

Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Aggression in Girls
by Rachel Simmons

After carefully analyzing *Odd Girl Out* I came to the conclusion that the book should only be a reading for certain organizations. These organizations could be any Non-traditional group, journalism, psychology club, sorority, or any woman's study groups. These organization will learn, evaluate, discuss, and involve the campus and community with the reading. This book is not recommended for a freshman common reading because too much emotion will occur and being new students and entering the college life they shouldn't have the emotional pressure on their shoulders. By having organizations reading the book, students who want to express their feelings or have an interest in female aggression have the choice to join the organization.

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BACKGROUND

Missouri Western State University considers a common reading a book for all upcoming freshmen to read and study over the first semester. My first semester as a freshman at Missouri Western State College the faculty chose *Bone Black* by Bell Hooks for the students to read. I wouldn't recommend *Bone Black* to any diverse colleges for a common reading. The book isn't diverse enough for Missouri Western State University. *Bone Black* was about the story of Bell Hooks' childhood as an African American girl growing up. The story itself was interesting but it didn't relate to me or most students. This college needs a book that can either relate to all students or be diverse enough for the students. *Odd Girl Out* relates to *Bone Black* in a way, Bell Hooks explains the story of her childhood "there is no one story of black girlhood." Rachel Simmons' book proves that every story is different. There are different situations, different races, and occurs all over the United States. *Bone Black* had the same setting and the same characters. The book was just a story no main point or nothing to bring the reader to a deep thought.

SCOPE

Odd Girl Out by Rachel Simmons is recommended as a limited reading for all new Missouri Western State University freshmen who choose to participate. The non-fiction book will teach the students about the hidden aggression in females and the life long effects that can occur. Students who participate in the reading will read the non-fiction book and do activities with the book in their organization within the campus and community. Students will have discussions about the book so that each student will be able to relate in some way with one of the characters in the book. For example, some students might be a parent of a female, teacher, classmate, boyfriend, or even the victim. Whatever the relationship might be to the female they will be able to relate to Rachel Simmons in Odd Girl Out. "We knew full well back in grades 6 through 12 that while the girls presented their sweetest selves to us and the adults, there was an underground girl culture of competition, meanness, and revenge, and knew damn well to stay out of its way." (Wilson Par. 3) This is just one example of why people chose to ignore aggression and why it is such a big problem today.

Readability

The appropriate readability of Odd Girl Out is grade level sixteen. There were one hundred and fifty nine words that were three syllables in thirty sentences.

Culture Diversity

Odd Girl Out shows culture diversity throughout the book. There are stories with African American females being taunted as well as white females. Bell Hooks stated in Odd Girl Out, "Truth telling and assertiveness, she urges, are "not necessarily traits associated with building self-esteem. An outspoken girl might still feel worthless because her skin was not light enough or the right texture." (Simmons178) The book talks about different religions, race, age and ethnic groups are all taunted. Peggy Orenstein states in her book Schoolgirls, "the conclusion of the study (an investigation that involved over three thousand girls and boys between the ages of nine and fifteen and cut across ethnic and regional lines) was alarming: there is a crisis in this country regarding the way we educate our daughter..." (Simmons226)

Relevance of issues

Readers of Odd Girl Out should be able to connect with the characters in the book because there is so much emotional appeal. The book makes the reader feel like they are sitting in the interview while the children explain their fears to Simmons. "Boys are most likely to express their anger physically, but shoving someone's face into a toilet or pushing him up against a locker, while girls generally lash out with more subtle but no less effective weapons: the push and pull of ever-shifting friendships." (Kantrowitz Par. 3) Just by the emotion Simmons describes; the reader should feel attached or involved with the children.

Style and Organization

Rachel Simmons' book is a fairly easy book to understand. Each chapter shows how well Simmons researched and found her information on aggression from other authors, physiologist, and students. "She interviewed 122 women and girls in 25 states..." "24 percent African American and 17 percent Hispanics." (Chesney Par.12) Within each chapter examples of the interviews Simmons conducted are apparent. There is a table of contents that list nine chapters starting with the introduction that explains Simmons childhood and how she was victimized. Then, there is the conclusion which explains why Simmons wrote *Odd Girl Out* and explains what readers should get out of the book. "Writing this book brought light to the dark corners of my life. Naming the alternative aggressions allowed me to see myself and my relationships in an entirely new way." (Simmons 261) After the conclusion the book contains notes, bibliography acknowledgments, and the index. *Odd Girl Out* is a very organized book and easy to find the sources and understand the chapters.

