Review 5, Option 2: Non-fiction review guide


(http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/csp/cms/sites/SLJ/Info/CA452765.csp)

Your review must include sufficient specific descriptive information to be helpful to your colleagues who will not see this book. Be sure that you have included a brief plot summary and a discussion of the book's literary quality.

Reviewer
Godwin, Megan

Title of book reviewed
Maus A Survivors Tale

Publisher, Publication date
Pantheon Books, New York

Author
Art Spiegelman

Content or scope of the book
Biography/autobiography of an Auschwitz survivor and his son

Point of view or bias of the author
The author has no bias and portrays the characters authentically

Fictionalizing (dialogue, feelings, thoughts, incidents)
The dialogue of the author's father is broken English, but still good. The author shows through the story and illustration compassion and also hatred toward his father. Mixed emotions are felt from the author about his father. The author has a hard time understanding the actions of his father.

Style: comment in your review on the following and answer briefly here. Is the writing

- clear
- confusing
- lively
- dry

Comparison: What other books have a similar scope for the same age range and how do they differ from this title (if applicable)?
Comparison: If a revision, what changes have been made since the previous edition?

Publisher and Date of original (if applicable):

Potential Appeal to Intended Audience

- general
- limited
- strictly for reports
- none

Why?

Is it for the beginner with no background in the subject (If extensive background in the subject is required, note this in the review.):

- yes
- no

Quality of illustrations (be sure to comment on this in your review)

- excellent
- above average
- average
- informative
- poor
- merely decorative

Ethnic/gender/cultural representation
Yes, the characters are different animals based on their religion/race.

Organization

- excellent
- average
- poor

Recommendations

- first purchase
- for general purchase
- additional purchase
- not recommended (this should be implicit in your review without using the words "not recommended"

Do you feel this book is outstanding?
This book was recommended to me by my mentor.

Godwin, Megan

Maus A Survivor’s Tale

Pantheon Books, New York

Art Spiegelman

In the autobiography/biography of Art Spiegelman and his father Vladek Spiegelman, Art tells the story of his father. Vladek is a holocaust survivor who survived the Auschwitz camp with his wife Anja, Art’s mother. The story begins in Rego Park, New York in 1958 when Art or “Artie” is playing with his friends outside but gets left behind. His father tells him in certain terms that one doesn’t really know who his friends are until you’ve been locked in a room with them for a week with no food. They story then shifts to the then present early 1970’s when Art is much older. He is estranged from his father after his mother’s suicide in his early 20’s. Art’s father has now remarried another woman who is also a Holocaust survivor. Art asks his father to tell him his story so he can write a book about him and his history. Vladek is very descriptive and full of detail in his recount of his younger years. His English is broken, but still good. Art begins to have a relationship with his father through the telling of his story and the meetings to write or record the tales he has to tell, but there is still a distance felt between the two of them. Art has an unspoken confusion about his father. He doesn’t understand some of his old ways and has a bit of a hard time around his father with underlying feelings of inadequacy when it comes to certain things. Art has mixed emotions about his father and the death of his mother. I would say the book is very personal.

The illustrations are very clear and easy to read and it is a black and white comic book type style. Art uses different species of animals to depict the different character’s races or
religions. For instance the Jewish people in the book are mice, but when they need to come
cross to others a Polish, they wear masks. The book is an accurate timeline of the wars and the
Holocaust. I would not however read the book as a history book, but rather a memoir. I do
believe the author tries to give actual information without being biased or without omitting any
information, but still it is only his father’s story or recount of his memories. I believe a person
with no background knowledge of the history would be able to follow this book. I think the book
should be available for the general public and purchased by both schools and public libraries.