

Worldwide Crush

Kristin Nilsen

SparkPress (Jul 11, 2023)

Softcover \$12.95 (272pp)

978-1-68463-192-6

A teenager learns when it's time to set childhood ideas aside in the entertaining coming-of-age novel Worldwide Crush

A superfan hopes to meet her favorite celebrity in Kristin Nilsen's funny, bighearted novel *Worldwide Crush*.

Millie is starting the seventh grade in Minnesota. She's a fan of a singer from California, Rory Calhoun. She writes Rory letters and acrostic poems that she never sends, collects information about him from teen magazines, and admires his poster. Her enthusiasm even extends to pretending to like whales because Rory's hometown in Bodega Bay is known for whale watching. When Rory releases a hit song, "Worldwide Crush," and sets off on a new tour, Millie and her best friend Shauna are determined to see him in concert and hope to be called on stage.

This is a sweet depiction of teenage fandom. Millie's daydreams are earnest; they're supported by her grandmother (once an avid Paul McCartney fan) and tolerated by her level-headed parents, whose warmth helps to ground their flighty daughter. Humor arises because Millie is so devoted, to the extent that she often exaggerates the urgency of Rory-related situations. She tries to persuade the adults around her that they should visit California, for instance, and her methods are roundabout and quirky.

Indeed, Millie is an appealing heroine: certain that she's neither as obsessive nor as high-strung as others think she is, she is self-conscious about puberty and sometimes nostalgic for her childhood. At various times, she is both innocent and practical. Her best friend, Shauna, is different, but they work together well. Shauna is clever; she encourages Millie to revise one of her fan letters to improve it. Still, when it comes to Rory, she's prone to gushing too—if her preoccupation with him is more hidden behind a veneer of independence.

There's a contemporary scrapbook quality to the story's composition. Lyrics to Rory's songs and social media posts are included in the book to complement Millie's musings. She checks her phone for updates and video clips of Rory and takes careful note of how her peers react to him. With the concert as her ultimate goal, her story is moved along by obstacles: she faces setbacks that require her mother's help; she makes mistakes and is forced to mature. Even so, in the end, this is less a book about getting to a show than it is a story of a teenager coming to realize how much she is loved, even when her behavior seems selfish.

In the endearing novel *Worldwide Crush*, a girl is an avid devotee of a singer, to the amusement of her supportive friends and family.

KAREN RIGBY (March 15, 2023)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.