



TEEN BOOK REVIEWS

APRIL 2024

GUIDE

BOOKS IN THE
YOUNG ADULT
COLLECTION

BOOKS IN THE
ADULT
COLLECTION

BOOKS IN THE
CHILDREN
COLLECTION



THE QUEENS OF NEW YORK BY E.L SHEN

CALL # YA FIC SHEN

COLLECTION: YOUNG ADULT FICTION

RATING: ★★★★★

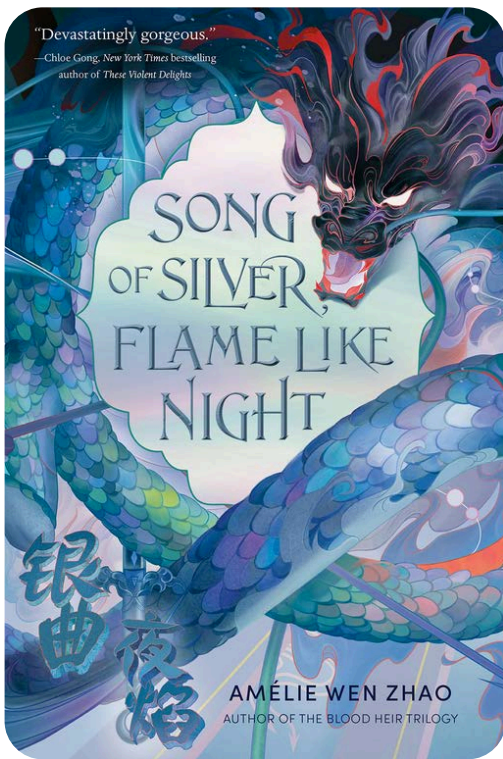
GENRE: REALISTIC FICTION

Book Review:

The summertime travels of three best friends are followed in The Queens of New York. Jia spends her days meeting a cute boy and watching her grandma at her family's dumpling shop in Chinatown. Everett is leaving for an acting camp, which she hopes will help her realize her Broadway ambitions. With sorrow on her mind, Ariel is traveling to California for camp at the university that she will soon attend. The three remain in touch even as the summer brings with it fresh feelings and encounters.

I enjoyed Jia, Everett, and Ariel's friendship, but I also adored how unique each girl was. They were a perfect complement to each other, and their camaraderie was palpable when they were together. I could have read an entire book about each girl on her own since their tales were so well-developed. I loved how the language transported me; the rich settings of New York, Korea, and Ohio complemented the plot. The Queens of New York saw a little bit of everything: racial tensions, expectations, romance, sorrow, and more. Even though each issue was thoroughly explored, none of it felt out of place or out of time, given its specific location and period in the story. It would be wonderful to watch Jia, Everett, and Ariel's friendship grow, so all I can hope for is to read about their reunion in the future.

I appreciated how each of the characters had flaws, and they were able to recognize and comprehend them. Ariel's anguish was really realistic, and I appreciated the characters' interactions. It wasn't just realistic and heartbreaking; the connections were also enjoyable and heartwarming. Everything about this narrative was authentic and genuine. I really suggest this book for a compelling summer read.



SONG OF SILVER, FLAME LIKE NIGHT BY AMÉLIE WEN ZHAO

CALL # YA FIC ZHAO

COLLECTION: YOUNG ADULT FICTION

RATING:



GENRE:

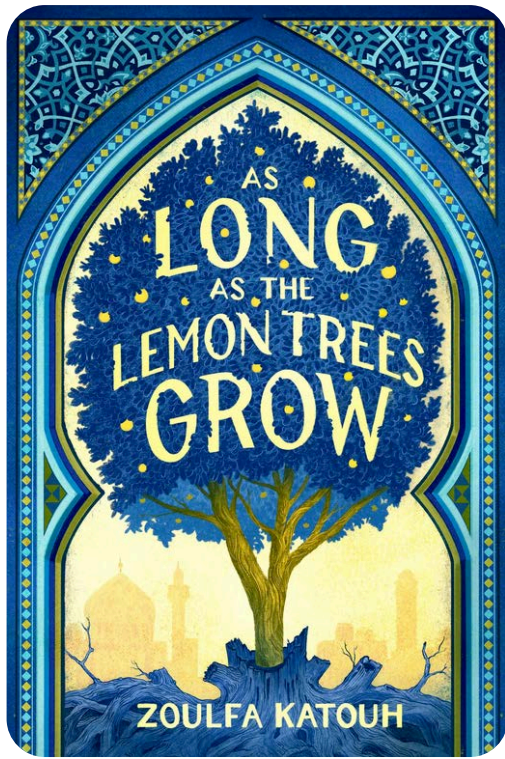
FANTASY

Book Review:

