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Spit And Passion (Blindspot Graphics)



Synopsis

At its core, *Spit and Passion* is about the transformative moment when music crashes into a stifling adolescent bedroom and saves you. Suddenly, you belong. At twelve years old, Cristy C. Road is trying to balance the values of a Cuban Catholic family with her newfound queer identity, and begins a chronic obsession with the punk band Green Day. In this stunning graphic memoir, Road renders the clash between her rich inner world of fantasy and the numbing suburban conformity she is surrounded by. She finds solace in the closet¹⁵¹; where she lets her deep excitement about punk rock foment and, in that angst and euphoria, finds a path to self-acceptance. Cristy C. Road has reached cult status for work that captures the beauty of the imperfect. Her career began with *Greenzine*, a punk rock zine, which she made for ten years. She has since published *Indestructible*, an illustrated novel about high school; *Distance Makes the Heart Grow Sick*, a postcard book; and *Bad Habits*, a love story about self-destruction and healing. She has also illustrated countless album covers, book jackets, and political organization propaganda. She lives in Brooklyn, New York.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Veteran punk writer and illustrator Road weaves text and art together in a charming and angst-ridden coming-of-age story. Cuban-American and raised in a traditional Catholic family, the preteen Road has a number of identity issues: she does not fit into her cultural mold, she finds salvation in punk rock, and she has a conflicted gender identity. Embracing her tomboy nature, Road begins to come to terms with herself as a gay woman, building a closet for her secret that

becomes her refuge. Road's identification with her teenage self feels genuine, and her recollections of pop culture (both embraced and rejected) of the 1990s will strike nostalgic chords in readers of that generation. Road balances long sections of prose with pages dominated by art; her pencil and marker style, with images populated by strange and imperfect-looking characters, is well suited to her story, even if the ending doesn't entirely solve her identity issues. Grotesque images of dangling eyeballs and gushing brains reflect the alternative scene the young Road has discovered. Readers who enjoyed Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home* will probably empathize with Road's story of sexual exploration and punk rock. (Nov.)

As a 12-year-old in Florida, Road felt a constant call to hone her identity: gay, Cuban American, gender queer (although the term wasn't then in her vocabulary), member of a loving and female-dominated household, miserable middle-schooler, and Green Day devotee. Her smarts and imagination allowed her to balance all those things by playing them off of each other through fantasies, fan letters to Billie Joe Armstrong, and the discovery that the school counselor could help her feel better about herself. In this passionate account of self-revelation, Road flashes her talents as a cartoonist and symbolist to portray herself slouching down the school hallway in gender-neutral punk clothing and tearing her eyeballs out and strangling them when overwhelmed. The tight narrative is depicted in loose yet detailed black-and-white art, which evokes a child who is not so much confused as provoked by others' confusion. A brave crossover book for fans of Ariel Schrag or Alison Bechdel, as well as for readers of queer literature who haven't yet experienced a serious graphic novel. --Francisca Goldsmith

To say that *Spit and Passion* is unlike any graphic narrative I've ever read would be a gross understatement. Cristy C. Road might very well have invented a unique genre with this book: the genderqueer Latina Bildungsroman (facilitated via punk pop—namely, Green Day) graphic narrative. And it's very good. And very frank. Her language is rather salty, and her images are sometimes quite well, graphic. Road does not hold back one iota as she traces the myriad sources of anxiety that bedeviled her middle school years. From her Latina heritage and the simultaneous love/condemnation she received from the adult women in her family to the unrequited crushes on female teachers to the excruciatingly cruel torment that is middle school (even for kids who are NOT genderqueer and/or bisexual) and the sweet temptation of a real-life girl crush, Road endures a gauntlet of emotional angst that rings true. Add to that her contemplative nature and her tireless quest to figure out why she's feeling what

she's feeling and why she feels so bad about feeling what she's feeling" and the result is a very powerful story of queer youth. All of its merits notwithstanding, I would certainly hesitate to teach this book to adolescents. Although it would be appropriate for mature adolescent readers, it would definitely be problematic as a class read. Just as some adult novels might be appropriate for young adult readers, *Spit and Passion* is a young adult graphic narrative that is appropriate for more adult readers. I hope that the teens who need to read this tale will seek it out and find it "but I doubt they will do so in an academic setting.

I've always known Cristy Road to be a multidimensional artist, playing in bands, writing and publishing zines, and producing amazing artwork. I even commissioned her to do the cover of a one-issue zine I did years ago. However, other than knowing she's a bit of an icon in the queer punk community, and must be a big Green Day fan based on her nom de plume, I didn't really know anything about her. This short-but-striking memoir of her life at ages 11-13 chronicles not only her home and school life, but her raging inner turmoil as she tries to work out her identity. It's a classic story of a kid from a loving, but somewhat repressive cultural context -- she grew up in a Cuban-American family in Florida with traditional Catholic attitudes toward homosexuality. School life is no better, as the misery of middle school in the early 1990s (cruel girls, idiotic boys, hormones everywhere) is further complicated by her inner sense of being different. Like so many alienated kids, Road finds consolation and connection in music -- in her case, the pop-punk of a Green Day tape loaned to her by another outsider at school. As someone who both also found connection through punk (in my case The Clash), and bought Green Day's debut EP, *1,000 Hours*, when I was still in high school in 1989, I can completely understand the depth of her passion for her new discovery. So, even though I'm a middle-aged straight white guy and didn't face her agonies about sexual identity and otherness, her memoir still strikes a chord. And of course, her trademark illustrations and text is amazing as always. She's got such a bold, confident and distinctive style -- here sometimes deployed in ways that are more imaginative and grotesque than usual. Highly recommended for teens and tweens everywhere who don't feel like they belong.

I don't usually like graphic novels--but I'm glad that I took a chance with this one! This memoir is an amazingly rendered, spot-on story of what it's like to grow up feeling like an outsider and then have your whole life be turned around by the discovery of a favorite band. There's too few books out there that handle both music/nostalgia and also real issues with any kind of depth or integrity, and this book succeeds.

Road's drawings are incredible and this memoir is such a sweet gift for anyone who has ever felt like a weirdo or an outsider. I highly recommend it!

This book was hard to read. Not because of how the writer chose to write it, but because of all of the brain cell killing logic that only a radical feminist could relate to. I googled the writer and nothing popped up but things about fried chicken. I googled the title of the book and only feminist media had it featured. I couldn't stand reading this book. All I saw in this book was a story of a girl who grew up crying and whining about everything, coming up with excuses for her weak actions and choices in life. For how much "important people" liked this book, it's not all that popular. So why did I read this? Because I'm a Green Day... or I was a Green Day fan. This girl is OBSESSED with Green Day. Green Day pops up in this book so much, you'd think she'd want to wear their skin around her house. Not only that, her depth in judging people is proven poor when, in the beginning, she relates everyone's personality to Zodiac signs. She also says stuff in this book that totally demolishes her point to what she was saying before. For example in the book she talks about being in middle school and being subjected to "gender inequality" because girls got deodorant and mascara, and boys got other deodorant and chewing gum. Then she says she was offended... offended enough to stuff what was given to her in the bottom of her bag "if she ever needed it." Why would she keep it if she were truly offended. Honestly I think this book is nothing more than half truths told by a radical feminist who wanted attention, and had the money to pay for it. So unless you are completely out of touch with reality, enjoy reading poor me I had a hardish life where most of my struggles were my fault, I wouldn't buy this. If you're just curious, don't waste your money. Your local library will have it, and if not have them order it. This is not worth the price it's set for.

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