



# Among School Children

*Tracy Kidder*

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Mrs. Zajac is feisty, funny, and tough. She likes to call herself an "old-lady schoolteacher." (She is thirty-four.) Around Kelly School, she is famous for her discipline: "She is *mean, bro*," says one of her students. **But children love her. And so will the reader of this extraordinarily moving book by the author of *House* and *The Soul of a New Machine*.**

**Mrs. Zajac spends her working life "among schoolchildren." To some it might seem a small world, a world of spelling and recess and endless papers to correct. But we soon realize that Mrs. Zajac's classroom is big enough to house much of human nature. Her little room contains a distillate of some of the worst social problems of our time. Some of the children's young lives seem already stunted by physical and emotional deprivation. And some are full of precarious promise.**

As we come to know these children, we long for their salvation — and we come to understand, as if for the first time, the difference that a good teacher can make in a child's life, and in our society.

Among Schoolchildren provides the most realistic account of American education ever written — on every page we encounter the precisely rendered truth for which Tracy Kidder is famous. But this is more than a book about education. It is about one woman's indomitability, about the joy of acting out of conscience and love. At bottom, its subject is nothing less than the struggle between good and evil.

In *Among Schoolchildren* Tracy Kidder has written his most emotionally powerful, most memorable work.

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