



Dork Diaries Book 1: Tales from a Not-So-Fabulous Life

Rachel Renée Russell

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It's *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* for girls in this hilarious novel!

Meet Nikki Maxwell! She's starting eighth grade at a new school—and her very first diary packed with hilarious stories and art in Book One of the #1 *New York Times* bestselling Dork Diaries series!

New school. New mean girl. New crush. New diary so I can spill about all of it...

I put a lot of really personal stuff in this diary along with my sketches and doodles.

But, mostly it's about how TRAUMATIC it was transferring to my new private middle school, Westchester Country Day.

And, how a lot of the CCP (Cool, Cute & Popular) kids were really SNOBBY and made my life TOTALLY miserable. People like, oh, I don't know, maybe...

MACKENZIE HOLLISTER!!

And, it just so happened that I got stuck with a locker right next to hers. I could NOT believe I had such CRAPPY luck. I knew right then and there it was going to be a VERY, VERY long school year :-(!

Dork Diaries Book 1: Tales from a Not-So-Fabulous Life Details

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Author : Rachel Renée Russell

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From Reader Review Dork Diaries Book 1: Tales from a Not-So-Fabulous Life for online ebook

Maliha says

This book is like another version of The Diary of a Wimpy Kid. They are both hilarious. One of the ages I read in dork diaries cracked me up so badly I laughed out loud until my stomach hurt. I was in the library so everybody was looking at me like I am a weirdo. The part that cracked me up was when she said "Mackenzie and her crew were GGGing. Giggling, Gossiping, and Glossing." Another part was when she was talking about Tyra Banks. She said that Tyra tells the models "you FAT worthless skanks. You will NEVER, EVER make it in the modeling industry like I did. You have NO idea how much I BLED and SUFFERED. And wipe that SMIRK off yo face before I SLAP it off you little (whatever this is) #@\$%&." It cracked me up. I love the dork diaries. I don't read them in a particular order. I wonder if there is a fourth book to Dork Diaries. Personally I would choose the Dork Diaries series over the Diary of a wimpy kid. I don't why. I just think that Nikki (the girl from Dork Diaries) is much much more funnier than Greg (the boy from The Diary of a Wimpy Kid.) I love the Dork Diaries. If you are a person who has a huge sense of humor and loved The Diary of a Wimpy Kid then you will love this book. The thing that strikes me funny is was that she said that she would never write in the diary ever again but she keeps on writing in it. She is like Greg in the girl and more funnier version. She just cracks me up.

it nice i rate it 5 stars

Isabella says

Dork Diaries is a great book. I recommend it to all girls who like excitement and longer books. Once you have read the first book you will want to read all the others

[Shai] The Bibliophage says

This book series captured my attention because it mentioned that it's sort of like the Diary of a Wimpy Kid. Based on this first book, I think it's a subtle version of the latter and it tackles bullying issues because of the antagonist Mackenzie. I would still finish reading all the books released so far in this series. But for now, I still prefer the Diary of a Wimpy Kid series because adult readers would enjoy them more. This Dork Diaries series is more appropriate for young female kids ages 12 and below.

Avery Bryson says

I'm a 4th grade teacher and have been longing for a book for the girls in my classroom that was comparable to "Diary of a Wimpy Kid." While "Wimpy Kid" is hilarious, the girls in the book are very minor, undeveloped characters at best. After discovering "Dork Diaries: Tales From a Not-So-Fabulous Life," I finally got my wish for His and Her books. I think this book will also be great for my reluctant readers.

Nikki Maxwell is just starting the year at a snobby, private middle school. Not only does she not fit in with the fashion forward girls there, she lives in dread of someone finding out that she is attending the school on a scholarship. Her so-called, "pity" scholarship was arranged by her father as part of his contract as the school's new bug exterminator. And, if all of that wasn't bad enough, her father's work van has a huge 5 foot long roach bolted to the top of it.

