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My Education

by Daniel Scheffler

EDGE Contributor

Sunday Aug 18, 2013

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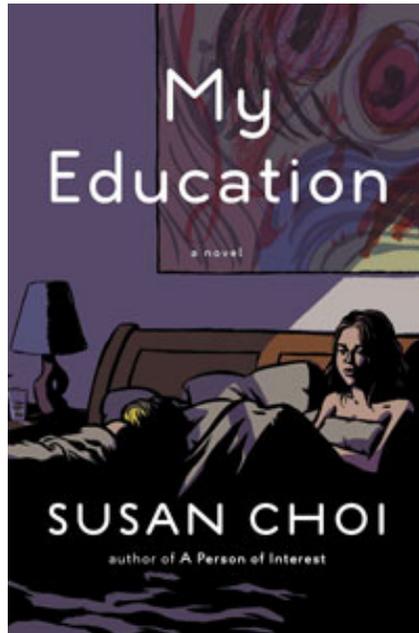
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"My Education" is the fourth novel from this 2004 Pulitzer Prize finalist. The novel slinks off to a familiar kickstart: the young, supposedly innocent, girl who falls for the smart, let's call him 'intellectual' older man. She is the student, he is the professor and we feel like we've seen this all before a couple of times. But even when the professor begins to sound familiar and starts to look familiar in your mind's eye and even when Regina, our lead character, hounds the man down despite his reputation for philandering and lechery, the masterful writer shifts the attention elsewhere very smartly. I gasped; you may even do the same, in bed or on the subway as I did.

The affair does take place, of course, but not with the person you've expected all along. Regina, the youthful yet calculated un-naïve graduate student, explores and she explores well. The proverbial moss does not grown near this girl - never mind on her. The relationship that ensues (big spoiler alert) between the professor's wife Martha and our girl Regina unfolds like an origami animal. Heated up sex scenes and eventually bitterness and a calculated destruction from both sides - all packaged in a tiny paper fold of cruelty.

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Regina and even Martha inspire more romances swirling around them and the ultimate realization of what love is, or pretends to be, comes swinging at them with a hairy, battered fist. The second part of the novel, almost 15 years on, showcases the characters in a new light yet again and (no spoiler here) makes the book even more worth reading, as the ending feels perfectly unexpected.

Gayness isn't mentioned, but love and eroticism and normalcy are. That's where Choi, our hero writer, does what she does best - she makes nice and she fleshes out every single scene with great care and consideration. Perhaps her feelings about life, politics, social standings, and love for that matter, are not so apparent in the novel but that feels authentic too. Painfully and carefully constructed the novel feels elegant, albeit it sexy, the disco inferno of love, supposed love, and rejection feel free and fresh like the ocean you know but cannot see.

"My Education"
Susan Choi
Viking
\$26.99

by Susan Choi

Popular Stories in Entertainment



Portraits by Bob Dylan on Display in London

Aug 30

New pastel portraits by singer Bob Dylan were shown for the first time at the National Portrait Gallery in London on Saturday. The 12 new works in the "Bob Dylan Face Value" exhibition represent the latest portrait studies from the legendary sin...



LGBT Legacies :: Jerry Mitchell

By EDGE | Aug 13

Two-time Tony Award-winner Jerry Mitchell discusses his early career in the theater and the impetus behind creating "Broadway Bares," the annual striptease fundraiser that has netted millions of dollars for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS.



Sundance Hit 'Fruitvale Station' Examines Racial Divide

By Fred Topel | Jul 19

One of the most disturbing racial incidents of the past few years happened in an Oakland subway station on New Year's Day 2009 when an African-American man was killed by police. Now the event is the basis of an award-winning drama.