



# TEEN BOOK REVIEWS

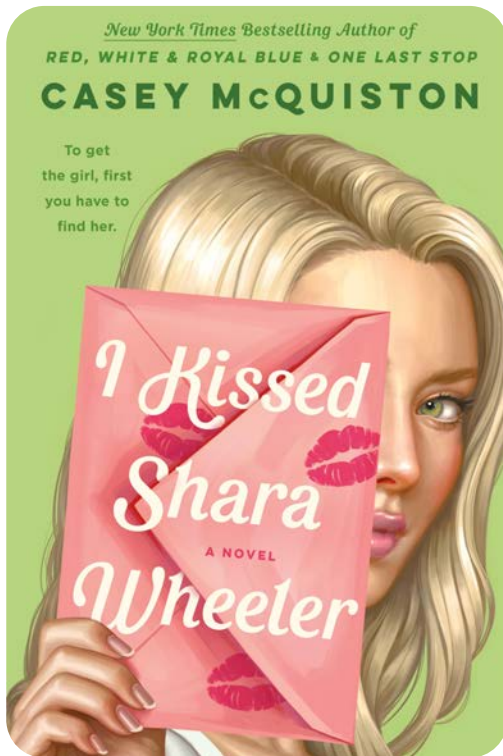
AUGUST 2023

GUIDE

BOOKS IN THE  
YOUNG ADULT  
COLLECTION

BOOKS IN THE  
ADULT  
COLLECTION

BOOKS IN THE  
CHILDREN  
COLLECTION



# I KISSED SHARA WHEELER

## BY

### CASEY MCQUISTON

CALL #

YA FIC MCQUISTON

COLLECTION:

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

RATING:



GENRE:

ROMANCE

#### Book Review:

The novel, I Kissed Shara Wheeler, is centered around Chloe Green, a student at Willowgrove Christian Academy who, for her four years of high school, has been focusing on one thing: winning valedictorian. The only thing stopping her is Shara Wheeler, the principal's perfect, pious, popular daughter, and who keeps on beating Chloe in all their classes. Chloe and Shara's rivalry comes to an abrupt halt; however, a month before graduation, Shara kisses Chloe and proceeds to completely disappear. Confused, angry, and looking for answers, Chloe finds out that before her vanishing act, Shara kissed two other people: Rory, the school "punk," and Smith, her boyfriend, the archetypical "jock." United by their experience, they soon discover that Shara has left behind a trail of clues to her location in the form of letters, each one telling a new and potentially dangerous secret.

This book is, at its heart, a story of love and how it serves as a motivator for change. I was hooked on it from the very first page, the clever writing and hilarious content effortlessly capturing my attention. It is filled with LGBTQ+ representation and themes, which makes it both an inspiring and deeply emotional book to read. In addition, the mystery and suspense of the novel were enthralling, stopping me from putting it down or thinking of anything else.

I would certainly recommend this book, if not for the reasons mentioned above, than at least for its beauty. It tells a story that is both relevant and compelling, both well-written and well-paced. Shara's letters make you want to reach through the pages and demand answers. The characters' problems make you angry and scared for them. It is a book that succeeds in giving the reader a door to its world, complete with all the emotions of the characters you see this story through. LGBTQ+ readers, or those who feel trapped in an unwanted role, will especially be able to relate to and enjoy this book. This applies as well to readers who love mystery, academic rivalries, and stories about LGBTQ+ people who actually have happy endings.



# YELLOWFACE BY R.F. KUANG

CALL #

FIC KUANG

COLLECTION:

FICTION

RATING:



GENRE:

