



The Epic Documentary of a Not-Yet-Epic Kid

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In 2012, a documentary crew descended upon Westside Middle School to detail the life of an average seventh grader and his classmates.

What they uncovered, though, was far from average. Mostly, it was upper average along with moments of extreme average, highlighted by several minutes of total epicness.

This is the story...

Trevor Jones--perfect attendance award recipient, former neurotic (he hopes)--has been preparing for the start of seventh grade his entire summer. But he is NOT ready for the news his best friend, Libby (proud neurotic, in a color-coding sort of way), drops on him: he must ask a girl to the fall dance. By the end of the day.

Trevor decides he would rather squirt hot sauce in his eyes than attend the dance. Everything changes when he meets mysterious new student Molly (excessive doodler, champion of unnatural hair colors). Trevor starts to think that going to the dance maybe wouldn't be the worst thing ever. But what if she says no to his invitation? More important, what if she says yes?!

The Epic Documentary of a Not-Yet-Epic Kid Details

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From Reader Review *The Epic Documentary of a Not-Yet-Epic Kid* for online ebook

Heidi says

There have been many books of this nature since *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* came out. Some I have enjoyed, some not so much. I quite enjoyed this one. Maybe since Trevor is a good kid, a bit clueless, but a good kid. When his friend, Libby informs him that he must have a date to the 7th grade dance before the first day of school ends, he has no idea what she has in mind. He is even more confused when she tells him that they can no longer be 'friend' friends (best friends). They have been best friends since kindergarten and Trevor has no idea what Libby is talking about. Things get worse when Trevor has an unpleasant encounter with the school Don Juan, Corey Long. How can Trevor survive his first day of school? Maybe the new girl, Molly might provide a solution.

I immediately felt a connection to Trevor, maybe because in junior high I also was pretty clueless about the new social order of things. Trevor tries his best to be a friend and a good student while wrestling with things that most teenagers wrestle with including crushes and bullies. The format was fun as well, with the 'interviews' and illustrations. This kind of format is very kid friendly. I recommend this book to all who enjoy an underdog facing his fears and standing up for his friends.

Mesoud A says

This book is called *The Classroom: The Epic Documentary of a Not Yet Epic Kid* by Robin Mellom. The genre of the book is realistic fiction and comedy. Trevor Jones is an average new clueless 7th grader. His best friend Libby wants their friendship to be broken up and try to find new people. Trevor is worried he won't meet expectations that Libby wants like new friends and a date to the school dance by the end of the day. Trevor had one problem he wanted to ask the girl to the dance but that meant that he had to get detention. So he tried and tried had no luck but he did ask her. My favorite character would be the Cory Long because of the way Robin Mellom describes him the way he bullies his laugh the way he brushes his hair. The details are so fine and specific on him. In a way I could relate to Trevor because his mom would tell him make friends and don't worry about anything. We also tried to find our classes and not get in trouble. My favorite part in the story would be when Trevor got on to the bus and the 8th graders didn't let him sit down. But the bus driver had to do something about it. This shows a resemblance of bullying in real life. That is one of the reasons I chose realistic fiction as one of my genres. I would change nothing because it is already unchangeable. I would recommend this book to who like humor and comedy. I chose five stars because of the details and the plot and the way I could relate to it.

Nathan says

GoodReads Book Review

The Book I've chosen as my book to read for the first 9 weeks is "The Classroom". This book is about a 7th

grader Trevor Jones on his way through a journey through a year in middle school. Oh did we forget to mention that the whole way through a film crew is filming his every move. And the fun doesn't stop there because not only is he being interviewed throughout the story but so his his classmates and friends and family. And with all his friends and a film crew around Trevor is destined to have the craziest school year yet.

First we'll talk about the characters of the book, first we have Trevor Jones the main character of the story 7th grader who's a little antisocial and also is very smart straight A's since the 2 grade. Then we have Libby Gardner another 7th grade who has been best friends since birth no joke the were friends as babies. Then we have Marty Nelson the biggest baddest 8th grader of them all, but secretly a sweet person who just wants someone to understand him.

