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The year is 1971 and the place is Laurel Canyon, California. Quinn, a fourteen-year-old music "encyclopedia," writes a music column—called "For What It's Worth"—for his school paper. But Quinn's world is about to change when he is faced with helping a war dodger and must make some tough decisions. When he starts receiving cryptic Ouija board messages from Jim Morrison, Janis Joplin, and Jimi Hendrix (all members of the 27 Club), he knows he is in over his head. Fortunately for Quinn, his new girlfriend Caroline helps him get a grip and channel his inner self.

For What It's Worth Details

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From Reader Review For What It's Worth for online ebook

Nic Leach says

Personal Response:

I thought that this book was a very well written coming of age story. The author did a really good job of making the characters relatable while staying true to the timeframe. Some problems I had with this novel were: the lack of character development and the poor pacing. Everything just seemed kind of rushed together. My favorite parts were definitely the music facts and the pop culture references.

Plot:

Quinn is a 14 year old music addict growing up in Los Angeles during the 1970's. At the start of the school year, all he focuses on is music and trying to get a girlfriend. He then meets Caroline, the new girl at school. Quinn falls for her almost instantly and makes an immediate effort to spend time with her. As soon as they start hanging out with each other, they realize they like each other and start dating. Quinn then meets a draft dodger who is friends with his sister and is homeless living in the woods. Quinn helps out the draft dodger by giving him change and leftover food. He then gets in trouble with the law prompting the draft dodger to run away. Before the draft dodger leaves Quinn sells all of his to raise money for the draft dodger. The story ends with Frank Zappa, who Quinn works for, giving Quinn a bunch of his records.

Characterization:

Quinn didn't really change that much. From the start, his main passion was music. Even when he started dating Caroline, it seemed like he cared more about music than her. The only change he experienced was knowing more about the Vietnam War and choosing to go against it. His personality totally stayed the same though. The antagonist in the story wasn't a person, instead it was the Vietnam War itself. All of the problems were a product of the stress caused by the war.

Setting:

The setting had a huge impact on Quinn. The 1970's music scene started out in Los Angeles and surrounds Quinn everywhere he goes and influences almost everything he does. If it was in a different time frame, the war would not be a factor and the music wouldn't have as big of a role to Quinn.

Recommendation:

I recommend this book for any fan of music in the 1970's over the age of 12, because the source material might be boring for people who don't care about that timeframe.

Marianne Robin-Tani says

This sweet book takes place when and where I grew up, so reading it brought back a lot of memories about the fantastic music and concerts during the 1970's. I liked the articles that Quinn wrote for his school paper featuring interesting factoids about music and musicians. An idillic book about one of the best summers ever.

Kellee says

Reviewed at: <http://www.teachmentortexts.com/2012/...>

I loved the mood of this book. It made you feel as if you are in high school with Quinn in the 70s. Quinn is such a music fanatic and I really enjoyed how Tashjian weaved his love for music in with the historical part of the book.

For What It's Worth is a wonderful introduction to the 70s especially because with the help of Quinn's articles scattered throughout the book. I felt was quite important because it gives the readers some great background information but does so without seeming like a lecture. Unfortunately, many middle and teen readers are not aware of the Vietnam War, the protests that went along with it or the 70s culture, so Quinn's articles definitely add that element that students would need to help them understand what is going on. The only thing that would have made the book better would have been a soundtrack that you could have listened to while reading. And Tashjian not only gave lots of love to the music of the 70s, but also discussed photography and the impact that a spectacular captured moment can have on the viewer.

On top of my love of the historical fiction and art/music aspect, I really liked the characters in this book. Quinn's story of his first love makes me reminisce about my middle school boyfriend because that crazy joy you feel for that first love is hard to duplicate and yet Tashjian captures it perfectly in this book. It is actually the realistic emotions throughout that drive the book- love, paranoia, fascination, sadness, anger, fear.

Ms. Yingling says

It's 1971, and Quinn, who is living in Southern California, is hugely enamored of the music scene there. His mother is friends with Cass Elliott, Frank Zappa hires him to do musical transcription, and he and his friends are working on getting a band of their own together. But things are complicated. A girl from the East Coast, Caroline, moves to town, and even though she's a little weird with his pleated skirts and blouses, Quinn likes her. Are they or aren't they boyfriend/girlfriend? His sister Soosie goes off to college, but sends a draft dodging friend to get Quinn's help. What's going on with his parents? Whatever is going on in his life, music is a constant companion, the backdrop to his days, and the obsession that takes all of his money. But is music really the most important thing? When Quinn realizes how horrible the war in Vietnam is becoming, he must decide which is more important-- his music, or helping someone avoid the draft.

