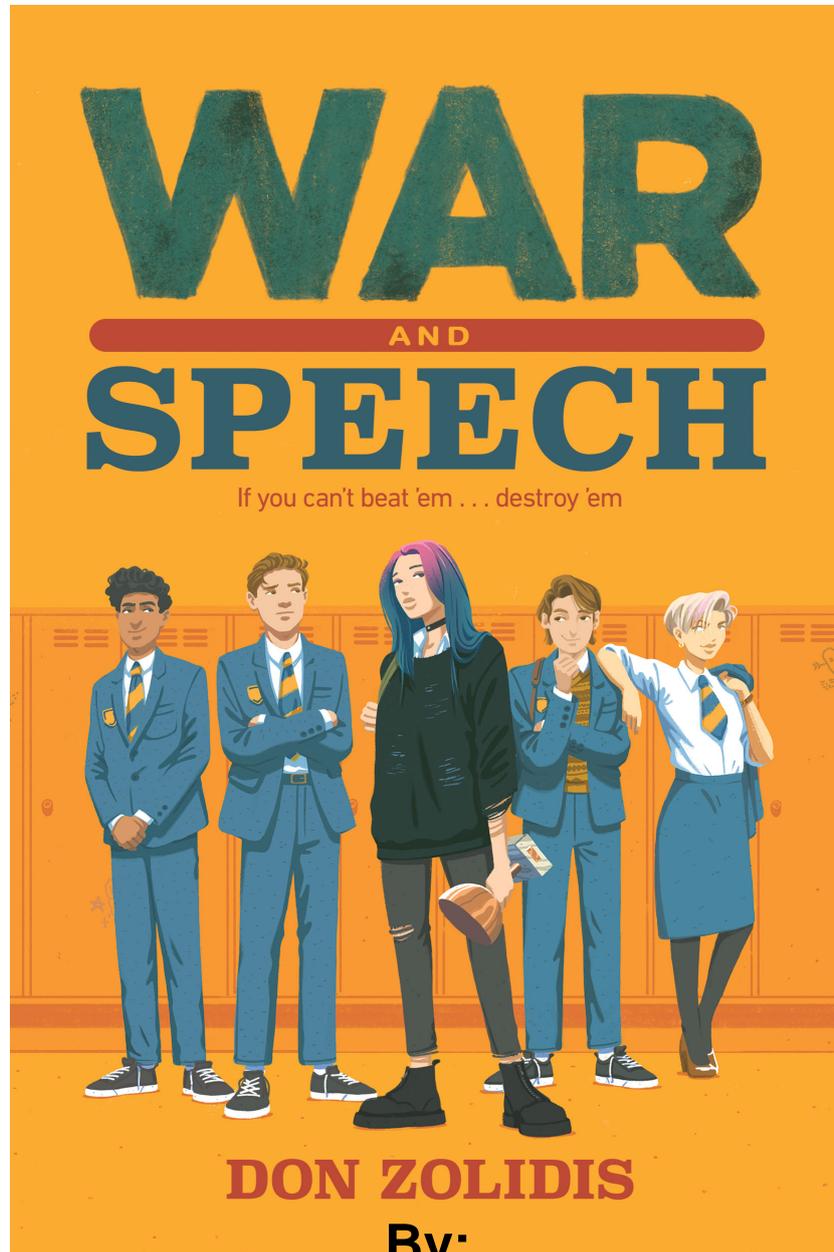

War and Speech Book PDF Download



By:
Don Zolidis

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What people Say:

Kelly

One of my favorite YAs in recent years is the wildly underrated *The Seven Torments of Amy and Craig*. It's funny, with spot-on teen dialog. This is Zolidis's follow up to that book and I'm thrilled it has equally enjoyable dialog and wit to it, while also offering some real depth. Zolidis is a playwright and that is especially evident in the dialog he writes.

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Sydney's father is in jail for a white collar crime, and she flunked out of her last high school. She's starting fresh at a performing arts school not because she's got the talent in her but because she resides within the school's residential boundaries and can. She and her mom are living together in a tiny apartment and money is supremely tight. The girl's got a mega chip on her shoulder going into school but it only grows bigger when she learns that her school is famous for its speech and debate team. The kids on the team are, in her perception, utter jerks and with her new-found friends, Syd devises a plan to take down the speech team and in particular, ensure the top stars of the team have their lights dimmed. Why do they get to be special? Reign supreme in school?

And when she shows up for her first practice, imagine her surprise when the teacher happens to be the man who ran informational programs about how to make money and scam people that got her father wrapped up in tax issues in the first place.

Sydney begins by doing a speech she finds online about becoming a heroin addict. She does really well, too -- winning her first competition and finding herself earning a surprise elite status in the eyes of her coach. She begins to better understand the team and the stars of it, almost seeing them as humans who don't deserve to be taken down!

Until she changes her speech, getting raw and honest about her father being incarcerated and how much that impacted her. Her mom has a new boyfriend and doesn't want to visit her father on Saturdays like she does, and she's alone to see her dad's humanity and the way the system convinced him that having all the best in life was the purpose of life all together. He broke the law and is serving time for it, but he was caught up in a system that rewards others for the very same thing. Like her speech coach, who believes her speech about her dad needs more depth, despite it being popular with audiences. "Just make up stuff," he encourages her. And it's

here -- this moment of realizing he, along with his elite speech team members, Sydney discovers what it is she's truly passionate about: speaking her truth and living fully into it, rather than believing she needs to be rich, polished, and a liar to get ahead.

