

Educating Esm[?] : Diary of a Teacher's First Year

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A must-read for parents, new teachers, and classroom veterans, *Educating Esmé* is the exuberant diary of Esmé Raji Codell's first year teaching in a Chicago public school. Fresh-mouthed and free-spirited, the irrepressible Madame Esmé—as she prefers to be called—does the cha-cha during multiplication tables, roller-skates down the hallways, and puts on rousing performances with at-risk students in the library. Her diary opens a window into a real-life classroom from a teacher's perspective. While battling bureaucrats, gang members, abusive parents, and her own insecurities, this gifted young woman reveals what it takes to be an exceptional teacher. Heroine to thousands of parents and educators, Esmé now shares more of her ingenious and yet down-to-earth approaches to the classroom in a supplementary guide to help new teachers hit the ground running. As relevant and iconoclastic as when it was first published, *Educating Esmé* is a classic, as is Madame Esmé herself.

Esmé Raji Codell has written a funny, hip diary filled with one-liners and unadorned thoughts that speak volumes about the raw, emotional life of a first-year teacher. Like Ally McBeal in the classroom, the miniskirted and idealistic Codell sometimes fantasizes her career is a musical. Her inner-city Chicago elementary school fades to black as the lunch lady strikes an arabesque or a struggling student performs the dance of the dying swan, all set to her interior soundtrack. (Tina Turner's "Funkier Than a Mosquita's Tweeter" echoes whenever her idea-stealing, dimwitted principal harangues her.) She's a rash, petite, white lady who roller-skates through the halls and insists that her fifth-graders call her "Madame Esmé." But it's not all fun and games: she introduces us to children who fling their desks and apologize in tears, and at one point, after reporting a disruptive student to her mother, who subsequently thrashes the young girl, she dry heaves into her classroom's trash can.

Codell's 24-year-old voice is loud and clear ("Serious gross out," she writes after the scorned principal hugs her), though, on the principle that kids say the darnedest things, she often simply repeats their comments for comic effect. She's got sass, maybe too much self-confidence at times, and though there's no deep introspection in *Educating Esmé*, you'll be convinced her 10-year-old charges emerge the better for knowing her. --Jodi Mailander Farrell

"A pop culture phenomenon" (Publishers Weekly)

"Screamingly funny" (Booklist)

"Funny, poignant, and even sad. You'll find yourself laughing at places, ready to cry at others." (The Arizona Republic)

"It should be read by anyone who's interested in the future of public education." (Boston Phoenix Literary Section)

"Esme is a teacher I'd hire tomorrow. There is nothing the profession needs more than such creative intelligent, combative, and loving teachers." (Herbert Kohl, author of *36 Children*)

Esme Raji Codell has come to teach. Fresh-mouthed and miniskirted, this irrepressible spirit does the cha-cha during multiplication lessons, roller-skates down the hallways, and puts on rousing performances with at-risk students in the library. In *Educating Esme*, the diary of her first year teaching in a Chicago public school, she opens a window into a real-life classroom. While battling bureaucrats, gang members, abusive parents, and her own

insecurities, this gifted teacher changes her student's lives forever.

Winner, Memoir of the Year, ForeWord magazine

Winner, Alex Award for Outstanding Book for Young Adult Readers

Other Books

Bibliografický sborník.

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