



TEEN BOOK REVIEWS

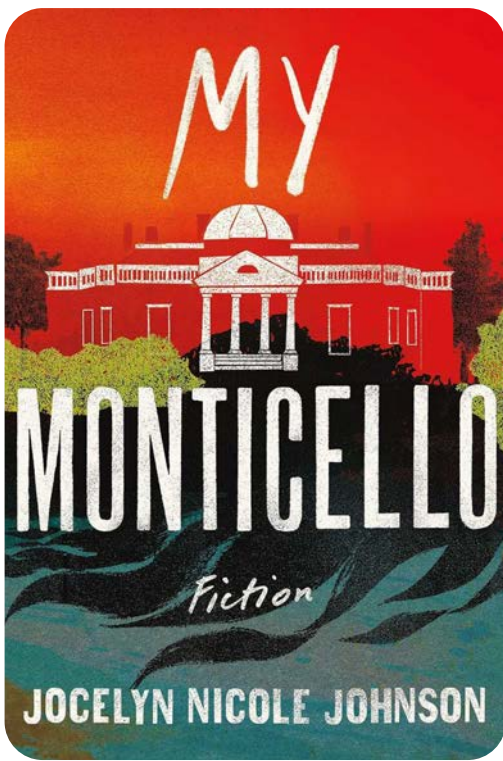
FEBRUARY 2023

GUIDE

BOOKS IN THE
YOUNG ADULT
COLLECTION

BOOKS IN THE
ADULT
COLLECTION

BOOKS IN THE
CHILDREN
COLLECTION



MY MONTICELLO

BY

JOCELYN NICOLE JOHNSON

CALL #: SS JOHNSON

RATING: 

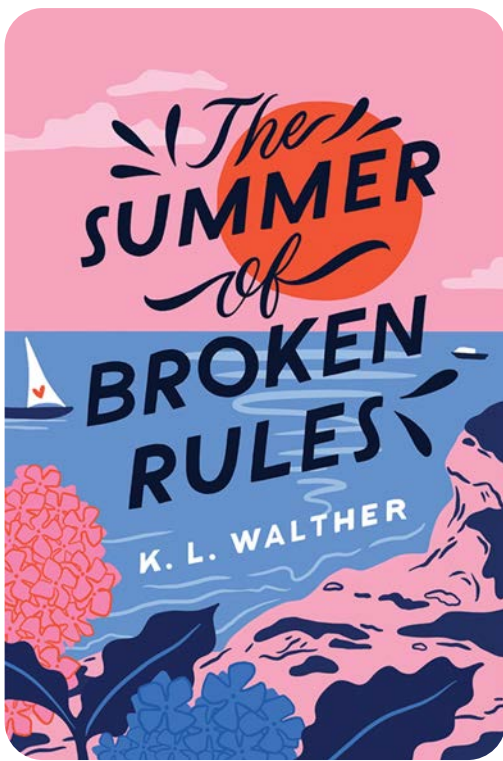
GENRE: SHORT STORIES, FICTION

Book Review:

The book "My Monticello" consists of 5 short stories that make up the book: "Control N," "Virginia is Not Your Home," "Something Sweet on Our Tongues," "Buying a House Ahead of the Apocalypse," "The King of Xandria," and "My Monticello." The short stories are each told from a different perspective and resonate with the theme of racism, inheritance, and community. They show the African-American community's experiences through different lenses, each story having a powerful meaning.

This is a strong and powerful book; the fluidity and strength in each story leave the reader with a feeling that this is not just fiction. There is one specific story that can be quite controversial due to different people having different opinions on it, which is the first story in the book, "Control N." I personally think this story is the best one out of all of them. Throughout the story, there are hints of where the author is leading the reader, but the ending may be surprising for people. Regardless, the point that the main character in the story was trying to make gets proven. There wasn't anything I didn't like about the book except for a part of the first story, but aside from that, there isn't much to dislike about this book. This book left me with mixed emotions; it was a mix of empathy but also a feeling of strength; since this book portrays the struggles of the African-American community through powerful stories, I think it can be a bit strong for younger audiences, but each story has a deep meaning to them.

I would recommend this book because I enjoy it when books have a deeper meaning behind them rather than just being a typical story; I like when they leave you with something to think about and learn from. That said, I think people who want a deep story would also enjoy this book. This book reminded me of the book Native Son by Richard Wright; while it is an entirely different concept, the story is powerful and portrays the struggles of African-American people.



THE SUMMER OF BROKEN RULES

BY
K.L. WALTHER

CALL #: YA FIC WALTHER

RATING: 

GENRE: CONTEMPORARY ROMANCE

Book Review:

"The Summer of Broken Rules" by K.L. Walther is a young adult romance book with a fun summery vibe. The story centers around Meredith, a teenage girl, and her first annual family trip to Martha's Vineyard since her sister, Claire, passed away in a car accident. For multiple years after the pass, Meredith blocked out all her friends and relatives, and she and her parents didn't go to their usual family summer vacation. However, with her cousin, Sarah, getting married, she decides it's finally time for her to venture into the real world. What she doesn't expect, though, especially so soon after breaking up with her boyfriend of 4 years, is to find her perfect match. She spends the wedding time trying to carry her sister's legacy of being an assassin champion, but when she meets a certain groomsman, she becomes distracted and risks not only losing the game but also breaking her promise.

