

THE VOLTAGE

Science Park High School

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Seeing Double at Science Park

by Edith White

At Science Park, there are 5 sets of twins in the senior class alone and more than 4 sets within the freshman, sophomore and junior classes, and that's not even mentioning the set of triplets in the sophomore class. There are always so many questions regarding twins. Can they read each other's mind? Do they feel the same pain? Do they do everything together? The truth is that twins do none of these things. Having a twin is similar to having a best friend or just any sibling close to your age. However, there are still many interesting facts regarding twins and their unique lifestyles.



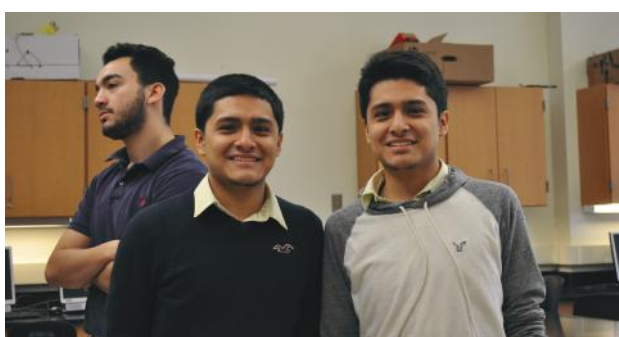
Tips when dealing with Twins:

- 1) Do not ask "Which one are you?"
- 2) Do not ask "Which one is older?"
- 3) When talking to a twin, do not state which one you like better. Twins are individuals who don't like to be compared to the each other.
- 4) Remember that each twin is an individual.
- 5) One of the most irksome questions that you can ask a twin is "Are you twins?"



Some facts you would never know about twins:

- 1) Identical twins do not have identical fingerprints;
- 2) Mirror image identical twins have reverse asymmetric features;
- 3) Massachusetts has the most twin births of any state in America;
- 4) Identical twins do not always have the same genetics;
- 5) Tall women are more likely to have twins;
- 6) It's possible that twins can have different dads;
- 7) Twins interact with each other in the womb;
- 8) Some conjoined twins can feel and taste what the other one does;
- 9) Forty percent of twins invent their own languages.



The DUFF Book Review

by Sofia Amorim

Kody Keplinger's *The DUFF* stands out from other teen novels, because it isn't your typical girl meets boy, girl falls in love with boy, boy and girl live happily ever after type of story. If anything, it's a lot more twisted than that. Like most books which have been adapted for the big screen, certain elements of the story had been compromised. However, the book is certainly one worth reading.

What makes Bianca stand out is that she is not the overtly feminine and introverted lead character that dominates teen fiction novels everywhere. She is different, and even though she is fragile (and let there be no mistake about that), she compartmentalizes and can function in her world without drawing much attention to herself.

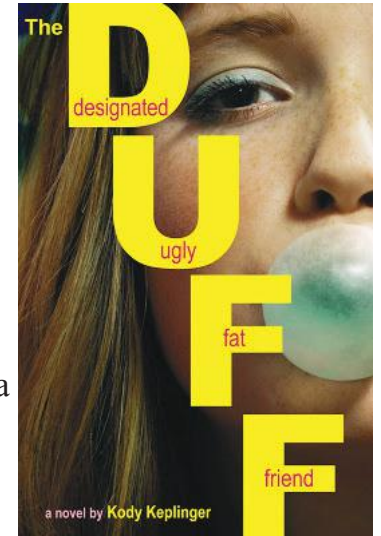
There is a whole other layer to Bianca that Keplinger develops throughout the novel: namely the fragile, emotional and self-effacing archetype who is protected by an independent and rational girl.

There is the obvious love story, but it is in fact almost predictable, so there is no need for a spoiler alert. What is interesting though is how Keplinger was able to demonstrate her characters' development the entire time.

Instead of taking a back seat to the courtship of love struck teenagers, Bianca's self-discovery and for lack of better words, self-acceptance, shines through.

The DUFF teaches teens something other than the "to value yourself, and others will value you too" lesson; it teaches us that we learn the most about ourselves from our faults. Faults are human, and no one can be the perfect Mary Sue littered about in pop fiction, but these faults are what give us those qualities that make us who we are. Bianca is the ideal example, because she was well aware of her faults, and actually wallowed in them, learning about who she really was versus who people wanted her to be.