Nikki gets assigned a locker right next to MacKenzie, the most popular girl in the school, who labels her a "Dork." So, Nikki hatches a plan that will launch her from dork to diva. All she has to do is win the annual school art show which should be easy enough seeing as she is a very talented artist and has spent the past 5 summers at art camp. However, her dreams are quickly dashed when MacKenzie signs up to compete in the art show and is rumored to be the frontrunner in the competition. At the last minute, Nikki loses her nerve and instead of signing up for the art show she signs up to become a library shelving assistant. The story takes off from there.

Nikki shares her fears, dreams, wishes, and frustrations with readers through daily entries in her diary and her funny drawings. The excellent artwork is a variety of manga inspired comic strips, doodles and drawings of the events she is writing about. I would say the artwork is probably more similar in style to "The Absolute True Diary of a Part-time Indian," than the simple comic strip panels in "Diary of a Wimpy Kid." My favorite artwork from the book? When an English lit homework assignment requires Nikki to provide a physical description of Shakespeare's character "Puck" from "A Midsummer's Night Dream," her imagination runs wild and she turns in sketches of Puck as Justin Timberlake, Corbin Bleu and Nick Jonas with huge, elf-like ears. Priceless! The girls in my classroom always try to add their favorite pop star crushes to their homework assignments.

Nikki is an imperfect, but endearing character. Her bratty little sister, Brianna, upstages her a few times and is another great character. The book was so funny that I found myself laughing out loud numerous times. I can't wait to share this book with my class. There were also a lot of references to teen pop culture that girls will enjoy.

If you don't have an appreciation for wry humor based on the angst of middle school, then you probably won't like this book (or "Wimpy Kid" for that matter). However, if you want a quick, witty, very funny Tween girl read, then THIS is the perfect book!

Lisa says

Read this before my 7 year old advance reader gets to it.

Kennedy says

Genre:Fiction

Tags:Romance,Realistic Fiction

Lexile Score:890L

Book Review: Rachel Renee Russell's Dork Dairies:Tales from a not-so fabulous life expresses the real life

of a teenage girl. A 14-year-old girl has to experience romance, drama, parties, and balancing her friends. Plot Summary: Nikki Maxwell is a 14-year-old is an example of your average teenager that is facing many different problems. She is in love with her crush, she only has two best friends, a click of girls that hate her for no reason, a dream of becoming an Artist, annoying little sister, and lastly two big parties that she promised to go to on the same night and time. When Nikki promises her little sisters teacher to volunteer for a party she doesn't know that it is on the same night as her eighth grade dance. At Nikki's little sister party she is dressed up as a rat because it is a costume. So Nikki is going back and forth from party to party to complete both promises. Eventually Nikki's biggest enemy, Mackenzie, Figures out what she is doing and takes her bag that has her dress inside of it. Nikki has no choice but to then go into the dance to get her bag back from Mackenzie. Mackenzie comes behind Nikki and snatches off the rat head she had on. Everybody, including Nikki's friends and crush sees her and are very unhappy that she lied to them. After all this happened Nikki and her crush hooked up, her friends were told the truth and all misunderstandings were cleared.

Amy (Books, College, and Other Random Things) says

Tales from a Not So Fabulous Life is the first book in the Dork Diaries series by Rachel Renée Russell.

Nikki J. Maxwell is an eighth grader that recently changed schools and is now going Westchester Country Day, a private school, because her dad has an extermination contract with the school. She wants to become a part of the CCP girls, Cute, Cool and Popular girls, and she believes a new cell phone will help her do just that. She thought that her mom got her one but realizes is just a diary.

It's not going to well at her school. She doesn't have any friends, and her locker is next to Mackenzie, the most popular girl at school and a CCP girl. Nikki loves to draw and is going to sign up for the art competition. Just as she is getting ready to get a form, she sees Mackenzie getting one. Being intimidated by her, Nikki just ends up getting a form to be a library shelving assistant. Even though she wanted to do the art competition, she ends up making friends with two of the other library shelving assistants, Chloe and Zoey. Will Nikki ever be one of the CCP girls? Will Nikki get the courage to enter the art competition? Can she ever stop being shy around Brandon Roberts, her crush?

