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Mitchell Wells may not survive eleventh grade. He really only has one friend, his best friend, David. His normally decent grade point average is in limbo due to a slightly violent, somewhat inappropriate claymation film. And girls . . . well, does hanging out with his sister count?

When David tells Mitchell he's gay, Mitchell's okay with it—but it still seems to change things. Since David's not out to anyone else, the guys agree to be set up with prom dates. *Then*, one of the most popular girls in school decides she *must* date Mitchell, and he's gone from zero to two girlfriends in sixty seconds.

From his pending English grade, to his floundering friendship, to his love life—the one thing that's taken a bizarre turn for the better—Mitchell is so confused, he'll be lucky if he lasts another week in high school! And then there's the prom . . .

With a wickedly funny voice and a colorful cast of characters, Steven Goldman has written a novel for every reader—even those who *like* high school!

Two Parties, One Tux, and a Very Short Film about The Grapes of Wrath Details

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From Reader Review Two Parties, One Tux, and a Very Short Film about The Grapes of Wrath for online ebook

Aaron says

Mitchell Wells is sort of an everyman sort of character. He does well in his classes and enjoys hanging out with his best friend David. At the same time, they fall somewhere in the middle to the social ladder at school so while not being part of the "in crowd," they are also not picked on by most people.

Mitchell is entering a school year that is going to be filled with ups and downs. It all starts when his best friend David comes out to him one day at lunch. He actually is not bothered by the fact, but he is also not sure if things are supposed to change in their relationship ... if at all.

Then, he and David get an opportunity in film class to make a really fun claymation video. It works out so nicely, that Mitchell decides to turn it in as a substitute for the short paper he was supposed to write on The Grapes of Wrath. The topic is actually the Biblical themes in the book. On the bright side, it seems to be universally enjoyed, but trouble pops up when the parents of one student complain that the film is offensive to their religion.

The prom is also weighing down on Mitchell. His younger sister and her friends have come up with an interesting plan to use David and Mitchell to take them to the prom so they can go. This plan gets a little bit more challenging when David starts to date the popular girl that he had a crush on for ages.

The book is an hysterical read. Mostly this is due to Goldman doing a great job of capturing what it is like to be an average teen boy. There is no shortage of social stumbling as David is torn between doing what he wants, not necessarily being able to speak his mind because he doesn't want to hurt any feelings, and navigating the challenges of school, which take on both the academic and social forms.

While the book does not focus on a single major issue that is faced by the narrator, it does a great job of just allowing the characters to live through the troublesome times of junior year in high school for boys. It reminded me a lot of a male version of the Georgia Nicolson series or The Princess Diaries, except that it is told from a guy's perspective.

Even though the book touches on romance and David's coming out, I can really see a lot of guys picking this one up. It really captures the way so many average guys think.

Lainie says

Have you ever had a friend tell you a secret that you didn't know how to deal with? Mitch is a good, if quiet, high school student who enjoys making random claymation films. His best friend, David, is a baseball player who drags Mitch to parties because it's good for him. When David reveals to Mitch that he is gay, Mitch doesn't quite know what to do. No one else knows David's secret. Should he act like nothing has changed? Has anything changed? If they go to the movies, and David pays, is it a date? On top of all this, Mitch is getting into trouble for one of his claymation films (he re-interprets The Grapes of Wrath with nude clay

actors), the hottest girl in school is suddenly interested in making out with him, and his sister's best friend is wondering why David, her prom date, doesn't seem that interested in her. Mitch sure has a lot to figure out!

Emily says

Most this is a book about nothing too different or strange from any other book about kids struggling to navigate through high school.

Michell is an average teenager who does his homework, worries about girls and has a best friend David. And then David tells Michell he's gay and though Michell's cool about it, he's not exactly sure if that changes anything or not.

Michell doesn't spurn his friendship with David nor is he totally comfortable. I appreciated his struggle and found it to be the most interesting thing about the book. I also loved how Michell and David go about resolving this newest development in their friendship just like all their issues (class projects, dates for prom, dealing with their annoying friend Louis, etc.) in their own awkward way.

My favorite character was David--deadpan characters usually are. But since the book is in first person from Michell's perspective and most the time Michell doesn't really know what's going on, it was hard for me to understand how David was feeling because he was so deadpan.

