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# The First Rule Of Punk



## Synopsis

From debut author and longtime zine-maker Celia C. Pérez, *The First Rule of Punk* is a wry and heartfelt exploration of friendship, finding your place, and learning to rock out like no one's watching. There are no shortcuts to surviving your first day at a new school—you can't fix it with duct tape like you would your Chuck Taylors. On Day One, twelve-year-old Mal (Mar-a Luisa, if you want to annoy her) inadvertently upsets Posada Middle School's queen bee, violates the school's dress code with her punk rock look, and disappoints her college-professor mom in the process. Her dad, who now lives a thousand miles away, says things will get better as long as she remembers the first rule of punk: be yourself. The real Mal loves rock music, skateboarding, zines, and Soyrito (hold the cilantro, please). And when she assembles a group of like-minded misfits at school and starts a band, Mal finally begins to feel at home. She'll do anything to preserve this, which includes standing up to an anti-punk school administration to fight for her right to express herself! Black and white illustrations and collage art throughout make *The First Rule of Punk* a perfect pick for fans of books like *Roller Girl* and online magazines like *Rookie*.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 336 pages

Publisher: Viking Books for Young Readers (August 22, 2017)

Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 5.9 x 1.1 x 8.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #788 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #2 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Hispanic & Latino #6 in Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Performing Arts #32 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Friendship

Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

## Customer Reviews

A 2017 ABA Indies Introduce TitleA Junior Library Guild SelectionPRAISE FOR THE FIRST RULE

OF PUNK: "A charming debut about a thoughtful, creative preteen connecting to both halves of her identity." *Kirkus Reviews* (starred review) "Those who enjoy vivacious, plucky heroines... will eagerly embrace Malu." *School Library Journal* (starred review) "Pérez's debut is as exuberant as its heroine... A rowdy reminder that people are at their best when they aren't forced into neat, tidy boxes." *Publishers Weekly* (starred review) "Extremely relatable and creatively inspiring, with a voice that is equal parts witty and sharp." *Bustle.com* "In *The First Rule of Punk*, Celia C. Pérez brings us Mal, a girl whose talents are as diverse as the images and words she snips for her zines. Mal is an irrepressible force, one that readers will long remember." *Diana López*, author of *Confetti Girl* and *Nothing Up My Sleeve*

Celia C. Pérez has been making zines inspired by punk and her love of writing for longer than some of you have been alive. Her favorite zine supplies are a long-arm stapler, glue sticks, and watercolor pencils. She still listens to punk music, and she'll never stop picking cilantro out of her food at restaurants. Originally from Miami, Florida, Celia lives in Chicago with her family and works as a community college librarian. She owns two sets of worry dolls because you can never have too many. *The First Rule of Punk* is her first book for young readers.

*The First Rule of Punk* is a fun middle grade book about a Mexican-American girl whose mother has relocated them to Chicago for a new job. I really liked a lot of things about Mal from the beginning, because it was completely relatable to me to see her struggling with her identity. She doesn't want to be the perfect Mexican *señorita* her mother wants her to be, but instead wants to be punk like her dad. Mal's struggles really highlight the unrealistic expectations that are placed upon children of color. Mal is called a *coco* (brown on the outside, white on the inside), by her classmate Selena, the perfect example of a Mexican child. Unlike Selena, Mal doesn't speak Spanish perfectly, she doesn't like cilantro, doesn't enjoy traditional Mexican dancing; basically doesn't do things that are "expected" from a Mexican child. But does this make Mal any less Mexican? Of course, there's more to the story than this. This book isn't only about identity and culture, but about friendship and finding your place. We see Mal's character develop throughout the story while she makes new friends and meets more Mexican people and role models who help her understand her struggles. I

think that this book really shows how representation is important, as we see how much MalÃfÃ° starts to reevaluate her life once she meets more people who are actually like her and she sees all the possibilities of what she can be. While being middle grade, this book never feels to me like itÃfÃ°Ã â Ñ â„çs too ÃfÃ°Ã â Ñ Å“juvenileÃfÃ°Ã â Ñ Å• or ÃfÃ°Ã â Ñ Å“childishÃfÃ°Ã â Ñ Å•; yes, the main character is 12 years old, but the story is written in such a way that itÃfÃ°Ã â Ñ â„çs difficult not to get sucked in. MalÃfÃ°ÃfÃ°Ã â Ñ â„çs narrative voice is honest and a little bit sarcastic, which made a lot of situations both relatable and completely hilarious. I definitely recommend this book to anyone, because itÃfÃ°Ã â Ñ â„çs fun and refreshing while also dealing with serious issues such as culture and being yourself. Review copy provided by publisher