[Song of Silver, Flame Like Night](#), by Amélie Wen Zhao, follows Lan, also known as Lian'er, who lives under the rule of the Elantian colonizers who have invaded her kingdom and killed her mother. Before her mother died, she left Lan with a mysterious mark on her arm that only she could see. She survives as a songgirl and spends her time trying to find out what the mark means. However, her life changes when a boy named Zen saves her life. He is also the first person she meets who is able to see her mark, so she follows him on a deadly escape from the Elantians and their magicians. While fleeing, they slowly uncover secrets about each other and themselves. This book is the first in a duology, followed by *Dark Star Burning*, *Ash Falls White*.

This book was very amazing! It had the ideal balance of romance, imagination, and tension. I adored how this book was written so well that I could see everything as though I were actually there. There are many strong friendships and family ties in this novel in addition to some wonderful romantic relationships! Among all the characters in the novel, Shàn'jūn is my personal favorite due to his kindness and helpfulness towards everyone!

I would definitely recommend this book to just about anyone! The combination of everything is just right and perfect! This book contains various references to China as well as pieces of Chinese, but it is still quite easy to read. Additionally, it is written from a third point of view, which aids in the story's visualization. I have yet to find another book or series that is similar because everything about this book is so unique and exquisite!



AS LONG AS THE LEMON TREES GROW

BY
ZOULFA KATOUH

CALL #

YA FIC KATOUH

COLLECTION:

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

RATING:



GENRE:

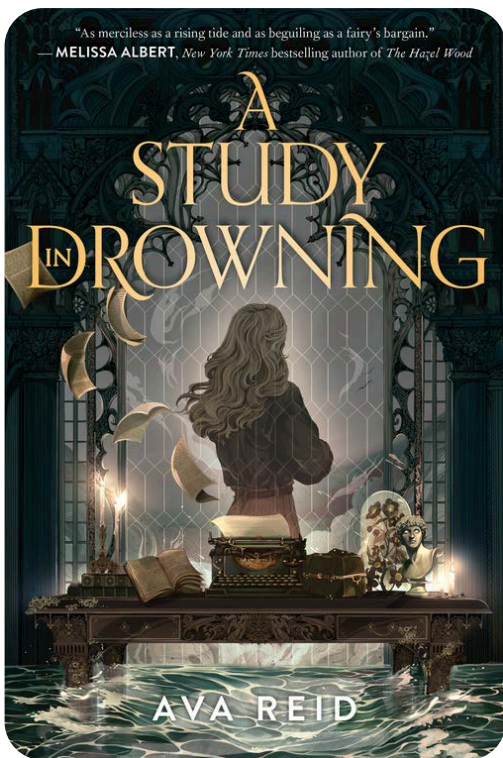
PSYCHOLOGICAL FICTION;
REALISTIC FICTION

Book Review:

In this book, Salama's future is unpromised, as she might get killed anytime, anywhere. She was supposed to be a pharmacist, but after the revolution started, she had no choice but to volunteer at the hospital nearby to be a surgeon. Every day, people die, and every day, she works harder. She lives with Layla, who is her childhood best friend and sister-in-law, who's also pregnant by Salama's brother, Hamza. After being hit hard in the head, she starts seeing Khawf, a hallucination who insists that she and Layla leave Syria and escape to Europe or anywhere else. Just as she begins to change her mind about staying behind and plans to leave, she meets Kenan. Kenan, who has vivid green eyes and wants to stay behind and fight for his country, gives her hope with his words and way of thinking.

This book is the definition of hope. We get to see how Syrians suffer and yet stay upright and strong, how they don't give up. And to know that this revolution is very much real, and in different countries too, not only in a novel, makes my heart ache. As I followed Salama in her journey in this book, I discovered many interesting facts and felt my eyes had been opened to other people's realities. I somehow anticipated the huge plot twist, but that didn't stop me from crying my eyes out. To be honest, I started crying from the very beginning when I got to know about Salama's family and patients. In my opinion, even though the epilogue was a very great wrap-up of Salama's story, I still wish it was written a bit differently; other than that, the book is amazing.

