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Tomek Tryzna

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Marysia Kawczak is a fifteen-year-old girl growing up in the grey flatlands of Poland, where she feels she is predestined to become--like her mother--a house-slave, "a 210-pound lump of fat with varicose veins." At the age of fifteen, Marysia moves with her parents to the nearest big city. It is here that she meets two streetwise girls, Kasia and Eva, who--each in her own way--begin to teach her the secrets of life. Marysia's drab life suddenly gains color, as she discovers not only the ostensible ways of the world, but also the subtler experiences of love, sex, desire, passion, and--finally, in the novel's breathtaking conclusion--betrayal.

Combining elements of straightforward contemporary fiction, the metaphysical, fairytales, and the epic, richly layered styles of Dostoevsky, Flaubert, and Mann (to whom many international critics have compared him), Tomek Tryzna has made an astonishing literary debut.

Miss Nobody Details

Date : Published December 29th 1998 by DoubleDay (first published 1994)

ISBN : 9780385489393

Author : Tomek Tryzna

Format : Hardcover 304 pages

Genre : European Literature, Polish Literature, Fiction, Cultural, Poland, Novels

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From Reader Review Miss Nobody for online ebook

Christine van der Veer says

Vreemd, droomachtig en intens. Maar ook mooi. En ik weet nog steeds niet precies waar het nu over gaat - behalve dan over vriendschap.

Nicolien says

"Steeds weer neem ik me voor niet in te grijpen in de werkelijkheid en iedere keer vergeet ik het weer."
(p. 131)

"Nou, Mateusz' idee was, dat er geen normale mensen bestaan, dat de normalen de gekken zijn die heel goed kunnen doen alsof ze normaal zijn. En gekken noemen zijn mensen die niet goed kunnen doen alsof of daarvoor de kracht niet bezitten en ook degenen voor wie het er niet zo op aan komt om te doen alsof."
(p. 221)

Anju Mai says

So I read this book for the second time, about fifteen years between the reads. For now, I'm lowering the star rating to 4/5 but this was still very good - and very strange and tragic. I think what was best about this book were the intense relationships between the girls. Such ferocious relationships between female characters are a rarity in literature, as far as I'm concerned. Also, the battle between good and evil was fascinating. I think this book was somewhere between magical realism and a story about a girl's mental health breakdown.

I recommend this book to anyone who wants to read about intense girl relationships or who just wants to read a strange and beautiful book. Although I have to say, this book was also very, very dark and disturbing.

EDIT: I thought about this book some more, analyzed the plot and was astonished by what I found.
WARNING: SPOILERS AHEAD!!!!

So, I realized that the theme of this book was actually... Hell. Yes, it was about Marysia's deviation from the path of goodness and her gradual journeying into Hell itself. Hell was mentioned so many times in this book and all in the treshold scenes.

Marysia was a good catholic girl in the beginning. She was from a humble and poor family background and she was in a new school, making new friends. She became close friends with Kasia, who was very moody, independent and questioned authority and religion. Kasia seemed to think that human beings can be their own gods. She was, in fact, the devil, masquerading as an artsy teenage girl.

The first big turn of events was when Marysia swore on her little brother's life that she would never hate Kasia. Then Kasia promised that, in return, she would save Marysia from the heaven of the innocent... that Marysia would go straight to hell. This was a disturbing scene. Marysia fainted right after this but seemed clueless about what she'd done.

After this, she progressed on her journey of becoming more evil. She desperately wanted to know the beauty that Kasia claimed to know and was willing to do almost anything. She was pushed by Kasia to say a mean thing to an old person. Then she repented, still wanting to go back to how things had been back when she'd been innocent. But in the next big turn of events, Kasia pushed Marysia even further... Marysia spit in the holy water of the church. Then she discovered that Kasia was the devil (or a demon... or possessed by a demon). And then, she finally committed to the goal of going to Hell and abandoning her Father in heaven.

After that, things started to get worse. Marysia's character became twisted, sometimes downright evil. The goal of going to Hell was reaffirmed several times and Marysia talked about it with her new friend Ewa. They agreed that they would kill themselves/each other and go to Hell.

Finally, in one very disturbing scene, Marysia became possessed by the devil. She could feel the creature creeping inside of her and she could sense the demon looking at the world through her eyes. It was gross and agonizing.

Then Kasia seemed to be a real girl again and she was trying to change her ways and become a better person after her odyssey. She was throwing a party for everyone... but all the others decided to not go to the party and Marysia was blackmailed to miss the party, as well. She knew she was breaking her friend's heart.