He walks around with a hunting magazine and always wears camo. Next we have Cindy Applegate a 7th grader who has a case of saying a little more than she should. She is what's known as the local gossip if there's something you want to know she's the girl you go to. Then we have Corey Long or the "cool guy". He is the cool 8th grader with the flowing hair and the nice clothes typical prep. And Molly She's a shy goth girl who doesn't talk much and seems to stay out of everyone's way, but she has a secret that no one knows not even the reader. And last but not least Wilson the handy handyman he is a fun character that brings a little comedy to the story he has his super duper unclogger and the super handy tool that he uses as his mega arsenal against the powers of the school.

The locations of the story are mainly in the school But theres are some different places in the school that it takes place. The frist location is the back steps of the school they always talk at this point if they ever need to talk alone because everyone else uses the front doors. They also use the janitors closet to hide from 8th graders. Another location is the the detention room this room takes a big role in the story because this is where trevor meet mysterious Molly for the first time and she first meets Trevor. And from that point in on the story we see Molly more often. The lockers of each character are also big because this is the main places the film crew interview each character before the start of each chapter. And finally the Dance, the dance is a big part in the story because this is where the climax of the story is. This is where we find out the the weird goth girl Molly is actually the principal's daughter. And that all the stuff people have been Missing Molly's had the whole time.

For my conclusion i think that this book was really good. In the story there are some parts the are kinda outlandish but that is also the charm of it. The books cooky and funny and a little weird at times but it has a good story and its written very well. In all I liked the book and I would recommend someone to read it. My final verdict is a 8.5/10 not a masterpiece but a very good book.

Laura says

Middle grades often get stuck between children's books and YA, but this book bridges that gap. Witty writing and frequent pictures will make this a popular title with both reluctant and avid readers.

Trevor has studied all summer to prepare for 7th grade, but he knows he can't survive without his best friend and defender Libby's help. When she announces that he has to find new friends and a date for the first dance by the end of the day, he is left on his own to face the bullies and social games. Trevor is a likable character, and his bumbings make for an entertaining read. The minor characters are fun and add to the overall humor of the book--like the teacher who loves his red Skittles and the AP who is convinced the kids need to eat only veggies.

The format of the book with the stage being set as a documentary and the characters giving journal entries of sorts will appeal to kids, especially those reluctant readers who are intimidated by a lot of text.

The topics in the book--bullying, crushes, friendships, and confidence--are discussed through action and character reactions instead of long dialogue where the reader becomes bored.

I enjoyed this book and plan to share it with my students in the library.

I received this book in exchange for my review. My thoughts and opinions are my own.

Finn says

This book is set in Westside Middle School where Trevor Jones is trying to survive his first year of middle school. Trevor is an obsessive worrier, and the plot of the story revolves around Trevor attempting to get a date to the Fall Dance. His best friend Libby is trying to protect Trevor, but she tries to be discreet. In doing so, however, she sometimes gets herself into some sticky situations.

This book is certainly character driven. It's set in a normal middle school with normal events, but the characters make the story interesting. I personally identified with the main character, but those of you who aren't slightly OCD might not recognize some of the tendencies that Trevor has. This definitely increased my enjoyment of the book.

The style of writing is also very interesting. The idea is that a camera crew has descended on the middle school, and they decided to chronicle the life of Trevor. The camera crew does little interviews after major events, so you know what the character's motivation for doing certain things. This really helped the progress of the book make more sense, as the narration is a bit erratic.

All in all I really liked this book. It was a nice, light read.

Katie_X77 says

I really liked this book and that it was funny when Trevor got revenge on Corey for making Libby cry. I liked how it ended with everything coming back together and Trevor and Libby were close friends again. I always wondered why Molly was quiet though, she never talked a lot and she would like going to detention to draw in her notebook, Molly liked trading things but at least she returned them.....after the dance. The fall dance didn't seem like a dance it seemed more like someone told the students to ruin the whole room. I really hope that I get a chance to read the other classroom books.

Akshat Channashetti says

Extremely good book

Lindsey Leavitt says

This book had my laughing out loud more times than I can count. The format is inspired and the characters consistent and fun. Funniest midgrade book I've read in a long time.

Sarah W says

Trevor Jones is starting middle school and he's been preparing for it for weeks. He's determined to get a good start to the year by following the instructions his best friend Libby emailed him about middle school. He's going to try not to doodle all over everything with his favorite pen. He's going to not hang out with the janitor. Those things are all in the plan, but Trevor's not prepared for Libby to show up for the first day in a skirt or for her to tell him they can't be best friends anymore. Libby's bailed Trevor out from embarrassing situations on the first day of school for years. Before Trevor can figure out how he'll handle rescuing himself, Libby issues him an ultimatum that he's even less prepared to handle--Trevor has to find a date to the fall dance before the end of the first day of school.

