And Still We Rise: The Trials and Triumphs of Twelve Gifted Inner-City Students

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Bestselling author of The Killing Season and veteran Los Angeles Times reporter Miles Corwin spent a school year with twelve high school seniors -- South-Central kids who qualified for a gifted program because of their exceptional IQs and test scores. Sitting alongside them in classrooms where bullets were known to rip through windows, Corwin chronicled their amazing odyssey as they faced the greatest challenges of their academic lives. And Still We Rise is an unforgettable story of transcending obstacles that would dash the hopes of any but the most exceptional spirits.

The typical image of South-Central Los Angeles doesn't lend itself to peaceful and productive high schools. But as Los Angeles Times reporter Miles Corwin chronicles in this troubling yet uplifting book, the ills of the inner city have not completely defeated Toni Little's advanced-placement students at Crenshaw High School, with whom Corwin spent the 1996-1997 academic year as a silent observer. Having grown weary of writing about gang violence, drive-by shootings, and drug arrests, Corwin wanted "to find a way to write about the other children of South-Central, the students who avoid the temptations of the street, who strive for success, who, against all odds, in one of America's most impoverished, crime-ridden neighborhoods, manage to endure, to prevail, to succeed." He also wanted to show "how truly slanted the playing field remains, how inequality is built into a system touted as a meritocracy." Though 98 percent of the students in the gifted program go on to attend college, it takes a near superhuman effort for them to reach graduation day. In And Still We Rise, Corwin details exactly why.

Corwin's poignant portraits of the students and his sensitive evocation of the effort it requires for them to pursue their education are among the many strengths of the book. There's Olivia, the abused former runaway, ward of the county, and gifted student; Sadikifu, the promising Muslim rapper who constantly fights the gritty allure of gang life; and Toya, who lost her own mom to domestic violence and who struggles to balance schoolwork and motherhood. Corwin further explores the intricate intersections of affirmative action, educational expectations, urban neglect, and racism. By turns shocking and inspiring, this is journalistic work that gets to the core of its subject to reveal students who "value education, sacrifice much to further their educations, and overcome many obstacles--including even their own teachers--in order to obtain their educations." It shouldn't be so hard. --Eugene Holley Jr.

A native of Los Angeles, Miles Corwin is an award-winning reporter for the Los Angeles Times and the author of the critically acclaimed The Killing Season, a national bestseller. He lives with his family outside Los Angeles, California.

Other Books

Puing-Puing Kehidupan, Indonesian version of The Remains of The Day Manusia memang tak pernah merindukan sesuatu sebelum dia kehilangan. Dan Begitulah Stevens. Puluhan tahun lamanya dia mengabdi sebagai kepala pelayan di Darlington Hall, seluruh jiwana didedikasikan demi profesinya. Cita-citanya menjadi seorang kepala pelayan yang sukses, yang bermartabat, yang luar biasa, telah dia raih. Dan dia bangga meraihnya. Yang tidak disadari olehnya, begitu banyak hal yang telah dia korbankan, salah satunya adalah Miss Kenton, seorang gadis menawan yang begitu cerdas dan cermat. Gadis yang dulu menjadi staffnya, ternyata mencintainya. Dalam perjalanan mengelilingi pedesaan Inggris yang dilakukannya kali ini, barulah dipahami oleh Stevens, bahwa ternyata dia pun mencintainya.

Namun bertahun-tahun telah berlalu sejak itu. Miss Kenton memang menulis surat kepadanya. Mereka memang akan bertemu. Tetapi akankah ada kesempatan kedua bagi Stevens? *** "Patut dirayakan...Gambaran yang menyeluruh dan sangat meyakinkan tentang kehidupan manusia yang terurai perlahan di depan mata ini begitu, terkadang lucu, absurd, dan yang jelas sangat menyentuh." Sunday Times "Mimpi sebuah buku: komedi tingkah laku yang secara magis mewujud dalam pembelajaran menawan tentang kepribadian, kelas, dan budaya." New York Times Book Review [Mizan, Hikmah, Novel, Inspirasi, Indonesia]

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