

[PDF] Random Family: Love, Drugs, Trouble, And Coming Of Age In The Bronx

Adrian Nicole LeBlanc - pdf download free book



Books Details:

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Author: Adrian Nicole LeBlanc
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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Politicians rail about welfare queens, crack babies and deadbeat dads, but what do they know about the real struggle it takes to survive being poor? Journalist LeBlanc spent some 10 years researching and interviewing one extended family-mother Lourdes, daughter Jessica, daughter-in-law Coco and all their boyfriends, children and in-laws-from the Bronx to Troy, N.Y., in and out of public housing, emergency rooms, prisons and courtrooms. LeBlanc's close

listening produced this extraordinary book, a rare look at the world from the subjects' point of view. Readers learn that prison is just an extension of the neighborhood, a place most men enter and a rare few leave. They learn the realities of welfare: the myriad of misdemeanors that trigger reduction or termination of benefits, only compounding a desperate situation. They see teenaged drug dealers with incredible organizational and financial skills, 13-year-old girls having babies to keep their boyfriends interested, older women reminiscing about the "heavenly time" they spent in a public hospital's psychiatric ward and incarcerated men who find life's first peace and quiet in solitary confinement. More than anything, LeBlanc shows how demanding poverty is. Her prose is plain and unsentimental, blessedly jargon-free, and including street talk only when one of her subjects wants to "conversate." This fine work deserves attention from policy makers and general readers alike.

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From Journalist LeBlanc spent more than 10 years following two Latina women from the Bronx, and in this ambitious work, she tells their stories, beginning in the late 1980s with their young teen years. Older Jessica becomes a mistress to an enormously successful heroin dealer, and Coco falls for Jessica's brother, an aspiring gangster. The two women find love, weather abuse, have babies, endure their own and their partners' prison terms, and struggle with health problems, social systems, motherhood, their own mothers, the violence of their communities, and the uncertain future. LeBlanc's prose is sprawling and dense with cinematic detail--what people wore, ate, drove, listened to; where they lived; what they said--and she studiously removes herself from the story, letting her characters' day-to-day lives unfold in scenes that are both gripping and mundane and, like life, defy easy organization. What emerges is an important, unvarnished portrait of people living in deep urban poverty, beyond the statistics, hip-hop glamour, and stereotypes. *Gillian Engberg*
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