I really liked this book. I wish it had more of Nikki's sister Brianna in it. I really thought it was funny when it talked about Brianna and the tooth fairy. I thought all the drawings were cute and wished there were more of them. I loved how Nikki interacted with Brandon and how she coped with going to a new school.

Cassie says

This is obviously a quick cash-in on the Wimpy Kid craze, and it shows. Oh, it SHOWS. Though derivative, I honestly wouldn't have minded a Wimpy Kid from the female perspective, but then I remembered - we already have that in the Amelia series by Marissa Moss, which is much better written and illustrated, and not to mention heartfelt.

The Dork Diaries is painfully vapid and shallow, and our protagonist Nikki is not particularly likable. I'm really not a fan of how she blames popular Mean Girl MacKenzie for a lot of her problems - especially her

fear to register for avant-garde art contest - and I'm just tired of the Mean Girl trope anyway. Nikki's new friends Chloe and Zoey seem more interesting to me, but Nikki is oddly dismissive of some of their interests and is a worse friend to them than they are to her. Nikki's sister Brianna has a lot of personality, too - it's really Nikki herself that seems to fall the flattest, and my guess is that she's probably an empty shell mostly to appeal to the largest swath of the tween population as possible.

They're no doubt popular, and Nikki and her friends have streaks of creativity, but it's still junk literature. The only positive thing I can say is that Nikki recognizes she doesn't really want to be part of the CCP (cool, cute, & popular) clique after all, so at least MOST of the messages being sent to readers are positive. There's an awful lot of materialism to contend with, though, and a colleague's description of these books as whining about "First World Problems" was spot-on.

Terryann says

Gr 5-7 – The Dork Diaries details the life of 14 year old Nikki J. Maxwell over a period of 6 weeks. Nikki has been awarded a scholarship to the prestigious, private middle school, Westchester Country Day as a part of her father's bug extermination contract with said school. Nikki's angst as she deals with the school's resident mean girl, her embarrassing parents, her crush on the hot boy and making new friends are all recorded alongside numerous sketches of her life. Although occasionally amusing, Nikki is not a very likeable character. She is shallow, self-centered and fails to show any growth in the book, even as she one-ups the popular and cruel MacKenzie in the end. In fact, Nikki who steals her neighbor's hearing aide and pranks her little sister, is somewhat of a mean girl herself. All other characters in the book are shallow, thin and underdeveloped, including Nikki's family and her new BFFs, Chloe and Zoey. The numerous illustrations, while well drawn and periodically witty, are much too sophisticated to be believable as drawn by a 14 year old. Fans of Diary of a Wimpy Kid by Jeff Kinney may enjoy this book as an adventure in déjà vu but from the girl point of view. Recommended for libraries with large collections.

Betty says

You will love Nikki Maxwell! Cute, cool & captivating!

The heroine of this YA story is eighth-grader Nikki Maxwell, a cute, cool and captivating girl you will fall in love with. Although the word cute is not a cool vocabulary choice for today's kids, I use it here because I love that word; it means much more than cool. To me it encompasses looks, personality and sincerity, while cool is...well "cool"...it can be a pose with some kids. So our Nikki is not only cool to her friends, she's also cute to us parents: the kind of girl every decent kid wants for a friend, every parent wants for a daughter. And I predict she will captivate everyone who reads this book, young and old alike.

But Nikki thinks of herself as a dork because rich, snooty MacKenzie Hollister and her wannabe followers go out of their way to make her appear that way. After one too many "klutzy" accidents—caused by the despicable MacKenzie, of course—Nikki starts writing the "Dork Diaries."