Strengths: The research involved in the music portion of this book must have been intense. Even though Tashjian would have been a contemporary of Quinn, there is so much detail about the interworkings of musicians and bands that some serious research was done. The story with Quinn and Caroline was my favorite part, and the historical setting added another level of interest. I have a student who read all three The Gospel According to Larry books in a week who will like this, although I don't know if Larry and Quinn would have been friends.

Weaknesses: The book really needed a CD with it. I could easily have spent hours looking up the obscure bands mentioned, but I restrained myself. The wealth of detail might be too much for the casual reader who is not interested in "old" music.

Nostalgia says

The only reason why I'm giving this book four stars is because the story didn't feel like something new to me,

even tho I enjoyed it.

Overall I adore this book, and I definitely don't regret getting it

If you're a true Rock N' Roll fan then this book will feel like heaven to you.

ZebraPrintRocks says

Wow, I had not been pulled into a time period so quickly while reading a book for a while. I enjoyed how many facts there were in this book too. Not just music facts - but history, as well. I enjoyed Quinn's music lists and paused a couple times to pull up some music videos during the book to tunes that I couldn't quite remember all the lyrics to. The illustrations were perfect too. All in all - if you like music/rock & roll/or the 70's - you'd probably enjoy this book.

I'm not going to kid, what initially drew me in was the front cover. It's not all fun/games/and music though. There was a war raging during the time, and these characters put you right in the middle of the draft, as well. Very good read for coming-of-age young adults interested in history and music. Family dynamics, love, peer pressure, and more --- it's all here.

Mark says

"In homage to Duane Allman who just died - motorcycle accident, not drugs; age twenty-four, not twenty-seven - I grab my guitar and launch into an amateur version of 'Midnight Rider.' When I finish, I give poor Duane an informal eulogy and am shocked at Caroline's lack of knowledge of one of rock's great guitarists.

'You didn't know he was one of the dueling guitars on Layla?' I ask incredulously.

'I thought it was just Eric Clapton.'

'Clapton was the FENDER; Allman was the GIBSON.' Sheesh. I thought Caroline could maybe become my first girlfriend, but her ignorance of the important things in life might be too big an obstacle to overcome."

It's 1971, and fourteen year-old Quinn lives in Laurel Canyon, CA, an artistic hotbed and home to many of the rock industry's biggest and most influential stars. Quinn lives for music – he maintains a huge collection of rock LPs, writes a music column for his school newspaper, and possesses an encyclopedic knowledge of contemporary rock 'n' roll. When he meets Caroline, a new girl at school, whose musical IQ is lacking, Quinn realizes there may be more to his life than just a great guitar riff and a heavy backbeat. Then the real world, beyond the idyllic image of Laurel Canyon, begins to make its way into Quinn's life: Caroline's brother has been drafted into service in Vietnam, Quinn aids a draft dodger who knows his sister, and Quinn's parents teeter on the edge of divorce. Quinn must make some difficult choices on his own, without relying on the spiritual guidance of rock's most famous recently deceased (the "Club 27" of Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, and Jim Morrison, who Quinn believes he can communicate with through his old Ouija board).

Tashjian presents Quinn's voice in an engaging, honest first person narration, and paints a vivid scene of early '70s California lifestyles. Quinn's struggles with relationships, learning more about the socio-political realities around him, and understanding the consequences of his actions will resonate with young readers. Above all, be sure to turn your stereo up as you read this one, especially if you still listen to vinyl.

Suzanne says

I loved *The Gospel According to Larry*, so I grabbed this book out of the box and placed it in the on-deck nightstand stack right away. I was disappointed to find that it is set in an era in which I have found it tough to interest the majority of students—the early 1970s. Then to make the sell even more challenging, the topic is super specific and fairly rare among my teen readers: music of that time period. So if you find readers keenly interested in American (and British) music of the 1962-1971 time period or those fascinated in the Viet Nam War protests and draft, this is a great find.

