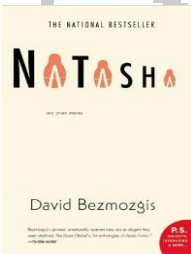




Fr. Michael Goetz Library Learning Commons Teacher's Book Review



Natasha and other stories by David Bezmozgis Reviewed by Mr. Bird, February 29th, 2012.

There are thousands of teens in Mississauga who are modern, socially networked, with immigrant parents who just don't understand. Look around you. They're in your class. You might be one. But who is telling the stories of these kids? David Bezmozgis, that's who. If you've taken grade 9 or 11 English or ESL CO or DO with Mr. Bird, you're probably familiar with David Bezmozgis' wonderful collection of seven short stories called *Natasha*.

All seven stories are chronologically linked and tell the story of Mark Berman and his family. The Bermans are newly arrived immigrants to suburban Toronto. These stories trace the heartbreak and hilarity of their struggles to fit in and figure out Canada. Although Mark is newly arrived Russian Jew, he would not stand out in the halls of Goetz. In the first story, he is six, he does not know a word of English, and he nearly kills a dog. By the fifth story he is a sullen teenager, too easily influenced by the wrong crowd. That leaves two more stories.

Does he disappoint his parents and become a typical Canadian teen: bored, apathetic and without a culture? Or does he learn to compromise and adapt in a healthy manner? *Natasha* might give you a glimpse of what's to come.