DOES REMI WOLF SINK IN NEW ALBUM MUD?

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California-based artist Remi Wolf released her newest album "Mud" on Friday, Oct 9.

She's been having a big year, recently coming off a guest appearance in the hit show "Off Campus."

Wolf has been making waves in the indie scene this decade since her 2021 debut "Juno." "Mud" is the first album from Wolf since 2024's "Big Ideas." This is my introduction to Wolf; I've heard nothing but great things. Let's see if she sinks or swims through the mud.

The genre of music Wolf writes and performs can be described as funk-pop: pop songs with elements of funk music and R&B. This album has more elements of folk or acoustic, but R&B influences are heavy on the track "Jamie," a song that grew on me after a few listens. Wolf mixes some spoken word verses with a solid chorus. The song shines on the refrain where Wolf shouts its title like she's screaming for help. Just like riding Storm Runner, it gets better each time.



Remi Wolf singing her latest album "Mud" on stage. The album was released on Oct. 9.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @REMIWOLF ON INSTAGRAM

Wolf is not afraid to do something straight out of left field; on the track "Covered in Mud," we get drum and bass with Wolf singing in a country accent. It feels very phoned in; the accent is an odd choice. It's a well-produced track with an unremarkable chorus on its first appearance but it gets better each time it comes around. It's a solid track, despite the fake accent.

My biggest gripe with Wolf's music is her songwriting; her choruses are too much, too wordy and not very memorable. They overstay their welcome, feeling like the song should move on or repeat sooner but doesn't. Tracks like "I Won't Cry," "Twiggy" and "Guess" all suffer from this. "Twiggy" just drags. The melody is half baked, which ruins the emotional climax of the song for me. This song is an example of the bridges just trying to shove too many ideas into one track.

"Wine Drunk" is a big highlight for me, with a punchy opening verse that builds on itself into an anthemic chorus. I hear a little resemblance to The Kinks in the guitar that opens the track. It doesn't let up one bit; my only issue is some lyrics leave me puzzled, like "We're naked in Jamaica, Waking up to the smell of bacon." These just feel like she needed a rhyme. They're very out of place, but it's still a good song.

"Champagne" and "Burn Me Blue" are more highlights on the album.



The album cover for Remi Wolf's new album "Mud." The album was released on Oct. 9.

PHOTO COURTESY OF REMI WOLF ON FACEBOOK

The former with some great production and a killer chorus, a moment where the stickiness of the chorus and its melody overpower the length of it. Then "Burn Me Blue" has this sandpaper-esque guitar line and booming drums. The vocal performance on the chorus is the best on the album; the way Wolf delivers the word blue just sounds excellent.

The album goes out on a whimper with the closing track "Yellow Rose." Wolf's vocals on this song are not pleasant at all, a far cry of what we got earlier on the album. It feels buried under this vocal effect that is straight up ugly. Combine that with a melody that doesn't go anywhere, and you get a weak finish to the album. There's a synth line in the chorus that sounds straight out of "Wolf" era Tyler, The Creator. It doesn't benefit the track; it just makes me want to go listen to the other "Wolf."

"Mud" by Remi Wolf is serviceable. There's a handful of good tracks on, mixed with a few not-so-great ones. But I look forward to listening to Wolf's discography and future endeavors.

Highlights: "Champagne," "Burn Me Blue," "Jamie" and "Wine Drunk."

Rating: 3/5

SECLUDED RAINBOWS: 'FELIX EVER AFTER'

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"I'm not pretending to be a boy. Just because you haven't evolved to realize gender identity doesn't equal biology doesn't mean you get to say who I am and who I'm not. You don't have that power. Only I have the power to say who I am."

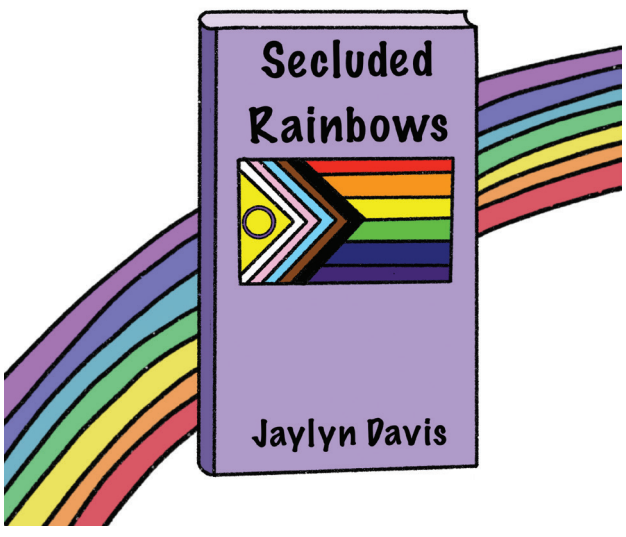
This is one of the boldest quotes from "Felix Ever After." I find it symbolic because it represents the strength and resilience that the transgender and non-binary communities hold. Despite the hardships they face, some transgender and non-binary people stand up for themselves and remind those who discriminate against them that gender isn't fixed.