There are so many lists of artists and fun facts about Club 27 (died at 27--Morrison, Hendrix, and Joplin) and similar artists, that readers not obsessed with the time and the tunes will not stay on board for the family drama, romance, and friendship that follow Quinn through his Laurel Canyon LA quest for music and more after his sister leaves home for college, his parents may be on the skid, he wants to start a band and add to his legendary record collection, and his Ouija board seems to be a direct line to the wisdom of Club 27. If you liked *Tales from the Madman Underground*, you might be ready to put this one on the turn-table, but I don't see it flying off the shelves

Patricia Bandre says

I had been putting off reading this book, but once I got started, I found that I really enjoyed it. Quinn, the protagonist, is "all knowing" when it comes to the music of the time - early 1970s. In fact, his mom is friends with Cass Elliot of the Mamas and Papas. With the Vietnam War raging and the enactment of the draft, Quinn is presented with a lot more to think about than music, especially when a friend of his college age sister runs away from the east coast to escape the draft and winds up needing help from Quinn.

Many "typical" growing up challenges appear in this book - making friends, having a girlfriend, knowing who you are, and understanding where you stand on societal issues. All of the musical references provide a fun twist and getting to read Quinn's column for the school newspaper is an added bonus.

Mary (BookHounds) says

MY THOUGHTS
ABSOLUTELY LOVED IT

The story centers around Quinn who is pretty nerdy and a musician, although at this time in his life, he is nowhere near a cool kid. He writes a column for the high school paper that gives some purpose to his life. His parents are pseudo hippies with his mother running a cool clothing store in Hollywood that caters to musicians and his blue collar father inspires his love of music. It also doesn't hurt that he grows up in the heart of Laurel Canyon amidst the musical legends of the early 1970's. Quinn thinks he is destined to never have a girlfriend until a transfer student shows up on the first day of school. Caroline, a Connecticut transplant, is a photographer and the two connect when she joins the school newspaper as collaborators.

Caroline has her own issues adjusting to life in California. She dresses super preppy and is very politically

aware which takes Quinn off guard. He learns a lot about the world from her, while Caroline takes on new musical knowledge from him. When the pair discover that they can converse with the dead "J"'s - Jimi, Janice and Jim through it, a whole new way of life opens up to them. They of course ask the three questions and then start charging money to let others talk to them. With the Vietnam war always in the background of this story, there are a lot of interesting connections.

This story has to be one of my favorites this year. I am always on the look out for anything with a music angle and this one even includes a bit of a paranormal angle. There are a lot of mentions of the musical genius that lived in Laurel Canyon during this time period and you can only image what really went on during this time period. I also adored the running sound track that followed the characters and matched the moods. This is just an exceptional story of young romance with a lot of political awareness.

Megan Mann says

Quinn is living the life. It's 1971 and he lives in Laurel Canyon; the exact place anyone in rock n' roll lives or hangs out. This helps Quinn out as he fancies himself a music encyclopedia. He writes a music column for the school newspaper called "For What It's Worth", constantly makes lists such as "Songs to Sing at the Top of Your Lungs When You're Grounded" and "Break-Up Songs I Hope I Don't Have to Listen to" and all of his money goes to buying new records.

When his sister moves away to college on the East coast, things start to change for Quinn. His parents barely spend time together under one roof, he gets his first girlfriend and the war in Vietnam is starting to creep into his life in ways he didn't expect. Oh, and his Ouija board is letting him get advice from the 27 Club; Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin and Jim Morrison.

Until now, his life had been wonderful, but now that he's faced with the reality of how things have changed, it's up to Quinn to know when to do the right thing.

I absolutely **loved** this book. I was so sad to see it end. It read really quickly and it was just so entertaining that you didn't want to put it down. This book is full of amazing facts about the huge music scene at the time and absolutely makes you want to go put these records on. It also reminded me of *I'm With the Band* by Pamela des Barres, but obviously much less scandalous and much more focused on the power of music. I kept singing songs mentioned on the page in my head while I was reading and actually came away from this learning some facts I hadn't known before. To me, that makes a really great book. I absolutely want everyone I know to read this.

This is easily one of the best coming of age books I've read in awhile.

angie says

Maybe I'm especially fond of this because I love the period of music For What It's Worth centers around. I don't think that you have to love the 70s and the music of its time to pick up Janet Tashjian's very engaging read, though.

There's a vibe here that is just lovely and great writing, too. One of my favorite sentences is: "I know it doesn't make any sense, but there's something cool about Caroline being so uncool."

The author clearly understands how deeply music touches our souls and the neat facts and playlists Quinn, a fourteen-year-old walking "encyclopedia" of music, shares are fascinating.

His zeal for buying albums is wonderful nostalgia for those of us who loved record stores as a teenager. This will go on my to-be-read-again list and is definitely "feel good."

Kay McGriff says

Do you love the music scene from 1971?