What made this book such a good read for me was the love all the characters had for each other. There were many good examples of healthy relationships, both romantic and platonic. Meredith's friends and family obviously care so deeply about her, as she does they. The main couple's compassion and devotion to each other are so heartwarming, as are the newlyweds. I feel that a lot of romance novels include some toxic element, and although it can be intriguing storywise, it's nice to be able to just read about happy relationships every once in a while. Despite her going through troubles with her friendships after blocking out so many people, throughout the course of the novel, Meredith can overcome those issues and is overall a pretty sustainable role model. All the novel's characters are charming, charismatic, and fun to read about.

"The Summer of Broken Rules" is the perfect read for when you want a little more happiness in your life, especially during the summer. It will immediately transport you to a warm, sunny, summer vacation. I recommend reading this book if you are just getting into reading, are in a slump, or just want a cute and fun new read. I assure you that you'll finish it in a pinch and be left with a warm feeling in your heart. Also, this novel includes a lot of references to Taylor Swift and her songs, so I highly recommend checking it out if you're a fan.

QUEEN OF THE TILES

BY

HANNA ALKAF

CALL #: YA FIC ALKAF

RATING: ★★★★★

GENRE: MYSTERY



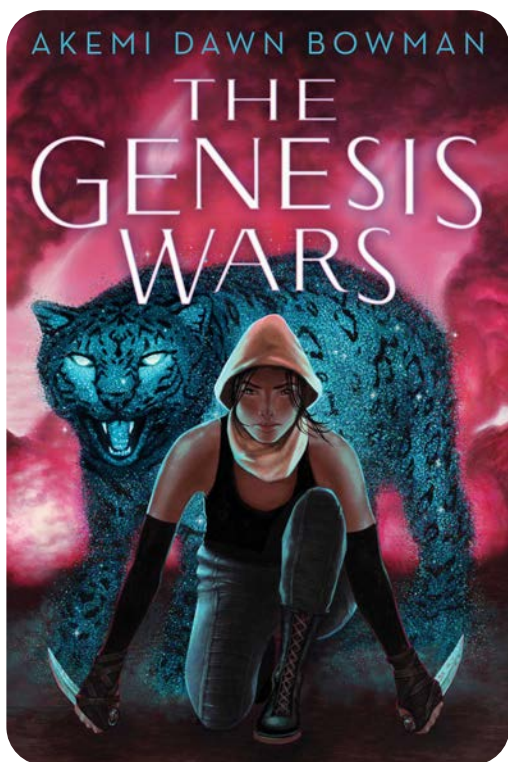
Book Review:

This is a wonderful book following Najwa, a competitive Scrabble player, at her first tournament since the mysterious death of her best friend, Trina, during the final game one year before. If you like teen fiction, murder mysteries, psychology, words, Scrabble, or all of the above, I recommend this book.

Najwa, a Malaysian Muslim girl, wrestles with her grief over the loss of her friend, fighting a war in her head against her overwhelming thoughts and emotions. She struggles to focus on the game and interact with her peers and competitors in a positive way. The weekend descends into greater chaos when strange messages and events bring the circumstances of her friend's death into question again. Najwa begins investigating and discovers surprising secrets about Trina's last interactions, which players had kept to themselves out of guilt or shame. These new findings throw suspicion on people Najwa trusts, and she is forced to question her friends' innocence. She must unravel hidden stories within the Scrabble games and the hearts of her peers in hopes of bringing the criminal to justice.

Besides the thrilling murder mystery, I appreciated the author's copious use of intriguing, scrabble words. The chapters are peppered with commentary on characters and situations in the voice of a word nerd, "If Yasmin were a word, she would be COMPLAISANT: eager to please, obliging." If you actually remembered all the unusual words used and defined in the book, your vocabulary would skyrocket. Even if you don't, I found it to add a pleasant bit of spice to the narrative.

The book starts out slowly and can be uncomfortable to read as you feel Najwa's internal grief. Similar to Hanna Alkaf's other book, "The Weight of Our Sky," about a girl with OCD, the storytelling really gets into the main character's head as she slowly overcomes her negative thoughts and takes back control of her mind to live a happier life. I found this to be a helpful perspective to understand the frustration of someone going through such an experience.



THE GENESIS WARS BY AKEMI DAWN BOWMAN

CALL #: YA FIC BOWMAN

RATING: 

GENRE: SCIENCE FICTION

Book Review:

“The Genesis Wars” by Akemi Dawn Bowman is a book about a girl named Nami, who escapes a brutal event and trains her body and mind to help her rescued friends and look for her sister. As she goes through multiple struggles, she finds ways to team up with others in order to reach her goal. However, the person who holds all the answers is none other than the person who betrayed Nami in the past; how she will pass through these walls is up to her decision.

The book was wild and interesting. I liked how the main character, Nami, focuses on her goals and the lives of others struggling with the same issue. The series of events that pile up together make a fun riddle and mystery for the reader also to try and solve. Some of the events that happened were kind of weird, and sometimes, the characters didn’t engage well, but the theme of the book is amazing and the story was always on a constant flow, and I never felt like I was lost when reading. The theme of care and mindset really helps people who read this book to feel confident with themselves and that not everything in life must be done by themselves.

I would recommend this book if you like mystery and action. The plot is very interesting, and it will definitely make you feel confident in life. This book reminded me of Ann Fraistat’s book, “What We Harvest.” Overall, definitely a good book to read.