



MWD: Hell is Coming Home

Brian David Johnson , Jan Egleson , Laila Milevski (illustrator) , Karl Stevens (illustrator)

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Liz served in Iraq with her trusty military working dog, Ender, by her side. But now that her tour is over, she has to readjust to life in her small New Hampshire town. Despite being surrounded by people she's known her whole life, Liz feels entirely alone and soon gets trapped in a downward spiral of flashbacks and blackout drinking. Things seem destined for a bad end, but when Liz's on-again-off-again boyfriend, Ben, almost hits a stray dog while she is in the car, things start to change. Brutus might just be the only thing that can bring her back from the brink. Brian David Johnson, Jan Egleson, Laila Milevski, and Karl Stevens have created a searing and honest portrait of reentry to civilian life after war and a touching exploration of the bond between dog and human.

MWD: Hell is Coming Home Details

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Author : Brian David Johnson , Jan Egleson , Laila Milevski (illustrator) , Karl Stevens (illustrator)

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Download and Read Free Online MWD: Hell is Coming Home Brian David Johnson , Jan Egleson , Laila Milevski (illustrator) , Karl Stevens (illustrator)

From Reader Review MWD: Hell is Coming Home for online ebook

Edward Sullivan says

A grim, tough, unflinchingly honest portrait of an Iraq War veteran suffering from PTSD struggle to put the pieces of her life back together after returning home. An emotionally powerful look at the toll war takes on a soldier's psyche.

Melinda says

Not sure why this was aimed at teens; it's better suited for an adult audience. The characters are adults, and the themes are heavy and brutal, even though the dog storyline helped lighten it up a bit.

Ibarionex says

The story of a young vet suffering from PTSD provides is portrayed starkly and honestly in MWD by Brian David Johnson and Jan Egleson. The complexity of Liz as a character is handled incredibly well, avoiding the typical cliches associated with the traumatized soldier returning home. Her relationships with family members, co-workers, fellow drinkers and most importantly dog help to reveal her in different ways, which provide her the depth that allows me to really connect with her, even though I have never experienced what she has. The graphic novel is savvy enough to allow moments to play out with images alone at times, rather than relying completely on the dialog. This allows the moments to be especially poignant and impactful. The ending doesn't completely satisfy as it the resolution relies on a singular act of kindness which I wasn't sure would lead the character to where she is at the end of the book. Nevertheless, I think it is a solid story that is deserving of attention.

Isaiah says

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I grabbed this book because I have been on a graphic novel kick lately. This book far surpassed any expectations I could have for it.

The book follows Liz coming home from war. She was one of the women serving in Iraq. She worked with a MWD or a military working dog. She was very in tune with her dog, Ender. Ender is not part of the book for long. He is mostly seen through flashbacks that Liz is having due to her untreated PTSD. She finds another dog and keeps thinking and see him as Ender, which is supremely sad. I was close to tears over this damn book.

The book is VERY VERY VERY VERY VERY VERY dark. This is not a YA book by any stretch of the imagination. I have no idea why this is shelved that way. There is rape, mild nudity, death, violence, attempted rape, dog fights, excessive alcohol usage, and a great deal of foul

language.

Liz is experiencing PTSD, but it is never named in the book. Instead people keep telling her she needs to get help, but she doesn't see that she needs help. Instead she turns to carrying an unlicensed gun and getting drunk all the time. She tries to hide her flashbacks and how messed up both the war and her rape got her. There is even a scene where Liz is talking with the dogs she saved, Brutus, and explains to him that there is a hierarchy and no one cares about one girl in that. She explains away her own rape to the dog, after snapping at a woman who really cares about her. She had snapped when she said that she knew what it was like to be in a world where she couldn't say no, how could anyone who hadn't been in that world know what anything really meant. Liz makes so many tremendous points, but they are so clouded in her fear and her PTSD that no one takes her seriously.

