



Confessions of a Prep School Mommy Handler

Wade Rouse

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When Wade Rouse—a rural, public school graduate who grew up more Hee Haw than Dynasty—was hired as the director of publicity at the prestigious Tate Academy, he quickly discovered his real job was to make a few of the very pretty, very rich, very mean mommies of the elite students happy.

Enter former Tate beauty queen and sports star Katherine Isabelle Ludington—Kitsy to her friends—who went to an Ivy, married an Ivy, and made a lot of money. Now, she is Wade’s VIP volunteer and a perfectly coiffed nightmare.

In between designing Louis Vuitton–inspired reunion invitations, dressing as Ronald Reagan for Halloween, and surviving surprise Botox parties, Wade tries to tame Kitsy and her pink Lilly Pulitzer–clad posse while reclaiming his self-esteem.

Following a year in the life of the super rich and super spoiled, *Confessions of a Prep School Mommy Handler* is hilarious, heartbreakingly, and deliciously catty.

From the Hardcover edition.

Confessions of a Prep School Mommy Handler Details

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From Reader Review Confessions of a Prep School Mommy Handler for online ebook

Laura says

I found the author's descriptions of the mommies only as pathetic and infuriating as his own descriptions of himself. What a coward he was! I don't know how he lived with himself, never standing up even slightly for what was right. While I may have hard days at work (and mean mommies of a different sort with which I deal), I at least am always true to myself. Sure this may get me in trouble sometimes and make my days harder than if I kept quiet, but I can always look myself in the mirror. I wouldn't trade that for anything.

Cristina Herron says

Even when I wanted to cry, I was laughing too.

Kristin says

4.25 stars.

I've said it before about Rouse's books and I'll say it again. I should not read them in public. I laughed so hard, okay, snorted, in one sitting at lunch that I'm surprised my uvula is still attached.

In *Confessions of a Prep School Mommy Handler*, Rouse recounts his time as Director of Public Relations in, as he put it, independent education, though names are changed, people are combined and time and scenes are compressed. I kind of hate this aspect of memoirs. If these people are so awful, screw them, they deserve to be publicly outed as the racist assholes they are. I just wish I knew how much of this is exactly as it happened and how much has been changed. While part of me wants to feel tricked or like this is more akin to fiction since it's not a 100% accurate retelling, the rest of me, the larger part, doesn't give a crap because I'm so amused by everything that is happening to Rouse.

Despite his title, prep school mommy-handler is definitely a more appropriate one. Rouse describes in detail the things he must do at his job that have him desperately performing yoga breathing exercises. These include handling the carpool lane, being a personal gofer for one of the meanest mommies, Kitsy, and, worst of all, hiding the fact that he is gay. While there are some heartbreakingly sad moments in the book, there are maaaaannny laugh-out-loud ones as well, with one of the funniest stories, chapter titled The Fall Guy, involving an elderly alum at Reunion week. Even compressed I find it hard to believe that some of this stuff actually happened to him. Not that I think he's lying, I'm just shocked at the nutbags and crap he has to deal with on a daily basis.

And while everything shallow about Rouse adds up to a great read, I just don't understand how anyone can care so much about fashion and what people think of them, particularly when the people in question are elitist bitches. I was also quite surprised by not only how much garbage Rouse put up with, but that he let these women get away with so many horrible things without saying a word. He could've at least done what they did to complain about people they deemed undesirable, send an anonymous e-mail! Yet I think that the

few interactions he describes with the children who go to the school show more of who he really is than those with the adults. Unfortunately, because of the culture they're being raised in, it seems the kids can only be who they really are with him as well.

I'm reading Rouse's books in reverse order, though it seems I'll never be able to read *America's Boy* because I can't find the damn thing anywhere, but I would recommend reading them in order. Finally, after reading about Gary for two books, I'm sort of wishing he'd write a companion book to go along with Rouse's because I'd love to read about all of the events Rouse writes about from his point of view!

John says

Wade Rouse is a wonderful story teller. There were several moment's in this book that I laughed out loud. For that alone I would recommend it. This is not as good as his stories about his family. His first book "American Boy" I think will be included among my favorite books.