This book is very funny, while also being a smart look at social class. Syd and her family experienced wealth for a while during the time her father was evading tax laws, but then she and her mother became very poor, very quickly. Her mom works at the Mall of America, and Sydney, who hates the new man in her mom's life, decides to get a part time job at the American Cookie shop at the mall too, thinking it might help them afford their apartment (spoiler -- it won't and doesn't, but some of the cookie store moments are among the best in the book, as she chooses to write super snarky messages on the cookies and they sell like mad).

At times, Sydney is downright mean, and some of the choices she makes to take down the fellow speech team members aren't especially kind or justified. BUT she recognizes that along the way, and she realizes who the real enemy is -- they're collateral damage along the way to making her point about inequality and unfair preferential treatment.

Smart dialog, which feels really teen and not adult-sounding-teen, with a teen who is sarcastic and snarky and also deeply hurting. She's not especially likeable but that's what makes her compelling: her rough edges don't get softened, but rather, readers better see why she's got those sharp parts.

Jypsy

I received a complimentary copy of this book courtesy of FFBC. I voluntarily reviewed this book. All opinions expressed are my own.

War and Speech

By: Don Zolidis

REVIEW ~*~*~*~*~*~*

War And Speech is a unique story about Sydney, daughter of a jailed white collar criminal, as she navigates a new kind of life. Because of her father's crimes, Sydney and her mom toppled from rich to very poor in an instant. Sydney has only known her former lifestyle, so this change is a dramatic traumatizing experience. Now

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REVIEW

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PinkAmy loves books, cats and naps

1.5 STARS

I don't like the trope MC is in pain/traumatized so she acts like a mean jerk until people break through her shell. Sydney is pretty darn awful. Her darts are thrown in the form of sarcasm and what she considers to be humor. I give Don Zolidis credit for writing a few funny lines, but over all found Sydney to be obnoxious and unlike any real teenager.

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The premise of WAR AND SPEECH is a group of misfits, led by new student Sydney, set to take down the entitled debate team, because as national champions they rule the school the way athletes do in other high schools. The debate coach is a man from Sydney's past who she blames as responsible for her father's imprisonment for a Ponzi scheme.

Revenge of the Nerds, this is not. The diverse group decides to turn team members against each other. Sydney starts by telling a student of color his white debate partner said racist comments, which was untrue. I couldn't believe the audacity of a Caucasian writer to use fake racism as a plot point. Racism isn't just a bad thing, it's painful centuries of hurt, lives lost and being treated as less than. It's black men who fear they'll be shot down while jogging or shot by police for looking suspicious in their own back yard. Zolodis to using this for such a petty plot point felt the same as writers who use rape to give characters an interesting back story then never mention it again. Stay in your lane if you aren't going to give sensitive topics the respect they deserve. If you're in the majority, vet your brilliant idea with people in the minority. The fake racist allegation soured me to the story, though I did finish reading. I doubt I'll read Zolodis again. Some of the writing was snappy and witty and Sydney did experience some growth, but not enough to bump to 2 stars.

Samantha (WLABB)

Rating: 4.5 stars

When Sydney's dad was sent to prison, she became someone everyone avoided. After relocating from their McMansion to a less than desirable apartment, she found herself with the possibility of escaping her past failures, and perhaps, finally being a winner at something.

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I know many people were interested in this book, because it held the promise of featuring speech and debate, but I honestly wanted to read it, because Zolidis wrote it. Last year, I read his YA debut, *The Seven Torments of Amy and Craig*, and it was hilarious. I was hoping for more of that, and I definitely did get that, as the book often had me releasing peals of laughter.

One of the main reasons I enjoyed this book so much was Sydney. She was snarky and sarcastic, and I just loved her sense of humor. From her observations of the world around her to her irreverent cookie cake messages, the girl kept me in stitches. She also managed to find a quirky bunch of friends, who were perfect foils for her. All of them brought their A-game when bantering, and there were times I thought I could listen to them volley all day.

One of the big plots of the book was the conspiracy to take down the all powerful Speech and Debate team. That's right. Sydney transferred to a school, where the BMOCs were orators and debaters. That whole idea made me love the school, until I met the people on the debate team. It was quite a toxic environment. The shocking part was how much Syd grew to enjoy S&D. The bad part was her inner battle to stick with the plan or fully adopt the team and its culture. Regardless, it was amazing to see that spark lit in her, see her believe in herself, and watch her confidence grow.

Sydney was also struggling with her anger towards her parents for all the fallout due to her father's crimes, but at the same time, still loving them. She felt betrayed by her parents. Her father lied, her mother was moving on, and Sydney was still trying to work her way through all these changes. Regardless, they were her parents, and she created so many beautiful memories with them, which could not be erased.

This book was just a treat to read. I laughed and laughed, while also enjoying the way Zolidis explored many different themes. It was packed with fully fleshed out characters, who were complex and interesting, and I found myself completely carried away in all the drama Eaganville.

Fazila

Check out the full review on my website.

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REVIEW :

DISCLAIMER : Thank you, Netgalley, Disney-Hyperion, and FFBC tours for providing me with an ARC of this book. I am leaving this review voluntarily.

War and Speech is a fantastic read and I enjoyed every second of it. I found the concept to be new and fresh. I loved the set up for the story and how the speech and debate program was used in delivering relevant messages as well. I loved how the whole plot hin

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REVIEW :