In the climax of events, Marysia decided to go to Kasia's place. Kasia had disappeared and a storm was brewing. Marysia travelled to a mountain to save Kasia but, instead, found herself at a crossroads yet again. She was deciding what to do when suddenly it was too late. Kasia was dead.

After this, Marysia was completely broken. She was also very ill. She went home and slept and had strange dreams and was feverish... In one dream, Kasia and Ewa were laughing at her, it had all been just an evil plot against her. Nobody had cared about her. Then she woke up and, while her parents were sleeping, she killed herself and took her little brother with her (the one on whose life she had promised never to hate Kasia).

And then she was in Hell!

It was a very, very, very, VERY creepy story.

Janet says

De afgelopen dagen heb ik dit uiterst aparte boek herlezen. Ik was daar wat huiverig voor omdat dit een van mijn lievelingsboeken was toen ik het voor het eerst las en je wilt je eigen lievelingen niet om zeep helpen natuurlijk. De sfeer van het boek stond me nog helder voor de geest en dat klopte ook wel; aan de ene kant heel meisjesachtig en naïef maar het werk heeft ook een duistere, magische kant. Na herlezing doet het me zelfs wel aan een andere favoriet denken: The magic toyshop van Angela Carter. Er zit iets van een gothic sprookje in dat me enorm aanspreekt. De zoektocht van een vijftienjarig meisje naar zichzelf op weg naar volwassenheid blijft een fascinerend gegeven dat prachtig wordt verwoord door Tryzna. Met name de droom- of hallucinatie elementen in dit boek zullen me bij blijven omdat ze zoveel inzicht geven. Juist dat raadselachtige maakt dat het boek een extra laag krijgt waardoor Meisje Niemand diepgang krijgt. Het einde kan ik niet helemaal plaatsen maar eigenlijk is het maar goed ook want dit boek moet je zelf invullen. Ik zou het nu denk ik 4 1/2 ster geven maar laat toch de vijf sterren lekker staan.

Kludia says

Wtf. Byłam na teatrze, który bardzo mi nie podszedł, a okazało się, że to nie teatr był zły, tylko oryginalna historia. Naprawdę...

Nie rozumiem głównej bohaterki, która była istotnie wysoce naiwna, nie rozumiem tej fabuły, bo nie wiem w jakiej społeczności dochodzi do takich interakcji społecznych i nie wiem, co autor miał na myśli. Nawet chyba nie chcę tego wiedzieć i zrozumieć. Ta książka to totalny chłam, który zapewne trafi do zdesperowanych nastolatków, ale jeśli ktoś ma w sobie chociaż nutę sceptycyzmu, to umrze na tej książce od każdej próby myślenia. Uh.

Bondama says

This book is one of the most unusual, yet starkly beautiful books I've come across in ages. The heroine, Marysia, is a 15 yr old "country mouse" who moves to a city when her father gets a job in a coal mine, and the family is able to get a apartment. The translation from Polish is truly, truly remarkable. I say that, having no basis for comparison, but the language of the characters rings completely true.

When Marysia goes to school for her last few months of eighth grade, she falls under the influence of two girls in particular. The first, Kasia, is a doctor's daughter, and a bohemian of sorts. The transformation of Marysia is made all the more poignant by the brilliance in which Tryzna captures her guileless personality and flat, affectless voice. The second girl, Eva, has even more of an influence on poor, believing Marysia.

The end of the book is devastating. I don't want to include anything that even hints at spoilers, because I do think that as many people as possible should read this book. Here in America, quite normally, we tend to be particularly cognizant of American (and British) books. The fact that I even heard of this book grew out of a conversation I had with Maciek on this subject. One just does not trip down to the library, and find books written in other countries without some searching. But, when one does find a jewel of this sort, it does tend to remain with us always.

RJ says

This is a strange novel of adolescence and girlhood friendships. It is bizarre in the extreme and depicts several girls attempting to define who they are and will be. Somewhat surreal, it forges a place for adolescence within a kind of magical realism that sometimes reads as mental illness, sometimes as overactive imagination.

Quân Khuê says

d? khi?p, phí ti?n

Anju Mai says

I read this in high school as a Finnish assignment. At the time I felt the book was splendid, gripping, totally awesome. Now, about fifteen years later, I've been meaning to reread it, to see what I think of it now. My rating may or may not change. You never know.