This is about his time working at "Tate" school located somewhere in the midwest. He was hired to be a "Mommy Handler" and it ends up being some of the Mommies who are in charge for a large part of the story. Not all of the characters are likeable, but over all it is a good read. I won't include any spoilers.

The book is written in many short chapters I like to refer to as short stories. This makes for a quick read and I personally enjoy Wade's style of writing.

Mandy Leins says

I am considering giving this book four stars, especially since I can't stop thinking about some of the issues it touches upon. Having worked at a prep school in the Northeast, there are some strong comparisons to be made between his school and my old school (thankfully, though, it was not 1:1).

I found the author, telling his own story, almost to be a caricature of himself, and I could not help but wonder if this was intentional. He certainly did not inspire me to like him much since he wanted to be "close to the movers and shakers" and thought working at a school like this was the way to do it. Throughout my reading, I could not help but think that the publication of this book was a way to get the last word in safely, without the "Mean Mommies" able to respond in kind.

What did resonate with me, however, is that education at a school like this is almost secondary, for it is not always the education that allows these people to achieve great things, but rather the connections that they have been privileged to have since birth. The families in these pages almost seemed to belong to a caste of their own, and the most disturbing aspect of the book was how this played out when families of color and families of lower income came to the school. This also held true in my old school, if not, perhaps, to the horrifying degree the author recounts.

I also was touched by his brief descriptions of the kids who are not allowed to be kids, even though they're six years old. The pressure on these kids is huge, and many of them have little choice what happens to them and their education, bowing as they must to their parents' wishes and the wishes of the school--for schools (and parents) of this type, only ivies will do, and only certain professions and degrees are acceptable. It sucks to be the kid who dances well, but who ends up going to an engineering school instead.

Would I recommend this? yes, if only because it highlights a strong network of "elite" families and their

circles which still manage to dominate major aspects of american life. Perhaps not the intent of the author, trying to chronicle his own experience.

Laura says

This book is a memoir, but reads like fiction (in a good way). I had the same reaction to many parts of "The Devil Wears Prada" - utter disbelief that people can actually act this way. But then I had to remember that this author worked at MICDS (a prep school in my home town of St. Louis), and his accounts are based on his experiences there. For a public school graduate who went to college with many MICDS alums, it is hardly surprising that these things happened at a place like MICDS. A quick and easy read for those who love "chick lit" or books criticizing the "elite."

Charlotte says

<http://charlotteswebofbooks.blogspot....>

Of course Wade writes a wonderfully witty book, but I gasped out loud more than I laughed. The behavior reported by Wade was so ghastly that it almost seemed unbelievable. But having worked retail for nearly 20 years, I know that it was all too true. As the school year progresses we watch Wade struggle with the battle of good vs evil. Does he do his job and cater to this over-privileged bitchy women or does he go with his heart and do the right thing when it matters the most?

While not as funny as other books, Confessions of a Prep School Mommy Handler gave me my "prep school" fix and gave me that voyeuristic look at a world of wealth that I will never know. The book was an incredibly fast read and perfect for that brief escape from daily life that I look for when reading a book!

Kris says

A memoir of Rouse's time as an employee in public relations at a prestigious private school (due to the "tell-all" nature of the memoir, the name of the school has been changed and its location not given). Rouse spends most of the book detailing the horrible behaviors of the "Mean Mommies" or "M2s", a group of rich women, mothers of students, who (because of entitlement, or just plain meanness) spend their time denigrating students, staff and other parents, and "borrowing" school materials and staff for their own personal projects. The Mean Mommies, and especially their leader, "Kitsy" (not her real name), make Rouse's life a living hell, and they are horrible people, but in my opinion, the worst person in the book is Rouse himself. He not only puts up with the M2s' abuse, but often enables it - and he acknowledges that he does all this purely so that he can gain favor in their eyes. He steals canned goods and stuffed animals from the school's holiday drive, so that Kitsy can "re-donate" them herself. When he observes the children of the M2s verbally abusing another girl, he looks the other way. A married gay man, he explains away the fact that these women - and the school administrators - won't even acknowledge the existence of his husband. They call him a fa**ot TO HIS FACE, and he makes excuses - all in the hopes that he'll be invited to their parties, that they'll lavish him with expensive gifts, that he'll be welcomed into their "popular kids" club.