I also liked the Grapes of Wrath bashing--I could not get through that book either in high school.

A do have a complaint about the author starting every new section in a chapter with a title. I found it distracting and disrupted my reading groove (...if that makes any sense.)

A says

I struggled through this one :(

Aramis says

A thoroughly mediocre read that was plodding and a little ham handed about the way it handled some things. If you're looking for a *safe* book with GLBT themes I guess this one might do.

Jerrika says

Can't say I really enjoyed this. Was able to finish this in one day, but it was very slow moving. It felt like the characters were coming to terms with so many things, but in a way that I felt was inaccessible to me as a reader. Some of the characters were likeable enough, although I felt some of the female characters were

necessarily grating (which is an issue I feel like I'm starting to notice a lot in YA literature). Also, for the story hinging on David's revelation to Mitchell, it sort of felt that David's character wasn't all that important. I feel like he could have been removed from the book and the story was the same. In the end, I felt like the characters showed growth, but I didn't really feel like I was a part of that.

Steven says

[In my opinion the explanation of why Mr. Curtis left the classroom in the middle of a lecture was a little weak. I think I would have had written it so that Mr. Curtis had left because of how little interest his

Alina says

This was one of those books where it was really fun, but looking back, you're not sure why. The main character was a pushover who was unsure about everything. The best character was the dry best friend. The book would have been much more fun if Mitchell had a backbone.

I think the most interesting and realistic part of the book was where David told Mitchell he was gay and Mitchell wasn't totally ok with it. He told David he was ok, but then went home and questioned his own sexuality and if he really was ok with David being gay.

I really liked the female cast of characters and Carrie and M.C. were fabulous. They really rounded out the non-verbal communication between Mitchell and David.

Overall, a pretty good, pretty funny read that left me wanting to jump into the book to give Mitchell some backbone.

Soby says

This was a thoroughly enjoyable book! (I had lowered expectations because both the title and cover make it look very middle-grade/younger YA, which really isn't my cup of tea, but I'd enjoyed the middle-grade *The Swap* earlier this week, so I gave this a go as well.)

The story follows seventeen-year-old Mitchell Wells in his junior year of high school. After years of unpopularity, a ho-hum existence, and zero attention from the ladies, he's prepared for more of the same but there are a few big changes coming his way: first, his friend David comes out to him, then Mitchell makes a silly little movie that gets him into an inordinate amount of trouble in school, and he somehow has more than one girl expressing interest in going to prom with him. If all this sounds like pretty typical material for a YA coming-of-age novel, that's because it is. The area where this book - and *Goldman* - really shine is the writing and Mitchell's voice. I thought this book was hilarious: witty dialogue, humorous observations, and outrageous but-so-believable-they-could-happen-to-you (in your nightmares) situations.

Oh, and my favorite aspect of the book was definitely how true this was to the way I remember high school; people and situations are awkward, rumors abound, and there's tons and tons of homework. (Srsly, so tired of YA where all everyone does is worry about the boy/girl of their dreams - Mitchell spends a lot of time

worrying about schoolwork - and Goldman even makes *that* interesting!) In most reviews, I usually have a little list of things that bugged me in the book (even in ones I enjoyed), but I can't think of a single thing for this book. Really good.

Emily says

It is hard to be a school librarian. Teens want books that are real, but parents tend to freak out about things that are too real. I have never been challenged about a book on the library shelves, and I don't want to be. Sooner or later, it will happen, though. If it does, I hope it isn't about this book which is an okay book, but far from phenomenal. It isn't a book that deserves to be read, but it is somewhat funny. So the problem is that I have it on the shelf, waiting for some kid to read it, discover the chapter called "The Masturbation Chapter," freak out, show it to all his friends, take it home, leave it laying around and let a parent - who is loving and maybe too protective - find it. And then the crap hits the fan and I am being questioned about a book that just isn't that great to begin with! I paid 16.99 for the dang book and my library budget is not that great. So what do I do? It isn't easy to be a school librarian. There are lots of things to consider. I didn't even mention the homosexuality in the book, either...