Can you recite lyrics and picture album covers from groups such as the Beach Boys, the Rolling Stones, the Doors, the Jefferson Airplane, the Monkees, Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin, and many more?

Do you know--or want to know--endlessly fascinating trivia from any and all things rock and roll back in the good old days?

Do you ever wonder what messages Club 27 (Jim Morrison, Janis Joplin, and Jimi Hendrix) might have for a fourteen-year-old boy who has his very first girlfriend, is trying to start his own band, and must decide whether or not to help a draft dodger who shows up?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, you will want to read Janet Tashjian's *For What It's Worth* (Henry Holt and Company 20120). Quinn, self-proclaimed music fanatic, lives in the heart of the music scene in Laurel Canyon in Los Angeles, California. Quinn's distinctive voice--complete with journal entries, music columns, and lists of all things musical brings 1971 to life. The only thing that would make this book better would be a soundtrack of all the songs mentioned.

First published on my blog at Permalink: <http://kaymcgriff.edublogs.org/2013/0...> ?Edit Get Shortlink

Barbara says

The life of fourteen-year-old Quinn revolves around music--discovering, collecting, playing, and writing about great rock and roll. Since the story is set in 1971 and 1972 in Los Angeles's Laurel Canyon, where many musicians hung out or lived, Quinn has grown up knowing or seeing many of them. For instance, his mother is still friends with Cass Elliot of the Mamas and Papas since they grew up together in Baltimore. Quinn finds a first girlfriend in Caroline, a new girl at his high school, despite how little she knows about the music he loves. As they grow closer and he shares his musical knowledge, he becomes plagued by doubts about her faithfulness, in part because of messages he receives from his Ouiji board. Against his will, he is drawn into political activism because of his older sister's friendship with a draft resister trying to make his way to Canada rather than serve in the Vietnam War. Mr. Woodrow, his substitute teacher, also helps raise his awareness through intense discussions of current events, including provocative pictures. Meanwhile, at home, there seems to be increased tension between his parents, and Quinn isn't sure what's going on.

Interspersed with Quinn's story are his wonderful columns about music. Entitled "For What It's Worth" and containing sketches of the musicians of the time--Jim Morrison, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, Pete Townshend, Frank Zappa and more--these columns contain fascinating trivia about the men and women behind the music Quinn loves. As she always does in her books, this author creates believable characters in Quinn and his

friends, describing the wonders and fears of first love while folding the storyline in authentic details about that particular period of time. She nails the paranoia that filled the nation after the violent acts laid at the feet of the "Family" of Charles Manson a few months earlier as well as the emerging news stories about the Watergate break-ins near the story's end. What's more she provides the perfect musical soundtrack--er, playlist! I fear I'm dating myself here--to crank up while reading the book. Or if you like your books read in solitude, play the songs or albums/CDs that Quinn loves so much afterward and think about the book's message and Quinn's unexpected heroism. The power of music and the power of art--of a photograph--permeate the pages of this wonderful title. And yeah, I think she got it right. I was in high school during this time, and I remember hearing this music for the first time and being blown away by Todd Rundgren and my beloved Eagles. I wore those records out! (This, of course, was when we listened to music on black vinyl records and marveled at the artistry of record album covers.) You won't be sorry that you read this book since it will continue to haunt you or tickle at your conscience long after it's back on the shelf.

Liralen says

The music scene in California in the early 70s. Sightings of Cass Elliot and Frank Zappa. A Ouija board transmitting advice from Janis Joplin, Jim Morrison, and Jimi Hendrix. A fourteen-year-old narrator who is obsessed with music trivia, becoming a musician himself, and having his first relationship (more or less in that order).

It's light and fun and absolutely packed with 60s/70s music references and other cultural references—Quinn's anti-war T-shirt with a flower on it; extended mention of the Kent State shooting and the photograph of Mary Ann Vecchio; draft dodging; patched jeans and pantsuits; vinyl record after vinyl record.

Quinn writes a column for his school newspaper, and those entries are included as part of the book, which spans a school year. I learned a ton from it (Janis Joplin's car!), although I think I will have to check the book back out from the library at a later date to compile a proper playlist from the songs and artists it mentions (too many to count). I didn't always love Quinn, but I appreciated the way his character was put together; he has all the insecurities of a fourteen-year-old but is also pretty happy with his life. The bit with Zappa—which in another book might have bugged me to no end—made me irrationally gleeful.

Still not the hippie-dippy-psychadelic-bell-bottomed 60s/70s YA historical fiction I'm looking for, but possibly the closest I've found yet.