And what fun diaries they are! This honest, precocious girl writes EVERYTHING in those pages, illustrating her tales with humorous drawings. These drawings by the author enhance this book, making it an unforgettable reading pleasure.

I admire the way Nikki handles all the set-backs in her life; she never loses her temper, attacking MacKenzie as many girls would. Instead she remains calm and works things out in her own way. That girl has more self-confidence than she knows.

While Nikki doesn't follow the dictates of the "Fashionista Police," she dresses cute and flattering. Enough so to attract the attention of Brandon, a school photographer that MacKenzie has set her cap for.

So what does MacKenzie do when Brandon repeatedly helps Nikki? And what do tattoos have to do with Nikki suddenly becoming so popular that even MacKenzie pretends to be her friend? Does Nikki fall for it? Do her best friends, Zoey and Chloe desert her for MacKenzie? And what does Nikki do when MacKenzie finally learns that her father is the local bug exterminator, driving around with a huge roach atop his truck? How embarrassing is that to our heroine?

And does she ever get the coveted iPhone that she thinks she needs to be cool?

The final showdown between Nikki and MacKenzie is a big school project. Nikki has much more talent (skills, as they call it), but will MacKenzie win through trickery? But to learn more about our Nikki, you will have to read for yourself, and follow along with the illustrations.

Even though author Rachel Renee Russell's writing flows easily, I had a hard time reading this book—through no fault of hers. Each time I put it down, my granddaughter grabbed it and when I wanted to read a chapter, I had to search for it. I told that girl I would pass it on to her. Can't she wait? (But she's a lot like Nikki, so I can see the appeal.)

A side note about this author: As I was reading this story, it was obvious the writer knew and understood the teens' mind, so I felt as though I were actually reading a diary written by a teen. I was surprised to learn that Russell is an attorney who "prefers writing children's books to legal briefs." After reading "Dork Diaries" I can see why. I look forward to many more books by her.

This review is from an ARC sent to me by the author.

Reviewed by Betty Dravis, May, 2009
Author of "The Toonies Invade Silicon Valley"

COMING IN MAY: "DREAM REACHERS," a compilation of inspiring celebrity interviews including Clint Eastwood, Jane Russell, Ted Kennedy, Shawn Richardz, Dozie, Darcy Donovan, Jenny McShane, Kiara Hunter, Jennifer Wilkinson, Barbara Evans, Jason Seitz... and more. INSPIRING! INTERESTING!

Shannon says

This is about an incredibly materialistic, shallow, melodramatic preteen who is whiny and annoying. This is not something I'd tell anyone in this book's targeted age range to read. I thought I was getting Diary of a Wimpy Kid for girls but it's basically a whinefest with no substance. And the way the kids talk is nowhere near natural. Everything is over-the-top drama and none of it is funny. Plus the whole thing is supposed to be a diary written by the girl but everything plays out in real time. Like she'll talk about writing in her diary in the janitor's closet and then her friends come in and they leave but she's still telling the story like she wasn't just writing everything down. It's weird and hard to explain, but you can't have something

going on in the present when it's all supposed to be a diary written by the character.

Even though the Diary of a Wimpy Kid books decline a bit as they go, I'd recommend those instead. They're funnier and better written though share some of the same characteristics (both good and bad) with this series. It's really a shame this turned out to be so awful because I liked the premise and I do like girly stuff and drawing but this was pretty much just a big failure.

Emilee O. says

I think this was a good book.! It was about a girl named Niki Maxwell who transferred to a new school. She didn't like it at first because she had no friends. Soon she found 2 great friends named Chloe and Zoey. There was a girl named Mackenzie that at first made Niki miserable, but in the end Niki tried to ignore Mackenzie so she had a better school year. She had a secret crush on a boy at her school, his name was Brandon Roberts, soon they became good friends. Niki also entered a drawing contest at her school and placed 1st! She started to love her school because of all the good things that happened there.