Missteps abound in Trevor's first weeks of middle school. He knows he's supposed to steer clear of the eighth graders, but it's impossible. When he isn't being the target of an overly cool boy's bullying, Trevor is asking an eighth grader at his bus stop for advice. When he tries to ask the new girl Molly to the dance by dropping a note into the trash, he ends up sneezing on the note instead. He's still determined to ask Molly even if she is as different from Trevor as can be--she wears clothes with tears, doesn't mind being late and likes getting detentions. Trevor also has to find a way to convince Libby that she's got the very worst date to the dance, but Libby thinks Trevor is making up lies.

Each chapter of the Classroom starts with an interview excerpts with students from Westside Middle School. Anxious Trevor, Libby, Molly, the bully and others take their turns spinning the events leading from the first day of school up through the fall dance. This is a funny read with depth that deals with friendship changes, bullying, teenage relationships, anxiety issues and more. Sketches and artifacts from the school add another dimension to this documentary-style book.

I reviewed an ARC of this book courtesy of Netgalley.

Katie Fitzgerald says

School often poses problems for worrywart Trevor Jones, but he's always had his best friend Libby Gardner to save him from disaster. Therefore, it's a huge shock when Libby arrives to the bus stop on the first day of middle school and immediately tells Trevor they can't be "friend friends" anymore because she thinks they need to branch out. It gets even worse when Libby explains that Trevor has until the end of the first day of school to find a date to the Fall Dance - without any of her usual expert guidance.

There are a lot of books out there about the first day of middle school, but *The Classroom* is unique for two reasons. One is that the story is told in a documentary format, with breaks between chapters for interviews with the main characters. Characters' pictures are shown, along with transcripts of what they have told the cameraman about their day at school, giving insight into the worries and motives of kids other than Trevor. I won't say this is a successful gimmick all the time, but it's a welcome change from the diary format that seems to be taking over lately. The documentary format is still visually appealing but it also takes a different approach, which makes the book stand out.

The second reason this book is unique among the scores of middle school books available is that it's a friendship story from the male point of view. We have other middle school books about boys, of course - *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, James Patterson's new series, the *Big Nate* books - but somehow those books don't focus quite as strongly on the changes in friendships that occur when middle school begins. A lot of attention is paid to girls losing their friends to the popular crowd, but Trevor is the first boy I've seen go through that in a work of fiction, and it was so completely refreshing to see that. I'm sure boys fall victim to shifting cliques as much as girls do, and this book really validates that experience.

I think the best term I could use to describe *The Classroom* is "tween soap opera." This book reads like a cleaner version of DeGrassi, and it has a lot of great characters who would lend themselves easily to an animated cartoon series. It was fun to keep track of each character's trajectory throughout that first day of school, and the big cast of characters captured that crowded, chaotic environment of middle school hallways so well. The story itself unravels a little bit at the end because the resolution comes so easily after all of Trevor's turmoil, but it was still worth the ride it took to get there.

Recommend *The Classroom* to true wimpy kids who are fed up with Greg Heffley, and to fans of *The Fourth Stall*, *The Strange Case of Origami Yoda*, *The Secret Life of Ms. Finkleman*, and the *Amelia Rules* graphic novels.

Mundie Moms & Mundie Kids says

A fabulously written, relatable middle grade coming of age story, *The Classroom* is a hysterical read with witty, well grounded characters and a quick, engaging plot line. It's been awhile since I've read a truly fun book, and Robin Mellom's middle grade debut is just that! With a documentary crew descending on Westside Middle School to document the life of an average 7th grade boy as he learns to navigate his way through MS, Robin was able to give a creative writing spin to her book by telling it from a documentary point of view. This not only allows readers to get to know the main character Trevor better, she also introduces readers to a variety of other characters through various interviews that take place in the book.

Trevor is a character I think a lot of people will relate to. He's hit that awkward stage where you reluctantly leave behind some of your "childhood" tendencies and learn to deal with a more mature scene in middle school. If that wasn't hard enough, learning to navigate your way around middle school for the first time isn't fun, and nor is learning how to fit into a new crowd. What Trevor deals with and learns to cope with are things adults will get, and young readers will be able to relate to. It's not just Trevor that readers will understand, but the rest of the characters who now make up Trevor's social scene.