Welcome back to Secluded Rainbows, a biweekly column that publishes stories every other Tuesday. In each story, I discuss an LGBTQIA+ book that's currently being banned or challenged. In this issue, I'll discuss Kacen Callender's "Felix Ever After."

Published on May 5, 2020, "Felix Ever After" follows the story of Felix Love, a Black, transgender and bisexual man from Brooklyn, N.Y. Throughout the novel, he strives to get into Brown University while dealing with financial strain and bullying.

Callender's novel is widely recognized as a powerful story. However, it's faced some backlash.

It's currently banned in Arkansas and South Carolina. Furthermore, it was threatened to be banned from Old Rochester Regional High School libraries in 2023 because of sexually explicit content. The Old Rochester Regional School District Standards Committee unanimously voted to keep the novel in the libraries, according to Shippican Week.



LOGO BY LILLIAN LAFEMINA, ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

In the beginning of the novel, Love begins to experience transphobia, demonstrated in a scene where Love's father deadnames him.

"Hearing it said out loud, directed at me, always sends a stabbing pain through my chest, this sinking feeling in my gut," Love says on page 22.

Not long after the incident, Love and his best friend, Ezra Patel, encounter pre-transition photos of Love at their school, which humiliates him. On the same day, Love receives a transphobic message from an anonymous sender. Shortly after the message is sent, Love and Patel embark on an investigation to find out the sender's name, so they can take them down.

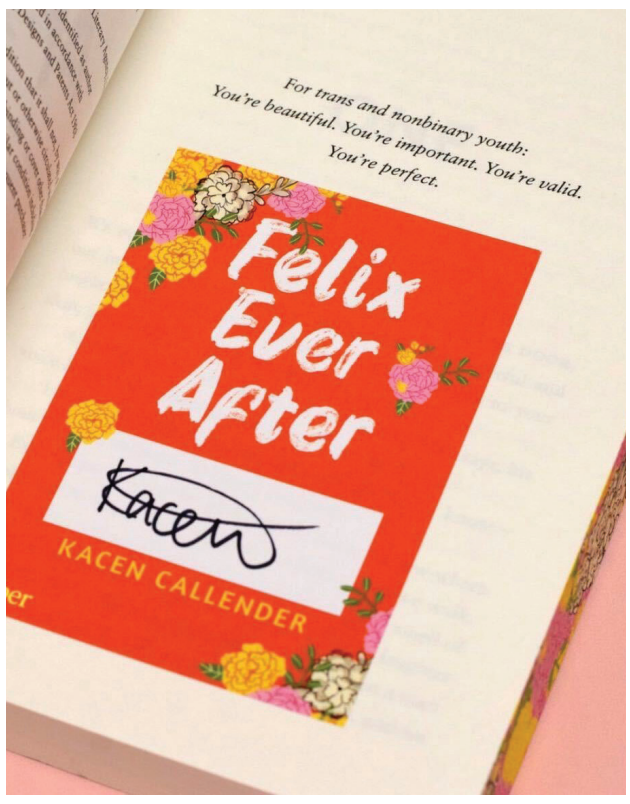
The bulk of the novel follows Love and Patel's investigation. However, "Felix Ever After" is also a journey about love and self-discovery. Throughout the novel, Love constantly questions his gender identity while exploring his love interests, making it a relatable story to those who are currently questioning their gender identity, sexual orientation or both.

"Felix Ever After" was inspired by Callender's personal life, according to the author's note at the end of the novel. Callender said he frequently dreamed of being a boy when he was a child. They also said "Degrassi: The Next Generation" made them realize they're non-binary and transmasculine. These experiences influenced Love's transgender identity along with the gender dysphoria he faced during his childhood.

The cover of "Felix Ever After" is a self-portrait that Love paints in the novel, according to an interview between Callender and The Nerd Daily. Callender said the cover represents Love's unique identity and personality.

Regardless of backlash, "Felix Ever After" received a lot of praise when it was published. ALA Booklist said "Felix Ever After" is "an unforgettable story of friendship, heartbreak, forgiveness and self-discovery." Meanwhile, Horn Book Magazine said it includes "responsible psychological guidance without bogging down the storytelling."

Besides praise, "Felix Ever After" received numerous awards and accolades. Three were the Stonewall Honor Book Award (2020), the Carnegie Medal (2022) and the Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Award (2023). It was also nominated for the Goodreads Choice award in 2020 and the Milwaukee County Teen Book Award in 2021.



The dedication page of Kacen Callender's book "Felix Ever After." The book has received widespread praise and acclaim but is banned in South Carolina and Arkansas due to its LGBTQIA+ themes.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @FOYLESFORBOOKS ON INSTAGRAM

"Felix Ever After" is in many bestselling charts. Two are the 2021 American Library Association Rainbow Book List and the 2021 New York Times 100 Best Young Adult Books of All Time List.

In a world where transphobia is prevalent, books like "Felix Ever After" are very important. They provide thoughtful advice about how to protect yourself from discrimination; they encourage you to stand up for yourself and they tell you that it's okay to explore your gender identity and sexual orientation.

Banning novels like "Felix Ever After" will prevent transgender, non-binary and questioning readers from acquiring that advice and motivation through a digestible narrative, possibly making their lives more difficult than they already are.