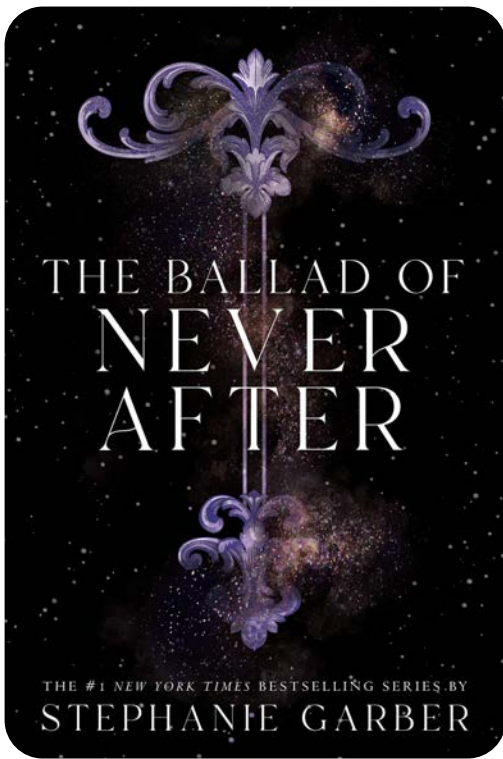
SATIRE, PSYCHOLOGICAL FICTION

## Book Review:

This book is about the satire of racism as well as the metafiction of social media. In the book, we learn that Athena Liu, who was a Chinese-American author, died while writing a book. However, her co-worker, who was working on the novel with her, decides to take all the credit from her and start to build up her career with Athena's work. Will she succeed, or will she be found out and blamed?

I think this book is an interesting read, especially because I am also Chinese. The book is very modern, but it also talks about human greed. The author used a lot of strong perspectives to write out certain situations. The author was able to also embed funny moments in the books as well. This is extremely well done because while reading through the book, it is a serious topic, but those funny moments help ease the tension that is building up. My least favorite character is Athena's co-worker, June Hayward; she stole Athena's work, which, in my opinion, is not right. By June deciding to plagiarize Athena's work, we are able to see how her actions represent human greed, which shows everyone would do whatever it takes to get what they want.

I would recommend this book to the Asian community because this shows the racism that's going around in the community constantly. This is not to anger the community but rather to make the community aware of these actions. This book isn't exactly fun to read but by reading it you can learn a lot from it, such as racism and human greed.



# THE BALLAD OF NEVER AFTER BY STEPANIE GARBER

CALL #

YA FIC GARBER

COLLECTION:

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

RATING:



GENRE:

EPIC FANTASY, PARANORMAL ROMANCES

## Book Review:

The Ballad of Never After is the second book in the soon-to-be trilogy Once Upon A Broken Heart. This trilogy is a YA fantasy about a young woman, Evangeline Fox, who, after her first love betrays her, resorts to asking a fate, called the Prince of Heart, or Jacks, to help mend her broken heart. This book continues the first in the trilogy and follows Jacks and Evangeline's journey through their mission. After being seemingly betrayed by Jacks, Evangeline tries to complete her personal mission without his accompaniment, but he always happens to be there when she needs help and manages to win her over once again. Evangeline struggles to decide who she can trust and who will betray her, especially after being hurt by so many people she cares about. Evangeline and Jacks juggle completing their mission and managing their feelings toward each other, struggling to hide them but knowing that it can't end well, given Jacks' curse.

This book is miles more entertaining than the first of the trilogy. Arguably, the best part of any series is being able to delve deeper and deeper into a character and witnessing the strengthening of their relationships with those around them. Additionally, while the first book of the series tends to be an introduction of sorts, the second delves a lot more into the plot. In this book, we got to see more of Jacks and Evangeline's relationship and the tensions between them. Evangeline also interacted more with her other friends and foes, making the character dynamics so much more interesting. There was also significant character development, particularly in Evangeline and Jacks. The communication between the two was so much better than in the first book, and Evangeline became a lot less naïve. To add on, the plot of this book was much more entertaining and complex than the first. In general, although the first book might be slightly boring, this book made it all worth it.

To anybody looking for a YA fantasy book to read, especially one with a romance subplot, I'd highly recommend giving this trilogy a try. The stakes are high, the world is interesting, and the characters are great - it has everything that makes a good fantasy, in my opinion.