Petra says

Liefde en jaloezie, trouw en bedrog: de wereld van meisjes van vijftien is vol van hevige emoties. In Meisje Niemand brengt Tomek Tryzna deze mysterieuze wereld op indringende wijze tot leven. Marysia verhuist van het Poolse platteland naar een appartement in de stad. Daar raakt ze bevriend met Kasia en Ewa. Haar nieuwe leven lijkt in niets meer op hoe het vroeger was: het wordt nu beheerst door gevoelens waartegen Marysia zich alleen met de grootste moeite kan verweren. Meisje Niemand is een verfijnde en geheimzinnige roman waarin aangrijpende gebeurtenissen elkaar in een hoog tempo opvolgen.

Op de een of andere manier had ik een roman verwacht over een coming of age verhaal. Het volwassen worden en vriendschappen vormen zoals ik dat zelf heb gedaan toen ik 15 was. Maar Marysia zou in mijn ogen al volwassener moeten zijn dan ik was op die leeftijd. Ze helpt in het huishouden en zorgt voor haar jongere broers en zussen. Het verhaal richt zich dus op de ontluikende vriendschappen van Marysia als ze van school verandert. Daarbij komt een stuk jaloezie kijken en verder vooral hele rare voorvallen, die niet worden toegelicht door de schrijver. Het verhaal is wisselend geschreven, de gesprekken zijn op een heerlijk leestempo. Maar af en toe lijken psychoses of dromen besproken te worden die voor een buitenstaander nergens op slaan en niks toevoegen. Toegelicht worden ze vaak ook niet, dat breekt het verhaal, waardoor de echte boodschap (jaloezie?)

Het lastigste aan dit verhaal is dat het totaal niet aansluit bij mijn belevingswereld van toen ik 15 was. Ik was met hele andere dingen bezig. Doordat ik me niet kan identificeren en het verhaal soms lastig te volgen is heeft dit boek me totaal niet kunnen bekoren. Desondanks ben ik wel benieuwd naar de verfilming, de verhaallijn teruggebracht tot een film van 1.5 zou best kunnen werken. Jaloezie speelt natuurlijk sterk bij meisjes, zeker op die leeftijd.

Celine says

I rarely write reviews on books I have read, but this book is so worthy of getting one. The protagonist, Marysia, comes from Poland and coming from a Polish family myself, I had to laugh so many times by how relatable the habits and traditions of her family were to my own family. You see how Marysia comes of age in this book and get such an in-depth view on her own thoughts. At first, I didn't really understand the correlation between the book's title and the story that was being told. Once I reached the final pages of the book, and it was made clear how her two best friends had betrayed her and never intended on becoming friends, it all made sense. The book ended with her committing suicide with her baby brother because she felt so hurt, which just left me heartbroken.

Kelley says

Surreal, strange, breathy, Ellen Foster-type/Catcher in the Rye-esque.

Carla JFCL says

This is quite a bizarre book ... part Dickens, part St. Exupery, part female Catcher In The Rye ... and mostly just plain weird. At times I found it totally engrossing, and then it would suddenly turn into something that had me asking "what the he&@ is going on here?" if I had to describe it in just a few words I'd say it's a coming-of-age story about some 15-year-old girls who are already smarter and more worldly than I'll ever be ... and also much stranger than anyone I've ever met. Interesting but I wouldn't say I really enjoyed it.

Magdelanye says

its always interesting to note a wild range of star ratings and for this book I can see why, wavering as I am between one and four. truly this is a disconcerting account, told in first person by a Polish girl undergoing puberty. So lost is she in her fantasy world, its difficult to trust the narrative as the shy,dutiful and reliable girl from the country becomes a rather delusional and wholly unreliable narrator.

it could be an account of a mental meltdown or it could be a blistering commentary on daily life in modern poland from the point of view of someone with an overactive imagination transitioning into womanhood. the first part was a fascinating reveal of a very different culture.

there is an abrupt shift in tone about halfway through, after marysia's fight with kesia. This reader found herself getting more and more uncomfortable with the sadomasochist tendencies and only partly mollified with the occasional philosophical questions thrown into the mix. these did make some kind of sense as the narrator examines the choices open to her, and realizes the treacherous nature of friendship and time.

More raw than Elena Ferrante, less panoramic and intellectual in its exploration of similar territory, this book held the same thrall as a jerzy kozinsky packaged as a Carlos Ruiz Zafon. I have a feeling I will have more to say about this when I have calmed down and at a computer where I can add a few quotes. just needed to spit out a bit before moving on.

Liliana says

Me encanto Tomek Tryzna y esa forma de narrar como en tono de farsa, de sueño, de ironía. Es una historia sórdida y con final inesperado, Tryzna nos lleva por el camino que sigue Marysia hacia la madurez, pero en ese camino aparece una nueva personalidad cínica y ambiciosa, también cruel, a pesar de ese cambio siento pena por Marysia, ese tipo de compasión que generan los personajes patéticos.
