



As The Crow Flies

by Melanie Gillman

Iron Circus Comics, 2017

ISBN: 9781945820069 (Trade Paperback)

Age Range: 13-17 (Suggested by Publisher)

Grade Range: 6 and Up (School Library Journal)

BOOK SYNOPSIS

Charlie Lamonte is thirteen years old, queer, black, and questioning what was once a firm belief in God. So naturally, she's spending a week of her summer vacation stuck at an all-white Christian youth backpacking camp. As the journey wears on and the rhetoric wears thin, she can't help but poke holes in the pious obliviousness of this storied sanctuary with little regard for people like herself . . . or her fellow camper, Sydney.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

★ "This contemplative graphic novel, taken from Gillman's ongoing webcomic, perceptively explores race, gender, faith, and friendship. Elegantly composed, richly hued images vividly portray the lush forest setting and shy, thoughtful Charlie's inner turmoil as she yearns to voice her opinions.... The book subtly folds in lessons about identity and the danger of assumptions; both girls learn and grow about each other, themselves, and the larger world. VERDICT Heartfelt, stimulating, and sure to spark discussion about feminism's often less than inclusive attitudes toward marginalized groups. For all graphic novel collections." *-School Library Journal Starred Review*

★ "Gillman's brutally honest and wrenchingly beautiful story of friendship explores the simultaneous pain and joy of being young and queer. On Charlie's first day at a Christian sleepaway camp for girls, she sees what she believes to be a sign from God, but she has a crisis of faith after she discovers she's the only black girl in attendance and the camp staff start treating her badly. Their cruelty only grows worse during her group's hike to a centuries-old ceremonial retreat in the mountains. On the way, Charlie meets Sydney, a transgender girl who's just as fed up with their privileged counselor and oblivious peers, and the two band together for support during the emotionally and physically grueling ordeal. The book is unflinching in its examination of how solidarity among white, cisgender women can harm others. Charlie's pain is palpable, as are Sydney's alienation and fear, producing a story that's as resonant for marginalized readers as it is enlightening for those it critiques. Throughout, Gillman's meticulously realized colored pencil landscapes remain impeccable. This book radiates love and melancholy in equal measure." *-Publisher's Weekly Starred Review*

★ "Gillman's lush, warm artwork, rendered entirely in colored pencil, brings the gorgeous scenery lovingly to life. The soft, luminous scenes of the mountains and nature emphasize the enormity of Charlie's undertaking, both spiritually and physically, and her interactions with the other people on the trip, from snickering over outdated concepts with Sydney to bringing up uncomfortable topics with adults, are nicely paced and expressive." *-Booklist Starred Review*

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"Gillman's remarkable skill at portraying the way that microaggressions and small slights can quickly escalate to create an environment that's emotionally crushing and dangerous is something that is hard to find anywhere else. There are comics, especially webcomics, that portray otherness well, but what sets Gillman's work apart is their ability to show how we are othered by the people in our lives, and how that creates anxiety and isolation that can be nearly impossible to overcome, especially for young people. Charlie is a complicated, nuanced, and sympathetic protagonist... It's a story that embraces the truth of how bad things can be without abandoning kindness, and that's something comics could use a lot more of." -*AVClub*

"This is a book that can now be found in print by the "real Charlies and Sydneys of the world" and one that, in microcosm, speaks to us all about the unconscious biases and entrenched inequalities that permeate every strata of our societal structures. Gillman's story continues here online but this first print collection will hopefully ensure the story reaches the even wider readership it deserves." -*Broken Frontier*

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- Stonewall Honor Book, Children's and Young Adult Literature
- Excellence in Graphic Literature Award Winner, Best Middle Grade Graphic Novel
- Eisner Award Nominee, Best Digital/Webcomic
- Ignatz Award Nominee, Outstanding Comic
- Denver Comic Con Excellence in Graphic Literature Award
- Broken Frontier Award Nominee, Best Webcomic
- YALSA Great Graphic Novels For Teens list
- Advocate's Best LGBT Graphic Novels of 2017
- ALA's Rise: A Feminist Book Project Top Ten list
- Booklist's Top 10 Graphic Novels for Youth
- Margins Book Award Recommended Reading List
- Texas Library Association Maverick Reading List
- Autostraddle Comic and Sequential Art Award Shortlist, Favorite Overall Comic

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

[Using Graphic Novels in Education: As the Crow Flies \(Comic Book Legal Defense Fund\)](#)

["These Stories Are Out There" – Reclaiming Queer and Trans Histories with Melanie Gillman](#)

***A NOTE ON AGE RANGES**

A publisher-suggested age range covers the gamut of readers that publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate age range for the diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book's intended use.

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