# SPY SCHOOL PROJECT X

## BY

### STUART GIBBS

CALL # J GIBBS

COLLECTION: J FICTION

RATING: 

GENRE: SPY FICTION

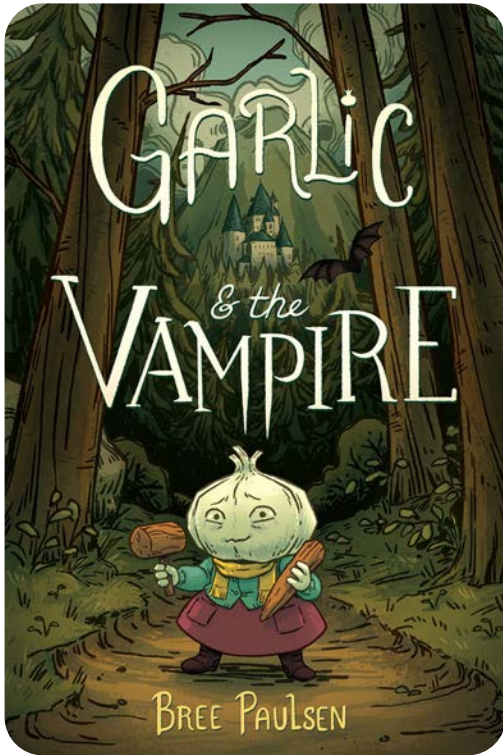
#### Book Review:

Spy School Project X is a novel about Ben Ripley, a 14-year-old spy, and his other spy friends attempting to get rid of a bounty set on Ben's head by Murry, Ben's Nemesis. The book starts off with Ben in class, like any other day, until he figures out a bomb is planted in the school. After a chain reaction of events that happens at school, Ben quickly finds out that Murry has set a bounty on Ben's head for 20 million dollars. The story then unfolds into a narrative with drama, plot twists, and action. Will Ben and his friends be able to call off the hit on Ben, or will he suffer to defeat all the assassins after the 20 million cash prize?

My thoughts on the book are that it is never a dull read. There is always something happening to keep the reader engaged with the book. At some points, you could lose what is happening at the moment, but you can always find yourself back to the main point. The book is part of a book series known as the "Spy School Series." Even though this is the newest addition to the book series, it doesn't hinder your ability to understand the plot one bit. If something from the other books is brought up, there is always a little context added to help the reader understand. Another thing that this book is good at is giving a lot of plot twists. Some of them are easier to spot than others, but it is always cool to see how the plot unravels.

I think this book is great for people who love both suspense and mystery because this book incorporates both of those feelings. The book also has quite a wide range of characters, such as a spy, an assassin, and a boy who sits in front of a computer all day. I would recommend this book to fourth through ninth graders due to the fact that the vocabulary isn't too hard but also includes some advanced wording. Though not many people could relate to this book, it does provide a new, cool experience for kids like me. The book is quite thick; however, due to the great detail and effort that is put into the book, it doesn't even feel that long.





# GARLIC & THE VAMPIRE BY BREE PAULSEN

CALL # J GN GARLIC

COLLECTION: J GRAPHIC NOVEL

RATING:



GENRE: HUMOROUS , FANTASY COMICS

## Book Review:

"Garlic and the Vampire" is a graphic novel about a nervous garlic and her incredible adventure. She lives a simple life with the other crops and has never once dared to step outside of her comfort zone or her very own community. When rumor has it that a Vampire is out and about, Garlic is volunteered to confront them, even if she is anything but brave. In this book, written by Bree Paulsen, Garlic learns and teaches us that sometimes a little courage and growth isn't so hard or scary at all.

I would definitely give this book five stars. The illustrations in the novel were stunning. Each and every panel was carefully and beautifully done; it's what made the story so enjoyable. Every time I read it, I love the cute and fun storyline, which still has an incredible plot and is always awesome to read. My favorite character is actually Carrot, Garlic's best friend since he is funny, kind, and supportive of Garlic's struggles, which I really admire.

This book was great, and I would for sure recommend it! It is a short book, so it isn't long or dry. I also found that on every page, the story always remained interesting and kept me going until the very end. Additionally, the message they were putting out was really inspiring and heartwarming. I think it helps to encourage bravery and confidence in oneself, which could be helpful for teens. "Garlic and the Vampire" is a book that I will forever admire and love (I have re-read it countless times!), so don't hesitate to check this book out if you like a quick and cute read!