



Fifteen and Change

Max Howard

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Zeke would love to be invisible. His mother is struggling to make ends meet and stuck with a no-good boyfriend. Zeke knows he and his mom will be stuck forever if he doesn't find some money fast. When Zeke starts working at a local pizza place, he meets labor activists who want to give him a voice--and the living wage he deserves for his work. Zeke has to decide between living the quiet life he's carved for himself and raising his voice for justice.

Fifteen and Change Details

Date : Published October 1st 2018 by West 44 Books

ISBN : 9781538382608

Author : Max Howard

Format : Hardcover 200 pages

Genre :

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From Reader Review Fifteen and Change for online ebook

Amanda Sanders says

I love the topic of this book. "Fifteen and Change" does a great job of helping readers understand what it's like working for \$7.25/hour. (The Fog of War p. 165 is my favorite poem.)

The author uses verse to tell the story of 14 year-old Zeke who decides to get a job so he and his mother can move back to their hometown. He doesn't bother asking her if she wants to move. The struggles of Zeke and his co-workers show readers how tough life can be working for minimum wage and how the battle for a better wage is even tougher.

Jana says

I received a free copy from the publisher through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

This is a novel written in verse that follows a fifteen-year-old boy whose mother is caught in an abusive relationship, but for financial (and let's be real, emotional) reasons doesn't want to leave the man. So the boy takes a job trying to save up money to move back to where they used to live.

I enjoyed the book, but honestly, I didn't connect with the main character at all. I wasn't emotionally invested in the book, even though my reading experience was pleasant. However, I did think that the topics seemed to be approached well.

Shreya says

Thanks to Netgalley and West 44 Books for giving me an ARC in exchange for an honest review.

I'm on the fence about this one. On one hand, I liked the story about the fight for higher wages, and how Max Howard showed that low minimum wages affect many people, and many families. On the other hand, I don't think all of the characters were as developed as they could have been, because of the verse format.

I enjoyed the side characters, and I sympathize with their struggles as they try to change their workplace environment. The only problem was that I wanted more of everything. I wanted to hear why Olivia decided to take a job at the pizza place. I wanted to see Hannah opening up and making friends, and I wanted Mary to be able to find a good place to live with her kids.

Zeke obviously had a hard time with his family, and has a rocky relationship with his mother. He always mentioned going back to Blue Way, the town he used to live in, but I had a hard time finding depth in this because I don't think there were enough comparisons between his life in Blue Way and his life now.

I'm giving Fifteen and Change 3 stars, because the bones of a great story are clearly here, they just need some extra detail.

Destiny Bridwell says

I received a copy of this book for a fair and honest review. A book completely written in verse. I have never read anything like this before. It took a little getting used to but it was a very effective way to write this. There is a lot going on in this novel that is only really touched the surface of these issues like domestic abuse, activism, homelessness and more. Zeke is trying to survive and help out his mother who is in an abusive relationship so he gets a job and soon comes to the conclusion that money is not going to solve their problems or issues. I kind of wish there was more to this novel. It has left me with a lot to think about now that it is done.

Maribel says

The idea of a novel told in verse is a great one. Howard combines not only two worlds of writing that are often firmly separated but were combined seamlessly in *Fifteen and Change*. Furthermore, Howard was able to write about the typical teenage love and heartbreak that one finds in a YA novel while also bringing in much more serious issues such as homelessness and domestic abuse. The everyday (and sometimes petty) becomes interwoven into the socially impactful.

Fifteen and Change is a great book with great content and composition.

Llyr Heller-Humphreys says

Good novel in verse about a teen figuring out his life when no one in his life has him as a priority.

Tori says

Although Zeke would like nothing more than to be invisible, he gets a job at a pizza shop. His only goal is to earn enough money to move him and his mother back home to Blue Way & away from his mother's current boyfriend.

I enjoyed this book and Zeke's journey but was left wanting more from his overall story. The elements of social justice were relevant and relatable for young adults, but I would've liked to see the story of Zeke's family be more developed.

Page says

Thank you to Netgalley for this Advanced eGalley of "*Fifteen and Change*" by Max Howard.

Zeke wants a way out of the miserable life he lives with his mother and her jerk of a boyfriend. He hopes a

new job will help him earn enough money to go back to Wisconsin where everything was seemingly better for them both. However, he quickly realizes money won't solve all their problems.

Written entirely in verse, this is a book that strives to address several issues: poverty, labor unions, love, social activism, domestic abuse, and homelessness.

However, in trying to do so much, it manages to barely break the surface of any one of those topics. Leaving you with the shell of a story.

Zeke likable but it was difficult to connect with him in any meaningful way because he was so poorly developed. He felt alien to me. And while a few of his actions did humanize him somewhat, he was mostly a bystander and didn't seem very important to the story—even though he was its central character!

The same could be said of his supporting cast. They were empty vessels. Ghostly in their lack of development.

Perhaps the decision to write in verse made depth difficult but I've read other stories, which used that format, with more success than Howard does here.

Honestly, it was as if Howard threw introduced the basic makeup of a particular person (the single mom, the devoted dad, the horrible boss, the well-meaning rebel, etc.) and left the reader to fill-in the blanks of what they were like based on the situation in which they were placed.

He expected empathy and sympathy without having to establish a connection.

It didn't work.

It could've been a good story, if Howard had centered on one particular aspect—especially given the decision to utilize verse—but as-is it falls flat.

Sage Thoughts says

Content Rating and Review

<http://sagethoughtsonbooks.blogspot.c...>

Michele says

Fifteen and Change

Max Howard

(West 44 Books)

4 stars

Zeke, Zekers, Z would much prefer himself as invisible. His mother is in a relationship with a horrible man and Zeke just wants to go back home to Blue Way. The only way to help his mom get away from her abusive boyfriend is to get a job and save the money to leave. Things don't go as planned and he must be visible to

do what he feels is right.

The story was written in poem form and was a very quick read. I really liked the format because the author was able to paint a pull picture with very little words. My heart broke for Zeke and was healed again by his generous spirit. A very good read indeed.