Libby, who's Trevor's best friend is a little bit neurotic and started off the story in a surprising way. Having grown up with Trevor all their lives (they're now 7th graders), they've done everything together. Being that Trevor tends to get himself in awkward situations, Libby has decided that this year they need to make new

friends. I kind of got her point, but poor Trevor is forced to quickly learn to rely on himself vs his best friend. Be rest assured, there's a fabulous message about friendship in this story, and these two are still best friends. There's also the good looking 8th grader who thinks he's above everyone else, the beefy 8th grader, who surprised me with how "nice" he is to Trevor, the know it all and the mysterious new girl, Molly. I loved getting to know each of these characters more.

The Classroom Room is brilliant, funny and relatable for all ages! Robin tackles all the different emotions that kids experience starting middle school. I felt like she nailed the experience of "growing up" perfectly in this book, but she also kept it light hearted and fun. Through each of the characters, readers will be able to connect with their worries, fears, triumphs, understand their motives for their actions, and get what they're thinking. Each character is striving for something different during the course of this book, and Robin does a brilliant job at allowing the reader to see that and get it. I highly recommend picking this book up when it's out next week! This is a book that's not just for middle grade readers, but for parents and teachers alike. Robin Mellom's creative writing style and down to earth, realistic characters will definitely leave readers wanting more when they're done with this book. This is a read that older elementary and middle grade readers will love.

Erica says

Oh my stars - this book is way too cute. It took me right back to middle school and everything that accompanies it. I loved the fun characters that Robin Mellom has written, since they just make the story.

I love the unique format - there is normal prose, but interspersed among it, there are drawings and doodles from Trevor's notebook, and occasionally there are drawings from others like Molly. Additionally, there are little asides with all the different characters like you would have on a reality TV show - like the little snippets where they share what they were thinking. I loved that format!

Stephen Gilpin's drawings are awesome - they were a joy to see and they really enhanced the book.

I loved the tips from Marty - first off, what a fun guy. Too many of them were an epic fail, but it is the thought that counts. The whole cast of characters really is great - I love what each character brings to the table. Trevor is an oddball by most, yet he is so genuine, and for him starting in middle school, that is what really works for him.

I love the message Robin Mellom sends through the book as well. There is such a large assortment of characters, and they really all excel in different ways. There wasn't the stereotypical "perfect" person or anything that succeeds - everyone of all sorts does.

I totally recommend The Classroom for anyone looking for a good middle grade read. Between the great storyline and the AWESOME drawings, it will sure to be a hit for you.

Aeicha says

The Classroom by Robin Mellom is a laugh-out-loud, relatable, and entertaining story about one awkward

middle-schooler who has to rise to the occasion, break out of his average shell, and be epic. With a fun, unique documentary style format, and quirky, endearing characters, *The Classroom* is a captivating and amusing middle-grade read.

Trevor Jones is an average kid starting middle-school (well as average as a neurotic, constantly worrying 7th grader can be), but nothing prepared him for the bomb his BFF, Libby, drops on him the first day of school. Trevor has to ask a girl to the fall dance (and he must do it by the end of the first day), and he and Libby can't be friend friends anymore (whatever that means!). Without Libby there to get him out of sticky situations, Trevor finds himself in one pickle after the other on his first day of middle-school. But he does manage to get a date to the dance in the form of the new, mysterious girl, Molly. When the dance arrives (the dance Libby has been put in charge of) and things look like they may end in disaster, Trevor has to step up and be epic for the first time ever.

The Classroom is told through the format of a documentary, with chapters broken up by character interviews/confessions. I really enjoyed this fun, refreshing format and how it resembles a crazy reality show. This structure gives the story a hip, cool vibe, but also allows for very over the top entertainment.

Robin Mellom has wonderfully captured the anxiety and nervous excitement of, not just starting middle-school, but of growing up as well. Losing and making new friends, dating, harder schoolwork, more responsibility...Mellom explores all of these issues with believability, humor, and heart. Trevor's story, with its moments of utter humiliation, surprising epicness, and everything in-between, is a very relatable one. Readers of all ages will have a blast rooting for Trevor in his bright moments and cringing in his embarrassing ones.

