

Title: *Unscripted*
Author: Nicole Kronzer
Genre: Fiction

Reviewer Name and Grade: Alivia Y., 8th Grade

Date Reviewed: March 29, 2021

Zelda Bailey-Cho is attending an improv summer camp along with her brother and his boyfriend. This story occurs in the modern world, most likely in the 2000s, it is not futuristic. The improv camp located in the mountains in Colorado was founded by Zelda's idol, Jane Lloyd. The story begins with Zelda being driven to the camp, and she is extremely nervous. After arriving she meets Ben, a young coach who is only 20 years old. Zelda is surprised because out of a camp with 200 people, there are only 5 girls, including her, they're all in the Gilda Radner cabin and start to call each other Gildas. Zelda is hilarious and amazing at improv, it's no surprise that she makes it onto the Varsity team. But during tryouts, there's already misogyny, with male campers already making comments like "girls can't be funny". Ben coaches the Varsity team, and Zelda finds him attractive. Her Varsity team consists of all misogynistic boys, forcing her to play a sexualized character, even making her act as a prostitute. Ben is harsher on her than anyone else but in private he is remarkably kinder. There are many examples of verbal harassment, mainly sexual against Zelda. Ben tells Zelda that Nina Knightly is coming, a successful actress, who had come to the camp only 15 years prior. Zelda, as she is on Varsity, would have a chance to perform for her. Ben tells Zelda to become "less sensitive" and "control her sexuality", so she would be a good comedian. He tells her to deal with the harassment she is put against. Ben creates a sketch, about how Zelda is a bad kisser, coercing her to play an embarrassing part. After the entire Varsity team agrees, saying the sketch wasn't funny, Ben says that Zelda created the sketch. Zelda runs off into the woods, saying that she wouldn't attend any more rehearsals. She's found by members of the Boy Scout Camp whom she's already met, they're kinder and respect her. They go hiking, and on their way down Zelda gets hurt, Ben shows up and brings her to the nurse's office. Ben apologizes for being harsh on her and yelling at her, saying it's because his father died that spring, causing Zelda to pity him. It becomes obvious that Ben is manipulating her, but Zelda is oblivious, only saying that not everyone gets a perfect relationship when her brother confronts her about Ben's behavior. Zelda attends rehearsals, and the horrible behavior continues and later, Ben tries to sexually assault Zelda, but she defends herself and escapes. Later, Ben forces her to say her defending herself was an accident. He says that if it wasn't everyone on the team would know that the only reason she got on Varsity was that Ben thinks that she's attractive. Later Zelda begins to develop feelings for one of the Boy Scouts, Jesse. Ben becomes more manipulative, threatening to kick Zelda from the Varsity team, but things seem brighter for Zelda, as she told the Gildas and they now have her back. Zelda reports Ben to the head camp counselors, but they don't believe her, saying it's normal for boys. She ran into the forest, only to find Jesse. They end up confessing their feelings, but afterward Ben catches them together. Ben starts a fight, breaking Jesse's nose, Zelda tries to fight back, and some of her teammates witnessing the fight call the head counselors. The head counselor worries about their reputation, instead of worrying about Zelda. They beg Zelda not to press charges. Ben is being taken away by the police, but they're kicking Zelda out of the camp, saying that there is no physical violence tolerated although it was self-defense. She goes to the Boy Scout camp for the remaining week and decides to press charges. The Gildas sneak Zelda

into camp and get her to meet and perform with Nina. The story ends with the Gildas exchanging separating. Zelda is smart, funny, and brave, and Ben is manipulative and arrogant.

Did the plot keep you interested?

The plot kept me interested. The plot was intriguing, and every important event lined up perfectly with the last. You could never see what was happening, and there were many ups and downs for the characters. It was overall extremely interesting and I loved the characters, and how they developed.

Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?

I think the pace of the book was just right, but it was a bit on the faster side. The protagonist sometimes moved on from the conflict too quickly. But usually, there was a perfect amount of time spent.

What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?

I think the grade levels that this book is appropriate for are grades 9th - 12th. It is a bit sexual so I wouldn't recommend anyone younger to read it. But the plot is interesting, and I think even adults would enjoy this book.

What type of reader would you recommend this book to?

I would recommend this book to a reader who likes realistic fiction, with a strong female lead. Along with this, the reader must be accepting, as this book is amazingly open, with characters of different sexualities, and races.

What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?

There are many different characters, who have different sexualities, races, and even a character with albinism. This I find amazing. But one should note there is attempted physical sexual assault, verbal abuse, emotional abuse, as well as sexual harassment.

Rating:

I would rate this book 5 stars, it has excellent character development. It's a good read for various ages, so it has a larger audience. The characters are all extremely different and it is exactly what was needed in this time and age. The strong female lead fighting against misogyny and toxic masculinity. It has a wide range of characters with different sexualities, races, body types, etc. It was extremely open. It was also extremely funny with jokes laced in with the plot. It was an amazing book, and I haven't ever been so engrossed in a book for some time.