



Class Dismissed: A Year in the Life of an American High School, A Glimpse into the Heart of a Nation

Meredith Maran

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This gripping story -a year in the lives of three high school seniors and their school-takes us deep into the hearts and minds of American teenagers, and American society, today.

The seniors of Berkeley High are the white, black, Latino, Asian, and multiracial children of judges and carpenters, software consultants and garbage collectors, housewives and housekeepers. Some are Harvard bound; others are illiterate. They are the Class of 2000, and through the lives of three of them *Class Dismissed* brings us inside the nation's most diverse high school-where we glimpse the future of the nation.

Autumn was ten when her father abandoned her family; since then she's been helping her mother raise her two little brothers and keep food on the table-while keeping her grades up so she can go to college. Her faith in God gives Autumn strength, but who will give her the money she needs when she's offered the opportunity of a lifetime?

From the outside, Jordan's life looks perfect. He hangs out with the "rich white kids"; rows on the crew team, has a cool mom, applied early to an East Coast college. But Jordan's drug-addicted father died last year, leaving Jordan reeling with grief and anger that makes his life feel anything but perfect-and his future suddenly seem uncertain.

A third-generation Berkeley High student, Keith is bright and popular, a talented football player who hopes to play college ball and one day, go pro. But Keith has a reading problem that threatens his NFL dream. And the Berkeley police have a problem with Keith that threatens his very freedom.

Looking into the lives of these young people, in this American town, at this time in history, we see more than what's true---and what's possible--for Berkeley High. We see what's true and what's possible for America.

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