There is a big scene where Liz takes another veteran out of an event and talks with him. She is accused of ruining the event for helping the veteran who had asked to leave. She is bullied because she listened to someone instead of letting people who did not experience the trauma dictate how things would work. It was so well done. It showed how people who don't know how the trauma feels will do things to make themselves feel better instead of what is actually needed by the people who survived. It was brilliant. This book is full of insight like that. Insight that is incredibly valuable.

I loved this book. The art was iffy for me at first. It was too realistic, but it grew on me real quick. I don't think this story could have been told with a different art style and be as powerful as this.

Sarah says

Disjointed, chaotic and deeply felt, this story is so similar to others I've been witness to among soldiers coming home. The buried pain and grief that only ever seems to bubble up with the assistance of drugs and/or alcohol, the disassociating stress that comes from activities that others would see as benign, the brief and rare and all-too-brief moments of peace....it's all here in beautifully drawn gray (because nothing is truly black and white). Liz's story is not enjoyable, and it's certainly not one I liked, but it was written and drawn with empathy and dignity, and with hope.

Jennifer says

Read ARC.

There are few books marketed towards teens about the Iraq War, and even fewer (if any) about women in the military, so in theory, this book fills a unique niche that most librarians would be excited about. Unfortunately, this one doesn't fit the bill-it is not a book for teens. When Iraqi veteran Liz returns home after being wounded in a violent tank attack, she is angry, unemployed, living with a grandmother who doesn't want her around, and suffering from what appears to be PTSD. One day on the side of the road she encounters a vicious dog which bites her; the dog is subsequently picked up Animal Control because it has bitten other people and slated to be euthanized. Liz associates the dog with a dog which saved her life in Iraq and sets out to save the dog. Along the way, she meets another veteran who tries to help her work through some of her issues, and reconnects with an old high school friend in complicated ways.

The slim graphic novel touches on a handful of "hot topics" without fully developing them into the plot-

homosexuality in the military, rape, how women are treated in the military, services (or non-services) available for veterans, grinding poverty, PTSD, euthanasia for animals, social media in the military, and incarcerated parents. Although these are all important issues it was a little heavy for such a short book, and were not fully integrated into the story, making it feel more like a collection of "issues".

Having said that, the book does a relatively good job of bringing up the complicated issue of how veterans are treated. Liz's friend's ill-fated attempt to honor a paraplegic veteran rang true, as did her feelings about the banner her friend puts up for her when she arrives home.

The violence in the story is graphic and brutal and not for the faint of heart. Pages showing how Liz was injured were particularly difficult to read. Crudely drawn black and white illustrations did not enhance the book.

The real problem with this book, however, is that it is not for teens. As it says in the epilogue, it was initially a script, written for adults, that was then turned into a book. Even older teens will have trouble with some of the content-not just the brutality, but some of the larger historical contextual issues the author addresses. It reads more like a book for adults-and there will likely be more interest from that demographic. I had a hard time visualizing the teen I would (or could) give the book to.

Skip this one.

Ange (Libby Blog) Schmelzer says

This is one heck of a brutally honest and gritty book about a women's return from serving in Iraq. This isn't nice, clean war stories. This is raw and powerful. The main character is a broken person when she returns who is struggling to care enough about herself to get the help she needs. She does everything she can to push everyone away around her, but one person gives her a second chance by believing in her. It has a nicely hopeful ending.

Andrew Lovell says

The story of a woman who served in Iraq working with a military trained dog. She returns home after an IED badly wounds her and kills her dog. It is an opportunity for the reader to see a woman's experience of dealing with PTSD and the physical, psychological, and sexual trauma that come with serving in the military during war time.