Toward the end of the book, Rouse has an epiphany (of sorts) and realizes that he's basically selling his soul

for the crumbs of recognition these rich, popular people dole out from time to time. He confronts Kitsy, and she (being an entitled rich person) gets her feelings hurt, then acts like nothing has changed and tries to continue ordering him around. Thankfully, Rouse comes to his senses, hands in his notice, and leaves with (some of) his dignity intact.

In a postscript to the memoir, he confesses that the school later "begs" him to come back, that everything has changed, that the Mean Mommies have lost all their power. He (of course) accepts, and returns to the school, where (he's sure) everything will be sunshine and lollipops from here on out. No word on whether his long-suffering spouse had an epiphany himself and got out while the getting was good.

Crystal says

The Devil, apparently, wears Lilly Pulitzer.

Wade Rouse works in PR at Tate Academy, but his real job is "Mommy Handler." Specifically the "Mean Mommy (M2)" handler.

I've seen a number of reviews claim that Rouse is making up or far exaggerating his experiences. He's not. These mommies are everywhere and they are just as miserable inside and out as Rouse's nemesis Kitsy.

Rouse's writing style is enjoyable, gunny at times. He is brutally honest when it comes to owning the choices he made (staying silent in the face of racism for one) and the consequences. He chooses to stay closeted, and his honesty about those choices is worth reading.

That said, I don't think I'll reread. what is entertaining in fiction (even though we all know Miranda Priestly-Anna Wintour and Runway=Vogue) is just depressing in non-fiction.

Janel Cox says

I just read this for the second time. I liked it better the second time. The first time was soon after it was published. The first time it was silly and funny, but over the top. And I dislike unproductive, self centered naval gazing. For some reason this time it didn't seem silly. Still humorous but Wade's journey felt more real and sad.

Robyn says

I read this book because of all of the 'hub-bub' it caused when I will still living in St. Louis. Because, yes, the school talked about here is most likely MICDS--seeing as all one has to do is google Wade Rouse (or read the St. Louis Post-Dispatch) to know that he worked there...twice.

I wanted to see how Rouse described the school since many of my friends from College and Grad school went there. Needless to say, I was more than disappointed. Not that I don't believe that SOME of this happened--but Rouse just sounded whiny the whole time. Yes, his nemesis in the novel is actually a number of parents he worked with he just made her SO fake that she was really truly unrealistic.

And Rouse's attempts to be funny were really just that; attempts. The book was a quick read but I found myself just waiting for it to be over--like a bad amusement park ride.

Book only gets 2 stars because a)he mentions the 'where did you go to high school phenomenon" and b)while what he wrote I didn't really enjoy, he does write well.

Julie G says

First of all, Wade Rouse is hilarious. I actually didn't realize he was the author of this book until I finally picked it up off the shelf (around two or three years after I got it). But I was thrilled to see it was by him because I've read him and love him before (At Least In The City Someone Would Hear Me Scream). In this memoir, Wade is facing a team of Mean Girl mommies whose leader is determined to make him, as the publicity director for a high end prep school, her own personal assistant.

Writing

Not anything especially spectacular for the memoir genre, but very very funny. I think Wade Rouse and I could be friends - we have a similar sense of humor. Overall, the writing was good but not exceptional for the genre.

Entertainment Value

Excellent! Especially if you can at all identify with the prep-school setting (I didn't go anywhere as ritzy as this, but I did go to a private school on scholarship) or working with people for whom "entitlement" is an understatement (again, I work at the opposite end of the financial spectrum, but you'd never know it from my students' sense of entitlement). So while Rouse deals with mommies who demand that their alumni event invitations match Louis Vuitton's latest color scheme, I'm dealing with students who are asking me why I don't have a cell phone that students can use to make free long distance personal calls on. Wade, call me up, we'll compare horror stories.