My favorite thing that happened in Dork Diaries was when Brianna, Niki's little sister, had to go to the bathroom when her dad was at a job at a costumers house. She went into the bathroom and put on cupcake body spray. When Niki realized the costumers house was Mackenzie's house she tried to get Brianna to come out of the bathroom. She did but Niki told her a little lie, that Mackenzie was the tooth fairy(Brianna is scared of tooth fairies).

I didn't have a least favorite part of the story, I loved it all!

Nichole.a says

Dork Diaries Tales from a Not so Fabulous Life is one of my favorite books. This book is more for the girls because it is from a girl's point of view. This is the first book in this series.

This book is about a girl named Nikki Maxwell who is at a new school and it not going so well. She all ready has an enemy and no friends. She also has a crush on a boy that her enemy also has a crush on. Will she get friends? Will she get the boy of her dreams? Find all the answers to your questions in the book Dork Diaries. I really loved the lintier book but my favorite part was when her dad had to go to some ones house to do an inspection because he is a bug inspector .He has to take Nikki and her sister Brianna because he had to pick them up from the movies. When they get their dad tells them to stay in the car .Then Brianna needs the rest room. When she is in the rest room Nikki hers a voice. She thinks that she herd it before. Then she knows how it is she is so worried that she doesn't know what to do. Want to know hose house she was in? If you do want to know read this amazing book Dork Diaries Tales from a Not so Fabulous Life!!(Don't forget that this is the first in the series of two or three). I hope that you like the book as much as I did.

Rachel Reads Ravenously says

DNF AT 11%

If this is how the youth of America think and act, we are doomed.

John Winston says

I'm going hard on this one. I'm a huge proponent of quality children's literature, and this one just doesn't do it. I know that most children like these stories and the consensus is, as long as they're reading something, that's a good thing, right? Wrong! There is enough quality contemporary literature out here that children shouldn't have to settle for this. C. S. Lewis said, "A children's story that can only be enjoyed by children is not a good children's story in the slightest." Those words are profound, and I think the reason for the success of series like Harry Potter. They perform on many levels. Unfortunately, this one, does not.

I've been teaching middle school for 16 years and the language in Rachel Renee Russell's novel is in no way authentic. Check this, "The SNOBBY CHIC phenomenon is quite a mind-boggling thing. Hopefully, Congress will allocate funding for scientists to study it." Not the language of a middle-schooler, but maybe of an attorney, which the author happens to be. And then the inappropriateness of this line on the 4th page. "While hordes of celebrity party girls regularly FORGET to wear undies, not a single one would be caught dead without her cell phone." OK, some middle-schoolers may talk this way, but some middle-schoolers do and/or sell drugs, have sex, and commit heinous crimes. Should we also include that subject matter in the literature for our 5th-8th graders.

Writing-wise, oftentimes Dork Diaries feels more like high school than middle school. Jock football players sitting at a lunch table. Two girls plan to get tattoos. All the talk of dating. Again, I know hormones begin to rage in middle school, but to put it in the literature. I'm just not seeing it. For two-thirds of the book it seems like Russell struggles to make the story interesting as the 14-year-old protagonist, Nikki Maxwell rambles on about nothing most of the time. One minute she's shallow, the next she's deep and introspective, a major flaw in character development. Speaking of character development, there was virtually none, especially with the supporting characters, and Nikki just wasn't a likable character. Isn't that important for the main character in a story?

Toward the end, Russell makes a run at pulling everything together, but in the end, everything falls apart once more as there is no internal change or growth in Nikki, but a change in her situation, and all is conveniently well with the world again. What happened to the flawed protagonist our kids can learn from that decides it's better to do the right thing than be popular, the hero that takes one for the team, the heroine that finds something within to succeed against overwhelming odds. We have to do better than this with our kids as far as literature is concerned. I know I'm in the minority on this, and that's alright. But parents, you need to read this one first.