Trevor has such an endearing awkwardness to him that makes him feel so genuine and lovable. He's not the star athlete or best student or most talented or most popular guy, but even in his average-ness, he finds ways to be extraordinary and epic. This is a character that young readers will enjoy seeing themselves in and will feel like they're experiencing everything Trevor is. Mellom has surrounded Trevor with an eclectic and fun bunch of characters that prove to be just as lovable as Trevor.

The silly, playful illustrations throughout the book are the perfect companion to Mellom's story.

MY FINAL THOUGHTS: Robin Mellom is a witty and fun middle-grade storyteller who has created a hit with this series. *The Classroom* is the perfect read for anyone who has ever felt awkward, consulted a Magic 8 Ball, or dreamed of epicness.

Sharon Tyler says

The Classroom by Robin Mellom is a novel about starting middle school, and finding your place. It is scheduled for release on June 19 2012. At Westside Middle School a documentary crew is recording the details of the average seventh grader's efforts to find his way, with some not so average moments to keep everyone on their toes. Trevor Jones is a worrier, with a penchant for ending up in embarrassing situations. His best friend Libby is a little neurotic and determined that she and Trevor each start middle school off on the right foot, making new friends and finding a date for the upcoming dance. Molly is the mysterious new girl, fascinating to Trevor but the opposite of what Libby has in mind for her friends. Then there is Marty, an eighth grader willing to impart his assumed wisdom to Trevor; the super perky and short Cindy, and Corey,

the cool kid with his own agenda. Will Trevor and Libby meet their goal of a date for the dance by the end of the first day of school, and will their friendship survive the changes wrought by the new year?

The Classroom is a fun and realistic look at the 'wonders' of growing up. Readers get to see the worries and thoughts of the characters, showing how even the people who appear to have their act together are really as confused as the rest of us. We see the thoughts of Trevor trying not to end up in another embarrassing situation, and trying to find his way out of the ones he stumbles into. We see Libby's desire to help her friend even as she tells him that they need to make other friends. We see Molly's thoughts as she tries to stay separate from everyone while not being bored. We even see the thought processes and some of the reasons that 'cool' Corey acts the way that he does. Best of all, the story did not take the same and almost expected route found in books for all ages with the best friends becoming love interests. It was nice to see an ending that wrapped up well, not with everyone's life perfect but with a very satisfying resolution none the less.

I highly recommend The Classroom for readers around nine through fourteen years old. I think the portrayal of the fears and reality of entering a new grade, and a new school, is right on. I think teachers and parents should read this as well to help remind themselves what it was like to be in the shoes of the kids. Adults that just enjoy reading books for this age group will enjoy it as well. My only concern while reading The Classroom is for the author. After having read their young adult book Ditched, and the this book, I am pretty sure that some time was spent at a 7-Eleven during or after a dance drinking Slurpees. If there had been a 7-Eleven near me during my dance years, I am pretty sure I would have been doing the same.

Natalie says

The first day of Middle School is pivotal for seventh graders. You must have a date by the end of the day for the Fall Dance, everybody knows that. The person you went with would set the precedent for all your future dances, everybody knew that too. Except for Trevor Jones, he just heard it from his best friend Libby. He learned everything socially important from Libby. They'd spent all of their holiday's together, even President's Day, for as long as he could remember—they even potty-trained together. But it sounded like she wanted that to change, she said they couldn't be friends friends anymore. What did that mean? She also said it was time for them to make other friends, plus there was that deadline to find a date she set. Find a date, on his own? How was he ever going to survive Middle School? It was only the first day and he felt completely hopeless and lost, plus where were the bathrooms in this place?

This book is a fusion of middle schoolers notebooks drawings, secretly passed notes, internal dialogues, and one-on-one interviews with the documentary crew trying to capture the average middle schoolers and average days. Mellom is able to capture the nervousness, self-questioning, and social anxieties that middle school students (and most everyone) experience on their first day somewhere. The pressure to create an image for themselves, or maintain one. The hope of setting a good precedence, impressing others, and maybe even branching out from the norm. A well-structured, 'documentary' of the struggles and social confusion students face in the average, slightly-above average, extremely average, and rare but totally epic moments of school life. An enjoyable read with a creative structure and realistic student illustrations.
