



Bridges

Gizelle Studevent

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Bridges is an incredible journey through the fascinating mind of an impressive young writer. Only The Table of Contents and a couple of excerpts are needed to showcase the book's brilliance. The Preface bypasses the customary fluff and immediately snatches the reader into this remarkable collection of thought provoking letters. Written while playing basketball at Penn State, Studevent candidly discusses a myriad of gaps in society that she feels need bridging. Gaps such as those between; Generation Y-previous generations, God-man, teachers-students, gay-straight, coaches-players, males-females, Black-White and good and bad. She tackles polarizing issues such as race, politics, religion and sexual orientation. After a couple of eyebrow raising letters, chapter 3 shifts into overdrive and Bridges never slows down. Amid a host of colorful metaphors, she shows how her generation has lost its way due to a misguided sense of self entitlement. She suggests that they must have emerged from the womb hands first, and not head first, as customary with most babies. If her generation could talk while breastfeeding, they would not only ask, but demand an explanation as to why Mom isn't able to provide chocolate milk in one breast and strawberry in the other. She suggests that maybe too many modern day mothers have 'spoiled' milk because so many of her peers, including herself, are spoiled. She feels today's "hybrid" (parent/friend) parents are partly responsible for this self entitlement epidemic that has struck Generation Y with a vengeance. Next, she unloads with a raw lambasting of absentee fathers, "it's your presence, not your presents that matters, and as long as you fathers continue to bail; strip clubs, pimps, prostitution and the porn industry will continue to thrive." To females, she explains how they have become enslaved to society's cruel '1-10' beauty scale and its 100 lb weight scale. In a twist of creative genius, her letter to the emasculated modern day male is full of comedic brilliance. Her use of cartoon characters in order to establish common ground with the men of her generation is hilarious. She helps them to recognize that women desire a man with character and not one who tries to be a character. She reminds them that Vicki Vale fell in love with Bruce Wayne before she knew he was Batman. Mary Jane was smitten by Peter Parker before there was a hint that he was Spiderman and Clark Kent stole Lois Lane's heart before she discovered he was 'The Man of Steel.' These gals fell in love with the man's character and not the costumed character. Her letter to teachers and coaches jumps off the pages as if it were written in 3-D. "Critical times call for critical measures, therefore teachers need to go beyond the syllabus and coaches need to rise above the playbook and prepare kids for the game of life." In a show of compassion, she pens a letter to Phoebe Prince, the bullying victim who committed suicide and whose story motivated her to write Bridges. How did this college student develop such an in depth perspective on life? Her life has been an epic tale of tragedy and triumph, one that rivals Hollywood's most inspirational sagas. After a drunk driver left her with a fractured skull, no front teeth and a shattered jaw, she would encounter an emotional head on collision that would prove to be far more horrific than being in a car that flipped three times down a California freeway. She would become the victim of a horrific case of psycho-cyberbullying. While a teenager named Gizelle may have begun writing Bridges, by book's end it becomes evident that she emerges as a grown woman named Ms. Studevent. From an impoverished childhood along the California-Mexico border, to one of the most elite high schools in the nation, her travels took her to South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, France, Italy, China, CBS, NBC and ESPN. However, her travels pale in comparison to the incredible journey across this literary jewel known as Bridges. WOW!!

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