Bianca breaks the norm, not by outwardly defying it, but by simply ignoring it. She is who she is, imperfections and all, and although that may not be a person whom everyone likes, it's who she is. Since when does everyone approve of each other? We don't, but we approve of ourselves, or at least we try to. That doesn't mean we can't try to be better, but we know that perfection is a far cry from who we are now, and who knows if you'll ever come close, but we'll be as perfect as we feel like being. Because in the end, understanding yourself and accepting your faults is what makes us, well, human.



The DUFF Movie

by Philann White

The latest in High School comedies: *The DUFF* centers on the idea of relative self-esteem and one's place within the social structure of teenage life. While in no way the first and surely not the last of its kind, *The DUFF* has a certain ambiance that draws in viewers. It hits on almost every iconic teenage comedy cliché, using main character Bianca, portrayed by Mae Whitman, as the narrator throughout the movie.

The boy our heroine likes, who eventually turns out to be Mr. Wrong; the trying-on-different-clothes montage; the neglectful parent, and the homecoming dance, where previously ironclad social roles get upended, are all depicted in the movie, leaving no room for confusion or multiple interpretations. In one scene, our narrator playfully lays out the social structure of her school, bringing the audience up to date on the events and status of all other prominent characters.

The DUFF is a mixture of *Mean Girls* and *Clueless* without the immortalization that these two have had, but with enough wit and charm to make it a worthwhile movie. From the beginning, the audience is aware of how the movie will unfold, lacking the originality that leaves viewers guessing at what will come next. But in no way does this fact take away from the hilarity that is displayed throughout the movie, ensuring that nothing is ever taken too seriously and is fully focused on the goal of making people laugh. While the plot does not leave people on the edge of their seats, the acting of the characters is what really makes this movie the success that it is.



Much of the film's allure springs from Mae Whitman's performance as Bianca, the DUFF—or Designated Ugly Fat Friend. While Whitman is none of those negative things, it is quickly established that DUFFness is a relative concept, ensuring that as the movie progresses the main character will go through a self-revelation that will lead to her eventually developing a better opinion of herself and her place in the social structure. Whitman displays flawless comedic timing and consistently makes inspiring choices in terms of delivery, reaction, and even the slightest facial expression. She shines confidently in a self-deprecating role, and ties the whole movie together.

The DUFF, while having the same plot as its counterpart novel, adds its own spin on events that make it more cinematically appealing, such as creating original characters that were not featured in the novel. These new characters add a whole new layer of entertainment, with resident mean girl played by Bella Thorne acting as the third person to the always present teenage love triangle and Ken Jeong as adviser of the school paper where Bianca is the star reporter who you could always count on to deliver the funny one-liners.

The DUFF changes its tune toward the end by laying it on too thick with preaching about self-esteem and defying labels, opposed to the comedy and amusement of the rest of the film. Even once was too much, but Whitman gets saddled with pontificating too many times, when the revelations and resolutions within the film itself make it perfectly clear.

However, regardless of the shift in the overall attitude at the end of the film, *The DUFF* still manages to retain its amusing dialogue and self-deprecating humor, leaving the audience satisfied with this modern showing of teenage life during high school.

A Spotlight on Teen PEP

by Romina Generali

Teen PEP, a program which began in New Jersey in the year 1995, aims to teach students about the risks of dangerous sexual behaviors and advocate the attainment of knowledge on how to stay safe. Teen PEP stands for Teen Prevention Education Program, and its motto reads, "To equip students with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors to avoid pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, and other sexually transmitted infections." Since its conception, Teen PEP has expanded well outside of New Jersey, and it continues to reach new heights each year. Teen PEP educators are trained to discuss leadership and sexuality issues, along with HIV/AIDS and homophobia reduction. Some of the workshops that are held within this course include Postponing Sexual Involvement, Pregnancy Prevention, Preventing Sexually Transmitted Infections, and Understanding and Preventing HIV/AIDS.



At Science Park, Teen PEP is taught by Ms. Bell. Ms. Bell ensures that her students develop the knowledge and skills they need to conduct workshops with the intention of increasing their leadership abilities. The goal is to expose the Teen PEP peer educators to information they will be comfortable passing on to their younger school mates. Also, an important aspect of Teen PEP is making the students aware of the resources they have at their disposal. Sexual health issues are prominent topics of discussion amongst the teenage community, and Teen PEP is an organization that facilitates their learning and understanding.

This year's first workshop was called "Let's Wait A While: Postponing Sexual Involvement." In this session, the Teen PEP class performed skits that spoke of the pressures faced by adolescents to become sexually active, and the benefits of choosing to wait. This first workshop encouraged students to practice abstinence, and to also become informed regardless of their sexual involvement. The second workshop, "Later Baby: Pregnancy Prevention," discussed the startling struggles of being a teen parent. All of the workshops in Teen PEP are meant to educate and to protect students from participating in risky behaviors.

