest home to ease her pain, with no consequence. Overall, though, the variety of characters, settings, and perspectives make this a quality collection.—*Nichole King, Morgan Hill Library, CA*

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From [Booklist](#)

The author dedicates her latest book to “those who struggle to make their way.” In these ten stories the “struggle” typically involves drugs, though sometimes in unexpected ways: an Afghan family’s economic security is shattered when the government destroys its poppy crop; a boy risks arrest by providing marijuana to ease the suffering of his ill grandmother; etc. The diverse settings, which range from the author’s native Canada to Russia to Ulan Bataar to Bolivia and beyond, also dramatize the global pervasiveness of drug problems while lending a welcome element of variety to the author’s unrelieved bleakness of tone and her too-often heavy-handed treatment of the theme. Despite these shortcomings, the stories themselves are uniformly readable, and their subject is undeniably timely and urgently important. Grades 7-12. --Michael Cart

Review

This gripping collection of young adult short stories delivers a chilling portrayal of “those who struggle to make their way” (to whom the book is dedicated). It is a subtle and sophisticated collection that requires careful previewing for classroom appropriateness prior to being offered to students. With that proviso in place, I highly recommend it.

The stories depict the lives of 10 teenagers who are directly or indirectly involved with drugs. Their vivid lives and desperate situations are portrayed in simple language, but their experiences are as complex as they are heartbreaking. Settings include locations in North America, Afghanistan, Russia, the Philippines, Mongolia and Bolivia.

In the first story we meet Matthew, a straight-A student who rolls and smokes a joint with his grandmother in her nursing home to ease her physical pain. The following nine stories are equally full of thought-provoking contexts and social issues. From the opium fields of Afghanistan to hardcore heroin addicts on the streets of Moscow, we see the similarities of lives controlled and often destroyed by drugs. Crystal meth, ecstasy, glue sniffing, child neglect, police corruption and rehab are just a few of the themes that may prompt discussions about rich and poor, right and wrong, the war on drugs and whether the end justifies the means.

Professionally Speaking

Andrea Murik, OCT, is a Special Education resource teacher at Angus Morrison Elementary School in

Angus.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mary Crouch:

This Lunch with Lenin and other stories book is simply not ordinary book, you have after that it the world is in your hands. The benefit you have by reading this book will be information inside this publication incredible fresh, you will get details which is getting deeper anyone read a lot of information you will get. This specific Lunch with Lenin and other stories without we understand teach the one who examining it become critical in pondering and analyzing. Don't end up being worry Lunch with Lenin and other stories can bring any time you are and not make your bag space or bookshelves' become full because you can have it within your lovely laptop even telephone. This Lunch with Lenin and other stories having excellent arrangement in word as well as layout, so you will not truly feel uninterested in reading.

Carla Spiegel:

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