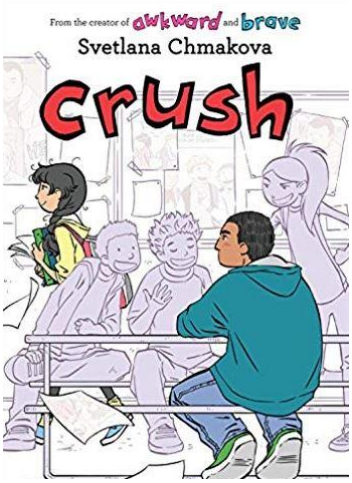
BOOK BUZZ BOOK REVIEW Spring 2019



Your Name: Jennifer Q
District: East Greenbush
School: Goff Middle
Date: April 2019

Title: Crush
Author: Svetlana Chmakova
Genre: Graphic Novel
Grade/s: 5-8
Audience: Male protagonist; middle school setting
Copyright Year: 2018

Summary: This book is the third installment of the series set at Berrybrook Middle School centers on Jorge Ruiz, whom readers met in Chmakova's *Brave* as "the sheriff," the big, scary dude (who's actually kind-hearted, honest, and loyal) who patrols the halls and intimidates bullies into leaving their victims alone. This year, students are obsessed with who's dating whom and who's asking whom out—which Jorge finds annoying, especially when he begins noticing one particular girl and can't seem to remember how to use words around her. With each page turn, everyone becomes more complex, and the situations they experience are timely and real. The artwork tends toward colorful pastels, and the backgrounds lighten and darken to reflect characters' emotions in a lovely, subtle way. Panels featuring well-placed, expressive speech balloons and creative fonts move the action along. Mr. Raccoon continues to sneak into the background, and the author has a fun cameo.

Your Opinion: I couldn't put this book down, and neither could my 5th grade daughter, seventh grade student, nor eighth grade student. Jorge is a genuine and relatable main character, and the plot stays at school, which makes the story easy to follow, full of realistic middle school drama and dialogue.

Notable quotes: "My dad always says, 'Strength is a resource. If you have a lot and someone doesn't, you gotta share yours (14).'" Jorge mentions this in the beginning of the book as a rationale for his upstander behavior at school. It's the only mention of his family/family life.

"Olivia's started dialing me into their group chats too. Some **real** awkward ones. Like when she finally broke up with Marcus (good riddance)--that was the night of a

thousand texts I **didn't want.**" (130) Jorge reveals this in the middle of the book, and it is a humorous example of the authentic dialogue.

The reading level and content is appropriate for approximately ages 10 and up. My daughter is ten and read it in an hour or less. No ages of characters are mentioned except for one, who is thirteen (probably 7th grade).