About half way through the story I wanted to give up on the book because it wasn't "exciting" and the main character was annoying, pestering, belligerent, and very unlikable. By the end of the book I changed my mind however, again appreciating the more candid narrative of a soldier which I also found in books like "The Things they Cannot Say" by Kevin Sykes (non-fiction) but which was appallingly and grossly non-existent/omitted in books such as "American Sniper". This book isn't fun, it isn't exciting, and one might think, as I did, why this was published into a book? While this is a fictional story, it was inspired by real life events as mentioned by the author in the afterword. The story just is. It is sad, frustrating, and it isn't fun; especially reading about people who are out of touch with reality. But I believe that this is more of the type of story that we should hear when it comes to war. War isn't to be glorified; whether it is necessary or not, lives are lost and people that do live leave with scars that don't heal, both physically and psychologically. I

wanted more action, I wanted something to happen, but that isn't what this story is about and I think that needs to be brought to light in war literature.

Rod Brown says

I thought having dogs and a female veteran would help this graphic novel rise above generic troubled-soldier-returns-home works of fiction, but the execution makes lands it in the below average range of the genre.

(Funny thing: After reading the book, I had no idea what the MWD in the title meant until I came here to write my review. Is it really not in the text of the story or did I just miss it? I now see that military working dog is referenced on the dust jacket, but I rarely read cover copy to avoid spoilers.)

Jenn says

Was the book supposed to have a few pages repeat in the middle or was that just certain copies? I could see how it might represent some aspect of ptsd, but wasn't sure what. It was a bit distracting. The tattoo resolution seemed inadequate for such a heavy story. A tattoo is not a happy ending solution for PTSD. I appreciate all the research that went into a woman's military experience though. That was really well done.

S Shapiro says

This graphic novel is a moving portrayal of a woman returning from war to face a home in which she no longer knows how to function. It's full of intense, important themes: women in the military, PTSD, sexual harassment, civilian interaction with veterans. Braided storylines of military working dogs, and the ways in which animals help people deal with trauma, are particularly poignant. It is gritty, true, but I'm a little confused as to why people feel teenagers aren't familiar with gritty themes and treatments. Soldiers go to war as early as 18; how is it inappropriate to expose them to relevant-if-difficult stories just a few years earlier? This narrative involves bullying and internet harassment, among other things--sadly relevant to the lives of middle and high school students. So many teenagers play video games with just as much grit and minimal larger benefit. This is a book that will give them much to think about, and might help them consider how they want to comport themselves in a world full of difficult, real, challenges. And I doubt most teenagers will actually find this book more extreme than what they're exposed to in the course of their normal lives, whether we like that or not.

Figgy says

Review to come.

Carrie Shaurette says

The tone of this grim PTSD story about a female soldier coming home after her military dog was killed in action is spot on. It definitely left me with a lingering feeling of empathy for the main character and female soldiers in general. I do wish parts of it were better fleshed out, like the creepy doorway man who is hinted at, but never fully explained.

Also, it could really benefit from a title switch (or at the very least a clarification about the acronym) as the story revolves more around the soldier than the dog.

Miss Kitty says

I dug this and read it in an afternoon. Wooo short power read! I feel so accomplished. This is a rare book with dog death that I didn't want to rage at and I think that's mostly bc the protagonist likes dogs more than most people. *fist bump* If anything I wish that it could have focused more on the trauma recovery process than just the hot mess part of trauma. It was still really good.

Stephanie Tournas says

MWD (military working dog) is a moody and moving graphic novel about a young woman veteran of the war in Iraq, returning to her small New Hampshire town. Injured in body and mind, Liz grieves for her faithful dog Ender, her best companion in combat. Her grief comes out in aggressive, self defeating behavior towards all who try to help her. Flashbacks tell of the roadside bomb that changed her life, and of sexual humiliation at the hands of her male comrades. Her only real affection is for a mercurial stray dog slated to be put down at the local animal shelter. The modest black and white pen and ink drawings reflect Liz's perceived reality and the economic depression of her surroundings. The text, all narrated or dialogue, is unaffected and sparse. The character-centered story line is an excellent portrayal of the hardship of PTSD.
