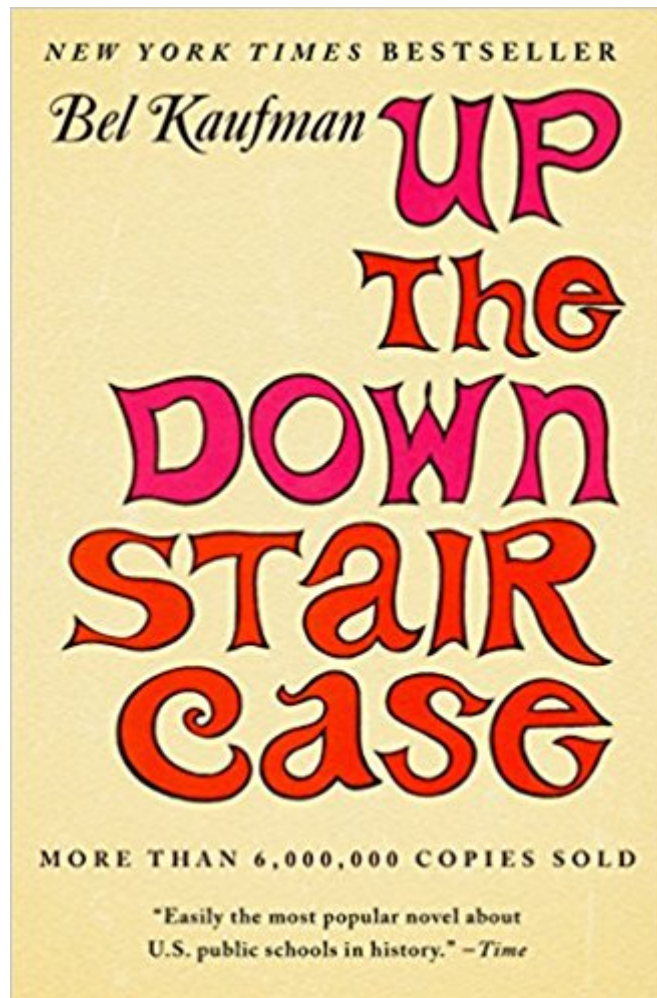




The book was found

Up The Down Staircase



Synopsis

For every teacher fighting to make a difference— the timeless bestseller about the hope, heartache, and hilarity of working in the public school system. When Sylvia Barrett arrives at New York City’s Calvin Coolidge High, she’s fresh from earning literature degrees at Hunter College and eager to shape young minds. Instead, she encounters broken windows, a lack of supplies, a stifling bureaucracy, and students with no interest in Chaucer. Narrated in an almost presciently postmodern style— through interoffice memos, notes and doodles, lesson plans, suggestion-box insults, letters, and other dispatches from the front lines, *Up the Down Staircase* stands as the seminal novel of a beleaguered American public school system perpetually redeemed by teachers who love to teach and students who long to be recognized (*The New Yorker*). Hailed as “the funniest book written in America since *Catch-22*,” *Up the Down Staircase* spent over a year on the New York Times bestseller list, has been adapted for the stage, and was made into an award-winning feature film starring Sandy Dennis (*New York Herald Tribune*). It remains an essential and highly enjoyable read that will leave you laughing and shaking your head at the same time. This ebook features an illustrated biography of Bel Kaufman including photos from the author’s personal collection.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I had seen the 1967 movie by the same title starring Sandy Dennis, so I jumped at the chance to read the fictional book on which the movie was based. The book is told through notes and directives and letters and memos between teachers and teachers, students and teachers, administration and teachers, and occasionally teachers and parents. Miss Barrett, fresh out of college, is hired to teach English to a variety of low performing students, and teaches a full schedule in addition to managing a homeroom period. She is totally overwhelmed by the crushing burden of administrative responsibilities, including attendance sheets, hall passes, performance profiles and a cacophony of bells that signal different things at different times. Many of her inner city students are at risk of dropping out, have haphazard home lives, and little parental support, yet she soon learns that most are just crying out for someone to notice them, to care about them. She writes that we "have keys but no locks, blackboards but no chalk, students but no seats, teachers but no time to teach". She balks at the drudgery and the waste and often feels frustrated and defeated. She has such a crushing workload of essays and papers to grade from her 204 students, that she has no personal life at all. In spite of the overwhelming obstacles she does teach some Shakespeare and poetry and essay writing, and she wins over a few of her students, some of whom idolize her. Many remain distant and critical of her, however she maintains her idealism and hope that she can reach even more. All she wants to do is make a difference in Room 304. Although the unconventional structure of the book (told entirely through notes and letters) conveys to a certain extent the chaotic, dysfunctional nature of the school and many of the students and staff, at some point in the book I just wished for some real dialogue and articulate, flowing prose. The notes and memos became a bit tiresome and left too many plot questions unresolved. It was still a very entertaining and enlightening novel, though no doubt some of the same battles are still being fought in the public schools to this day.

I read this book when it first came out in the sixties and enjoyed it tremendously. The characters are true to life, the problems presented are realistic. Working as an educator now, I decided to reread this book and found it to be just as compelling now as it was when first written. The characterizations are still realistic, the students still suffer the same problems, the staffs still try to juggle paperwork, emotional upheavals, raging hormones, and dwindling inventories, broken equipment, and ever changing standards. There is no other profession that is like this, but for all the

problems we see everyday, the "AH - HA" moment makes it all worthwhile.

Written via memos and notes the story could been written today via email and texts. Funny and heartbreaking. The dates change but I think life in inner city schools are just the same today as the 1960s.

This was published in 1964 but I never read it until this year (2017). What a fantastic book and what an unusual but effective style. It lets you know what being a teacher is like. If I had read it when it came out I probably would have gone into teaching.

As an educator, it was interesting to re-read this book. Many of the problems etc. continue today. The book is entertaining. Seeing the respect shown by some students was rewarding.

My mother was a teacher maybe that is why I'm a sucker for teachers' memoirs or fiction about good teachers. This definitely qualifies as the latter.

This is an easy to read, unique, and heartfelt story of a young English teacher who finds her ideals challenged at every turn. The book cleverly mixes sadness, anger, chaos, and humor in a way that brings every character to life. Considering the fact that it was written long before anyone knew the term "instant messaging" it is also very prescient. Much of the story is told in notes, letters, and handouts. I can just imagine the book easily translated into the 21st century by writing it as a series of texts, emails, and Facebook posts. The characters stand the test of time... one can still find them living in high schools today: the "Admiral Ass(t)" administrator, the motherly, caring teacher, the bright but defiant student headed on a road to nowhere. From the very beginning, when the teacher with a long list of goals for the day can't even get through roll call before the bell sounds, this story feels real to anyone who has sat in...or stood in front of...a high school classroom.

Kaufman's masterpiece has aged very well, and is just as relevant today as it was when it was first published. UtDS is the story of Miss Sylvia Barrett, an idealistic young English teacher fresh out of college who is teaching her very first year at Calvin Coolidge High School, a New York public high school that challenges -- and outright shatters -- every idea of teaching she has by forcing her to deal every day with embittered colleagues, indifferent students, and the crippling bureaucracy of the school itself. Bookended by direct dialogue chapters, the story of UtDS is told in epistolary form,

using personal letters, interoffice memos, student notes, and even the school newspaper to illustrate Miss Barrett's first year of teaching, allowing the story to grow organically as the characters change over the course of the term, telling a story that is surprisingly bittersweet and affecting. This book should be required reading for anyone considering a career as a teacher.

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