Oh wow, do I ever love this book. The First Rule of Punk has heart, humor, spunk, and charm. And, of course, a radical and delightful punk-rock sensibility in the main character, MalÃfÃ°. This is a terrific story about a girl, MalÃfÃ°, who has to move from Miami to Chicago with her professor mom for two years, and is bummed, and wants to be punk rock about it (her dad, back in Miami, owns a record store) but finds it's hard to maintain a punk rock attitude all the time, especially when you're only 12 and in a new town. She is also a zine maker and the book includes her zines as she makes them, which is so cool to see, and will no doubt inspire zine-making in readers (I read an advance copy of this book, and am very much looking forward to the "real" book, when the zine art is all final). I'll be honest: this book is so ridiculously my type of book that I was unspeakably giddy the whole time I was reading it. If you are a fan of spunky main characters who are finding their way and find their people despite (or because of) their parents' influences, arts/crafts/zines/glue sticks, Chuck Taylors, tights, musical references, coffee references, delicious food references, and Beverly Cleary references, then you will also love this book. But who cares about me? I'm a grownup! My 9-year-old daughter read this book and ADORED it, and is now super into collaging and gluing and zine-esque journaling. She loved it so much that our copy is full of post-it notes marking her favorite pages.

MalÃfÃ° doesnÃfÃ°Ã â Ñ â„çt want to move with her mother to Chicago, even if it is only for a couple of years and not permanently. She knows her mother wants her to be much more of a proper Mexican young lady just like her. But MalÃfÃ° is much more into punk rock and creating zines. When they get to Chicago, MalÃfÃ° finds herself in a very diverse middle school where she manages to violate the dress code on the very first day. As she struggles with the rules of the new

school, MalÃfÂ° starts a punk rock band of other kids who donÃfÂ°Ã â ÑÃ â,,çt fit in. They enter the school talent contest but donÃfÂ°Ã â ÑÃ â,,çt get any further than the audition and then are rejected for the performance. Now MalÃfÂ° has to channel her own punk attitude to stand up and be heard. This is such a winning and cleverly built novel that one canÃfÂ°Ã â ÑÃ â,,çt really believe itÃfÂ°Ã â ÑÃ â,,çs a debut book. PÃfÂ°rez captures the push and pull of middle school and being a person with unique interests struggling to find friends. PÃfÂ°rez also weaves in the main characterÃfÂ°Ã â ÑÃ â,,çs cultural heritage throughout the book, making it a vital part of the story and playing it against the rebellion of punk rock. That play of tradition and modern attitudes is a strength of the book, allowing readers to learn about Mexican culture and also about rock and roll. MalÃfÂ° is a great protagonist, filled with lots of passion and energy. She has a natural leadership about her even as she is picked on by another girl at school. Still, MalÃfÂ° is not perfect and itÃfÂ°Ã â ÑÃ â,,çs her weak moments when she despairs or lashes out where she feels most real. Her zines are cleverly placed in the book, thanks to the skills of the author who also publishes zines. A fresh and fun new read that blends Mexican Americans with punk rock in a winning formula. Appropriate for ages 9-12.

ÃfÂ°Ã â ÑÃ Â“The First Rule of Punk,ÃfÂ°Ã â ÑÃ Â• by Celia C. PÃfÂ°rez (Viking / Penguin; 336 pp.; \$16.99; ages 9-13). MarÃfÂ°- a Luisa wears Chuck Taylors, listens to punk rock, makes zines, and goes by the nickname MalÃfÂ°. SheÃfÂ°Ã â ÑÃ â,,çs devastated when she has to move to Chicago with her mom, whom she calls a ÃfÂ°Ã â ÑÃ Â“SuperMexicanÃfÂ°Ã â ÑÃ Â•, leaving behind her dad and his record store. At her new strongly Latino school, MalÃfÂ° must navigate finding new friends, balancing her Mexican culture with her interests, and speaking out against rules she donÃfÂ°Ã â ÑÃ â,,çt agree with in a constructive, meaningful way. A fun, fresh story about claiming your own style. (ages 9-13)

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