



[Audacious](#) by Gabrielle Prendergast

Orca Book Publishers, 2013

9781459802643: (paperback)

*Age Range: 12+

Grade Range: Grade 10+

BOOK SYNOPSIS

Sixteen-year-old Raphaëlle says the wrong thing, antagonizes the wrong people and has the wrong attitude.

She can't do anything right except draw, but she draws the wrong pictures. When her father moves the family to a small prairie city, Raphaëlle wants to make a new start. Reborn as "Ella," she tries to fit in at her new school. She's drawn to Samir, a Muslim boy in her art class, and expresses her confused feelings in explicit art. When a classmate texts a photo of Ella's art to a younger friend, the fallout spreads throughout Ella's life, threatening to destroy her already-fragile family. Told entirely in verse, *Audacious* is a brave, funny and hard-hitting portrait of a girl who embodies the word audacity.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

★ "Prendergast's sophomore YA novel is aptly named, both for the fierce spirit of its narrator, Ella, and the choice to tell her story entirely in verse...The verse bolsters character...[and] also allows Prendergast to take a jagged, piecemeal approach to telling Ella's story, a sort of diary structure that feels intimate and believable...The refusal to stick to one particular style, form, or rhyme scheme is an apt reflection of Ella's tumultuous teenage state...Prendergast asks concrete questions about faith, art, and politics that are sometimes avoided in YA...In *Ella*, Prendergast has created a voice that is definitely audacious—but also utterly real and memorable." —[Quill & Quire](#), starred review

"[An] action-packed coming-of-age tale fraught with familial and societal dysfunction...Prendergast offers great insight into teen psychology—especially that of the outcast—and boldly probes sensitive topics like religious prejudice, sex, censorship and eating disorders. A provocatively modern test of understanding difference." —[Kirkus Reviews](#)

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"The novel contains multiple, adeptly intertwined plotlines that touch upon an extensive range of issues...A wonderfully fast-paced novel that mature teens are sure to embrace." —[School Library Journal](#)

"Fans of Ellen Hopkins and Sonya Sones's novels in verse will delight in Prendergast's rich, riveting story, first in a planned duo...Prendergast demonstrates a powerful understanding of the adolescent search for identity, and her writing uses the verse format to great effect, with an honest teenage voice, a willingness to play with poetic form, and an intensity that arises through the condensed language." —[Publishers Weekly](#)

"In deft, layered verse, Prendergast chronicles her heroine's desperate search for a positive identity. Young love, religion, politics, prejudice, and the meaning of art in society all factor into Raphaëlle's acceptance of herself and her family in all its complexities. Many readers will recognize both her tendencies toward self-sabotage and her growing belief in herself, and they will likely want to continue this journey in the planned sequel, *Capricious*." —[Booklist](#)

"This stunning, potent novel-in-verse delivers a riveting story and a character who is independent yet unsure, brave yet vulnerable, and so utterly true to herself. Readers will revel in every carefully chosen word and image. Prendergast has created a magnificent portrait of high school life, of first love, of a family in crisis. She raises challenging, intriguing questions about religion, women in society, art and self-expression. She takes on so many things in this book and yet the reader never feels overwhelmed, it never once feels like too much. The poetry format is used to brilliant effect, compelling readers to slow down and savour each exquisitely crafted poem, and to enter more deeply into Ella's mind and heart." —[Canadian Children's Book News](#)

"Prendergast has written a stunning young adult novel which shows the coming-of-age process of a strong and independent young woman who wants to express herself through her art... *Audacious* is written entirely in verse, but readers will hardly notice this fact after the first few pages. Somehow, the author manages to create fully formed characters, interesting dialogue and a series of events which tell a complete story while using a minimum of words. Prendergast says enough that readers have a clear sense of plot, setting and characters, and yet readers are able to fill in any blanks with their own imagination—a perfect combination!" —[CM Magazine](#)

"Smart, funny, clever and bold. Ella is a quirky, appealing character with a complicated back story and realistic, identifiable problems...Explores important, highly topical themes in an intelligent way." —[Resource Links](#)

"In deft, layered verse, Prendergast chronicles her heroine's desperate search for a positive identity. Young love, religion, politics, prejudice, and the meaning of art in society all factor into Raphaëlle's acceptance of herself and her family in all its complexities. Many readers will recognize both her tendencies toward self-sabotage and her growing belief in herself, and they will likely want to continue this journey in the planned sequel, *Capricious*." —VOYA

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- Forest of Reading White Pine Award | 2014 | Nominated
- CCBC Best Books for Kids & Teens | 2014 | Commended
- Canadian Library Association (CLA) Young Adult Book Award | 2013 | Short-listed
- Resource Links, The Year's Best Books | 2013 | Commended

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RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES

Banned by Wilson County Schools. All the books on this list were removed from their libraries:

<https://go.boarddocs.com/tn/wcschools/Board.nsf/files/DA6S3Q70BCC6/%24file/Director's%20Report%20-%20October%2024%202024%20BOE%20Meeting.pdf>

*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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