This year I have had the pleasure of being part of the 2015-2016 Teen PEP class. Period two consists of heaps of valuable information, alarming statistics, and a great group of seniors. The atmosphere created within the classroom is essential to our success outside of it. By working together, whether we are learning lines or putting up bulletin boards, we are always learning together. Teen PEP is a rewarding experience open to anyone who wishes to become an advocate of the most important sexual health issues facing our communities.

Ms. Mimidas

by Sofia Amorim

The Freshman Hallway is always crowded; I don't think there is ever a time when someone can pass without having to do some bizarre Mission Impossible-esque maneuver through the narrow corridor.

But, it's not just freshmen, because when you get to room 229, you see freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and especially seniors, crowded in Ms. Mimidas' room.

Ms. Mimidas' classroom is always busy, but she never turns a student away. Even though I am no longer a student of hers, before or after school, I'll sit in her classroom, and ask for guidance or help with an essay. She is dedicated to her job, and spends a good chunk of her time helping students, former and current, imparting her advice and knowledge.

She presents a fresh lens to analytical interpretations, and any student of hers will tell you that she takes her time to be clear and precise.

She is perpetually surrounded by an ever growing pile of papers, and she sits there and devotes herself to every e-mail, worksheet, essay and assignment she receives.

I have always loved English and Ms. Mimidas' class pushed me harder than I normally even pushed myself.

There is something about her approach that just makes all the work bearable and less bothersome. And just a word of advice: her class helps, because I know that all of her work really prepared me for the AP Language Exam.

Her warm personality, passion for English, and devotion to her students are all the qualities that make Ms. Mimidas the highly valued teacher that she is. There are not words that do justice to the work she has done for us here at Science Park, but she is important and appreciated by all of us. And that is something, I doubt, will ever change.



Mr. B.'s Words of Wisdom

“Apathy is the new righteous.”

“Smart is not what you are; it is what you do.”

“Integrity has become so rare that it should be considered a superpower.”

“Wisdom and intelligence are two separate things; intelligence is knowing factual knowledge while wisdom is understanding the human condition. Pretty much all tests you have ever taken have tested your intelligence in an area, not your wisdom.”

“The reason why humans read fiction is to better understand the human condition. When you read *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, Romeo and Juliet become a part of you; their lives become parts of your life. The mistakes they made become your mistakes; their pain becomes your pain. You never have to make Romeo and Juliet’s mistakes; you already made those mistakes – through *Romeo and Juliet*.”

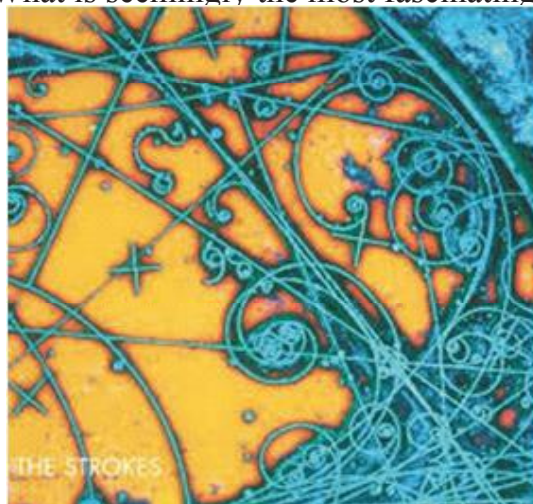


Is This It Music Review by Renee Johnson

Is This It, the first debut album by The Strokes, captures the epitome of what legends are made of. *Is This It* was recorded in a basement studio in Manhattan, creating a new branch of rock 'n roll that many artists today try to imitate and measure up to. After releasing this album, The Strokes went from handing out gig fliers to strangers to being in the front of magazine covers. This album started the career of The Strokes.

The sound of this album is unique, which is what captured the attention of many music lovers looking for something new, something different. Rhythm is what is mostly prioritized by the band, leaving all of the lyrics on this album and the next few to come to be written by the lead singer Julian Casablancas. While Julian sings what is similar to a ballad on most of the tracks, the sound continues to be somewhat aggressive, frantic, and ultimately cool. What is seemingly the most fascinating thing about this album is how Julian uses distance to communicate passion.

The message in each individual song is simple, yet frustratingly oblique. Whether you're a first time listener longing to experience a different vibe, or an old fan of The Strokes looking to revisit a feeling, *Is This It* is an essential album to have.



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