Cornmaven says

I LOVED this book! Not only was the writing just exquisite, but the story line was wonderful. Goldman got a lot right with his character of a 17 year old boy trying to make sense of his world. His sort of calm, detached observation of his life I think was spot on. Every character was complex. The image he has of his parents was dead on; the sibling relationship was dead on.

My favorite quotes: "Mom lives for these moments when she gets to hear about our lives." Any mother with a high schooler is nodding her head right about now. Those moments are few and far between, and you treasure them when they reveal themselves.

"I have a sudden awful vision of the world as just a much bigger version of high school, where adults have to worry about being popular and whether someone in charge has it in for them." Is this not often true in life? I think so.

I especially liked the friendship between David and Mitchell, how it ebbed and flowed, how it changed dramatically when David came out to Mitchell. The wise-cracking jerk-like Louis actually has a strong streak of compassion in him. And the prom, well, how it ends up being not such a magical night for a lot of people - how true, how true.

Just a fabulous book. I look forward to more from Goldman.

Arminzerella says

Mitchell Wells is a pretty typical teenage guy with pretty typical teenage guy problems - he's average-looking, girls don't really notice him, and he can't make himself write his English paper. It's supposed to be on *The Grapes of Wrath*, but Mitchell hasn't finished the book, so he decides to turn in the Claymation film

he created for another class (which, his best friend David informs him *could* be spun off as an interpretation of the religious themes in Steinbeck's work). This lands him in a whole heap of trouble with the school administration, which receives a complaint from some parents. Meanwhile, David has come out to him, his sister is trying to set him up with some girl he barely knows (to take to the prom), and Danielle (the girl he's been pining for these many years) just broke up with her boyfriend. Does Mitchell have an in?

Although this takes a little while to build, the hilarity quotient rises as Mitchell's life spins out of control. He's basically flying by the seat of his pants until the very end where he finally figures out what it is that he wants and how to get it. I am so glad I was never a teenage boy, if Mitchell's experiences are anything to go by – the humiliation, embarrassment, and awkwardness are enough to do anyone in.

Tara says

This is the second book I've picked up from an impressive list of the best YA books of 2008 put together by an awesome librarian.

This was definitely a "fluffy" read; not a lot of intellectual content, but a great choice for anyone looking for a light, hilarious book.

The book timidly deals with a gay teenager coming out in high school. The author only goes so far as to have him come out to his best friend, (it happens in the first couple chapters of the book, so not much of a spoiler). The gay teen happens to be on the varsity baseball team and perhaps his team realizing that he was gay would have been a more provocative storyline, but that wasn't really the focus of the book.

Some of the teenage jargon is "adult" grade, (I now know what a "bearded clam" is), but laugh-out-loud funny, nonetheless. It's really a coming of age story of the narrator, dealing with some of his relationships with his friends and some trouble he gets in at school, but nothing that really leaves your mind blown.

I would like to have this on my classroom shelf as a solid recommendation for any male reader, although it might be a tough sell for reluctant readers, as it is just over 300 pages long.

Jennifer says

Hilarious and poignant, this book provides a humorous look at high school adolescence. When Mitchell's best friend, David, reveals himself to be gay during lunch period, Mitchell begins questioning his own sexuality through side-splitting tests. He also creates a disastrous claymation film about "The Grapes of Wrath" to get out of writing an English paper and somehow winds up taking the most popular girl to the prom.

Goldman understands the psyche of a male high school student very well. At times emotionally mature but also obsessed with the little things that make you feel high school is the most important thing in the world, Mitchell's take on the world is hilarious and truthful. I found myself cackling throughout the prom scene and believing the craziness every step of the way.

On a more serious note, Mitchell's changing relationship with David is handled beautifully and realistically.

A great book to give to any teenager!

Additeenlibrarian says

Mitchell is your average high school geek. He's a pretty decent guy, not too popular, but not a social outcast. He has one friend: David. Then David tells him that he is gay. And Mitchell doesn't really care, except it does make things seem different. Not a lot different, just awkward and a little weird. Meanwhile, Mitchell doesn't want to read *The Grapes of Wrath*. So, instead, he makes a little claymation film that almost has something to do with the book. Which causes a controversy with some of the more religious parents and leads to Mitchell having several run-ins with the rotten assistant principal. And a sudden, mysterious relationship with one of the hottest girls in school. The night of the prom, everything comes undone...for everyone.