This is a definite recommend for when you're needing something lighthearted and funny. I read it in just a few hours. I'd say it's a great beach, poolside, or airplane book or for anytime you need a laugh or want to read something quick and upbeat.

Natalia says

I picked this book up from the library because one of my book club friends mentioned that it was based on MICDS, a private school here in St Louis. I was curious, and I love a good dishy memoir. The book is both funny and melancholy, and it's a quick read.

My thoughts:

- I belong to the Junior League, so I have had some interaction with the social class he is describing - but I was glad of his mention at the end that when he came back to work at the school again a few years later the Mean Mommies had been pushed out of the spotlight. I can't say that I have met many women who would fit the mold he is describing. I don't know one woman who takes her dog everywhere and dresses it in daily outfits.

- Since he brings it up in the book, I have to admit something: I don't like Lilly Pulitzer's clothes. Hoo boy. Too much pink, the patterns are gaudy, and honestly a lot of it is just not that flattering.

- I wanted to reach into the book and shake Wade for being so hung up on what other people thought of him.

But I appreciated that it gave him some empathy for the kids.

- Kitsy is an awful person, her friends are awful people, and her husband seemed like a total jerk. I liked Maggie, though.

Stephanie says

I have taken this out of the library a few times with the intention of reading it, but I just never got around to it. Until yesterday.

This is a memoir about a man realizing his past and present aren't all that different. Rouse is a PR director at a very prestigious prep school in the Midwest. He flips between the present and his past as an unpopular kid. Rouse is open about his sexuality and how much he has to hide it at his job. He is reconciling who he has become with the kid he was. It is an interesting look at how we carry our past experiences to the present.

It is also very much about the "Mean Mommies" at the school where he works. Having attended private school myself, I didn't have the same experiences but my school was smaller and much less prestigious. I found the stories about the moms and their ridiculous life more humorous than I think they were supposed to be. Rouse shares his observations about the Queen Bee and his role as a mommy handler.

The book is well written, and I definitely want to read Rouse's first book "America's Boy." That said, it does get a little chick lit in a few parts. It isn't a spectacular read or anything mind blowing, but it was easy. Rouse was funny enough to carry my attention through some of the less interesting moments.

Ciara says

much better than i expected! it's a memoir about a gay man who works PR for a private prep school (elementary through high school). for some reason, i went in thinking that the school was on the east coast, perhaps an all boys' boarding school for the upper grades. i was basically picturing the school my ex-husband attended. i was expecting this book to just be a bunch of dishy "oh, these rich women & their fussy demands!" stories--funny, but maybe kind of shallow.

i was not at all expecting this story to be set at an all-grades prep school in the midwest. the fact that mothers of very young children were involved just...i don't know. it made the stories a little sadder to me. & the book is far less just a collection of crazy stories than it is an exploration of how feeling forced to remain closeted impacted the author--at work, in his relationship with his partner, in terms of his own history growing up poor...this was just so different from what i was expecting, in a good way.

which is not to say that it was OMGamazing!!eleventy1!!! it was, you know, not bad. kind of touching, occasionally quite witty. i'm all for the "it gets better"-ish message of empowerment. things did seem to improve for rouse once he came out, & although he faced some pretty scathing homophobia, he acknowledges that the overwhelming majority of his neighbors & colleagues were supportive or indifferent. but set against the backdrop of him basically working as a lap dog for crowd of bossy rich ladies for an entire year, doing all kinds of undignified things just because they asked him to, jeopardizing his partnership & mental health in the process...less than heartwarming. & some of the shit he does, i'm like, "sister, you really

think you could get up this business & no one knew you were gay? please."

far & away my favorite parts of the book were the numerous descriptions of rouse falling down. the best was the one where he fell down in front of a photographer hired to shoot the school's admissions brochures. i read that passage like ten times in a row & laughed my ass off. I LOVE IT WHEN PEOPLE FALL DOWN. i prefer to actually see it happen--that is usually FAR funnier than just hearing a description. but sometimes a description can be extremely funny, as these were. without all the falling down scenes, i wonder if i would have docked this book a star or two? it's possible.