Length and Complexity

Odd Girl Out is the perfect length, it wasn't too long or short. The wording is easy and incoming freshman should know the meaning of the three-syllable words used. For example "probably" was a common word found in most chapters as well academic, diversity, differences, and certainty. These are words students should know coming into the first semester of being a freshman. According to the SMOG index *Odd Girl Out* is the readability of grade level sixteen but I found it easier than that only being in the first semester of my sophomore year.

Appropriateness

My definition of appropriateness is if the situation is at the proper time or in the proper way. Yes, I definitely would say that Rachel Simmons wrote a very appropriate book for parents, teens, and colleagues. The book is written in third person and the context is easy to understand. There isn't any information that the readers of *Odd Girl Out* should be offended in any way. *Odd Girl Out* is a book of truth which I find it appropriate in all ways. "Simmons believes that girls are just as aggressive as boys. Their actions might not inflict black eyes or bruises, but they can be just as harmful." (Dutton Par.3)

Academic Value

College faculty members would find value in teaching the ideas, elements, and issues of *Odd Girl Out*. After reading this book I was pumped to change the lives of girls who were victimized. I wanted to do something; I wanted to make a difference and let them know that there is people out there who care. By having faculty members teaching *Odd Girl Out* and discussing the importance of it I think students will be more willing to make a difference in some little girls life. I was unable to get any responses from the teachers at Missouri Western State University because of the short notice and being summer.

Social Value

Odd Girl Out would definitely be a book to spark discussion or interaction between the students. Some students might have witnessed aggression their whole life and would

like to stand up and stop it or others might have been taunted their whole life. There might be students who will want to know if the situation ever does occur in their lives how to deal with it. There are many possibilities students can relate to. By this book being read and heard, students might feel comfortable to reach out to peers and want to express their past anger or memories.

Staff/Resources

Group leaders should be involved by analyzing the book and able to answer any questions group members might have. Leaders should plan activities with the book and have lectures on Odd Girl Out for the readers to have a better understanding of the book. Group leaders should plan ways to get this book involved with the campus for students who might be interested. This might make incoming freshman feel more welcome to the college life and give them something in common to talk to upper class mates about. "Speaking out to stay connected- particularly with one's friends. For many of these adolescent girls, speaking out in relationships about anger and frustration was done not just for its own sake but also for the sake of maintaining connection." (Way 119)

Schedule

May- Organizations should hand out fliers on campus to welcome students to participate and have sign ups. Fliers should be mailed to all incoming freshman to welcome them and give the option to join the organization or activity. Start making plans for a visiting speaker such as: a victim of aggression, author of book, or a physiologist who can explain how aggression affects a person

June- Odd Girl Out should be ordered and research should be taken place for additional background information (reviews) by the group leaders: Once book arrives leader should begin reading.

July- Meetings with previous members and start discussing activities within the community and campus. Plan meetings for the rest of the semester. Plan a welcoming event to all new members.

August- Books distributed and all members should start reading. Meeting for discussion should start taking place.

Cost

On Amazon.com Odd Girl Out was only \$2.42 used. If there were approximately fifty members the cost would only be around one hundred and twenty dollars without shipping and handling. Depending on which speaker visits the budget will be determined.

Advantages

- * By students reading Odd Girl Out they will be more aware of what aggression is
- * Students will know how to handle a situation where aggression occurs
- * Students will be able to hold discussion with other students about the book
- * Organizations could have counseling sessions for victims of aggression

* The community will be more aware of what aggression can do to an adolescent

Odd Girl Out is a non-fiction book about the hidden aggression in female adolescents. The book explains how female adolescents treat each other by dirty looks, leaving people out, name calling, etc. Odd Girl Out was written by Rachel Simmons who was a female victim of aggression and she explains her personal experience as well as hundreds all over the world. Simmons explains to the readers how aggression can be recognized and what to do if the situation occurs. Elizabeth Wurtzel states in her Book Bitch that "the small town sweetheart who drips sugar and saccharine for all the world to see but is in fact full of lust and evil...and malice and bad thoughts." This is a perfect example of what really hides in the personalities of girl that no one ever notices. Odd Girl Out is recommended for organizations such as Non- traditional, Sorties, Physiology, or any woman organizations. Half the population entering into colleges today is in this culture of girls and will be entering into the "real world" in four years. By this book being read and heard there will be a better understanding of how female adolescents can be harmed for life by childhood memories. Someday most of the students will have children and by reading Odd Girl Out, credibility will be established as well as preparedness for both male and females.

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