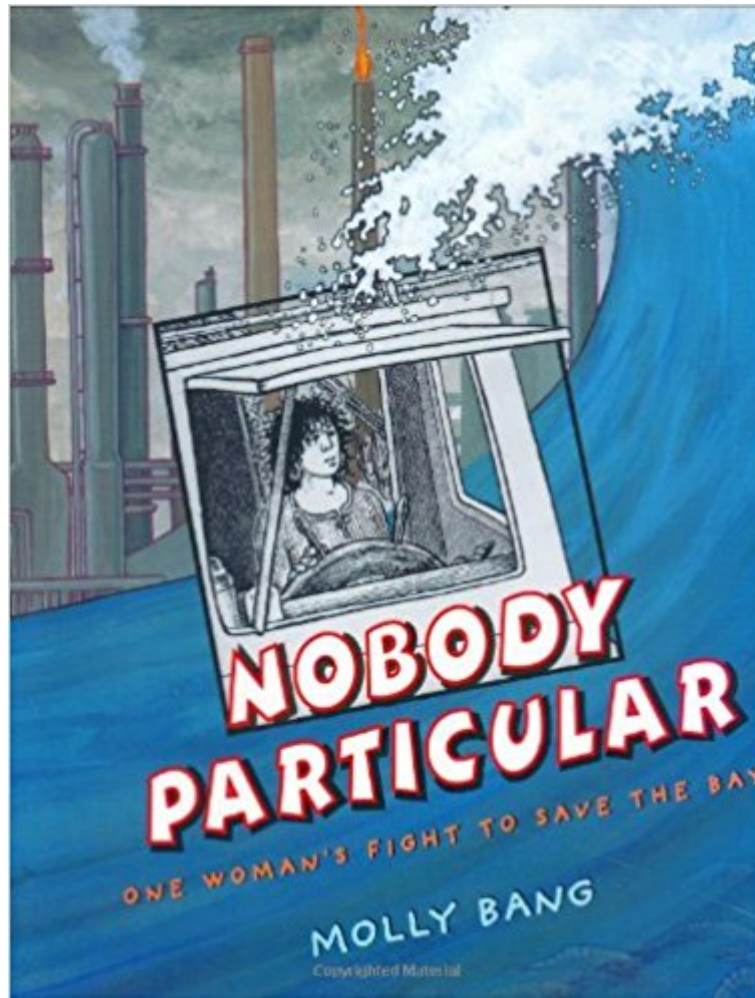




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Nobody Particular: One Woman's Fight To Save The Bays



Synopsis

From a renowned author/illustrator; a bold, daring, non-fiction picture book that tells the true story of one woman's fight to protect her environment. Sometimes we have to take a stand and do what's right. That's what Diane Wilson thinks. An independent shrimper in Texas, she ekes out a living in the same waters that her family has worked hard in for generations. When Diane learns that the chemical plants in Texas give out more pollution than in any other state, she decides to stop them. One woman against a powerful industry is not much of a fair fight, but Diane educates herself, lobbies, protests, writes letters, and never gives up. Based on real events, this is an inspiring, heartfelt story of one woman's struggle to take a stand against injustice and indifference. Award-winning author/illustrator Molly Bang has created a compelling narrative, told inventively through a series of black and white graphic panels set against a richly colored gouache background.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Think of her as Erin Brockovich on a shrimp boat. This unassuming, working-class mom, a fourth-generation East Texas shrimper--"no education, no money, no clout," she says--turned her life upside down to fight the good fight against chemical plants that were destroying her livelihood and the bays she held dear. This comic-book-style biography of unlikely activist Diane Wilson

follows her radical transformation, from the first days of pulling up nothing in her nets to her hunger strike, law suits, and run-ins with the EPA. The format might lead you to believe this is strictly kids' stuff, but Wilson and author and Caldecott Honor artist Molly Bang manage to pack a lot of information into the book's mostly black-and-white panels (maybe a little too much for some younger folks). But readers of all ages will find inspiration in this political, feminist tale of how one person--"nobody particular," says Wilson--can fight big business and win. (Ages 9 to 12) --Paul Hughes

Bang (Common Ground) continues in an environmental vein with this cramped account of commercial shrimper Diane Wilson's fight to protect her native Texas waters from pollution. Taking a chronological approach, she tracks Wilson's growth from ordinary citizen (or "nobody particular") to environmental activist; the tale of how Wilson plays David to corporate Goliaths is an inspiring one. Artistically, Bang attempts a new style, apparently in order to shoehorn in a vast amount of information. On most spreads, she floats densely lettered black-and-white comic-book-style panels over full-color backgrounds that depict, variously, everything from the marine ecosystems of the Gulf waters to bird's-eye views of petrochemical plants. Additional elements include newspaper clippings, photographs and sidebars. With so many items vying for attention, the visual presentation is generally cluttered. Several scenes--for example, a lovely, limpid close-up of two whooping cranes feeding--stand out in refreshing contrast. There's much to appreciate here, but it may be for motivated readers only. Ages 11-up. (Jan.) . Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Diane Wilson:"This much I know: Within 25 miles of my house are five giant chemical plants--one each for Alcoa, British Petroleum, DuPont, Formosa Plastics, and Union Carbide. By night they look like magic lit-up fairy castles. In daylight they turn into gray and twisted surrealistic pipe dreams. We grew up high on their strange perfumes, knowing workers whose bathwater turned yellow every night until they died early, knowing we weren't supposed to fish the waters where Alcoa dumped tons of mercury..."Now, I'm nobody particular--just a shrimper and momma--no education, no money, no clout. How can a nobody make these corporations quit dumping their poisons on us. If I stop to think on it, I'll know I'm a fool and go patch a shrimp net, quiet my mind in moving twine and fingers."Molly Bang's picture book, NOBODY PARTICULAR: ONE WOMAN'S FIGHT TO SAVE THE BAYS is an astounding dual story--a powerful introduction to the complex competing demands upon the world's scarce fresh water supplies coupled with the jaw-dropping true story of Diane Wilson, a fourth-generation Texas shrimper who successfully took on multinational corporations and

the EPA in order to protect the Texas bays from significantly increased toxic industrial discharges. In the background of each two page spread, Molly Bang illustrates and discusses the prehistoric and historical development of, importance of, and mounting pressure upon the world's estuaries and fresh water supplies. As with her other environmentally related picture books, Molly Bang has a knack for portraying the interconnectedness of ecosystems and how they drastically affect and are affected by human beings. In the midst of each spread, in an overlying black and white graphic novel format, Bang simultaneously recounts how Diane Wilson discovered the bay pollution affecting her livelihood, learned of the plans by corporate polluters to expand their operations, and educated herself in order to fight the corporations and governmental bureaucrats.

Teenagers looking for nonviolent heroes like Dr Martin Luther King, Jr, need only read this book to find one. Diane Wilson, a shrimp fisher in Texas, learns that chemical factories which provide many jobs are also poisoning the water, reducing her livelihood and affecting the community's health. She rapidly becomes a hero to environmentalists and an enemy to the companies and local government, and has to undertake a hunger strike to get the federal government to enforce its own laws. Black and white comic-style illustrations flesh out the story, with a background of full color paintings depicting the natural systems affected. Like a graphic novel or Larry Gonick's Cartoon History of the World, the illustrations brim over with facts, which may overwhelm many readers. But those who persist will understand just how much willpower it takes to overcome environmental injustice.

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