The book is a must-read for everyone because people need to be informed, if already not, about these types of stories. As I was reading the book, I didn't feel that it was boring or that it was very political or something like that, but when I finished, I realized that this book is a great way to make people see more about the world in a better and more detailed way. Another book that talks about a revolution and heartbreaking characters is "A Thousand Splendid Suns" by Khaled Hosseini.



A STUDY IN DROWNING BY AVA REID

CALL #

YA FIC REID

COLLECTION:

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

RATING:



GENRE:

HISTORICAL FANTASY

Book Review:

A Study in Drowning is a gothic YA standalone fantasy that follows an architecture student named Effy who is tasked with redesigning the estate of her favorite author, Emrys Myrddin, who has recently passed away. While at the manor, Effy begins to find evidence to suggest that the legendary author isn't who everyone thought he was. With the help of Preston Heloury, a literature student who is deeply suspicious of Myrddin's real character, Effy sets out to uncover the truth about the cursed estate and the author she had always looked up to.

The magical, eerie atmosphere and gripping mystery of this book made it a very compelling read. The imagery was rich and vivid, and I was fully transported to the rotting Myrddin estate surrounded by jagged cliffs and the merciless ocean. I thought Effy's character was very fleshed out and intriguing, and I liked how the book didn't shy away from showing the misogyny she faced as the only architecture student at her college. It provided a lot of commentary on the prejudice that women face, especially in academia. I also enjoyed how we gradually learned more about Effy's mysterious past throughout the book because it was satisfying to slowly put the puzzle pieces together. The romance was easy to root for because of the chemistry and slow burn between the two main characters. My favorite part of the book was its themes of stories and the power they hold. Each chapter started with a passage from one of Emrys Myrddin's books, which then provided interesting parallels to the plot of the book itself. I loved the "book inside of a book" format, and I thought it was really well executed.

This book is perfect for anyone who loves mystery, romance, and dark academia. I would especially recommend it to people who are looking for a dark and moody fantasy but are not intimidated by confusing word-building. Despite how fleshed out the world in A Study in Drowning was, especially in its magic system and folklore, it was also straightforward to understand and dive right into, which made for a fast-paced and engrossing read. Anyone who loves haunting, atmospheric books that keep you on your toes and wanting to know more will definitely love this book.



WE GOT THE BEAT BY JENNA MILLER

CALL #

YA FIC MILLER

COLLECTION:

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

RATING:



GENRE:

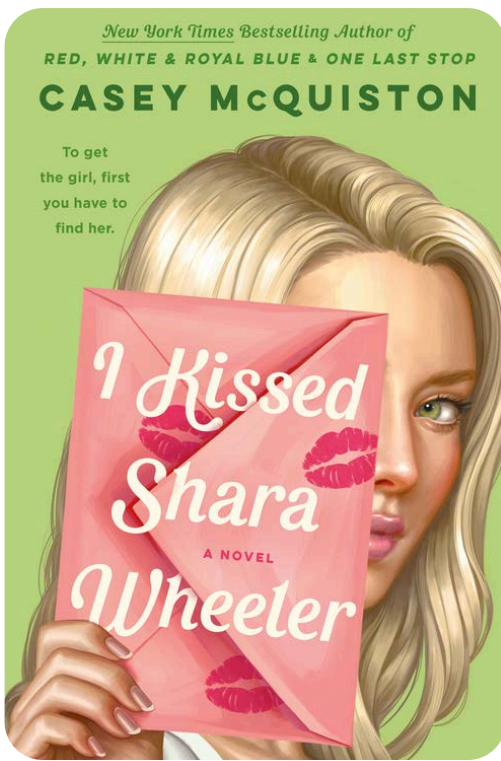
CONTEMPORARY ROMANCE

Book Review:

We Got the Beat is about a fat and nerdy lesbian named Jordan who joins the school newspaper team. She has multiple friends, one named Aubrey, who is very supportive of her. She is struggling with another girl named Mack, who she thinks is using her to get a good article about her in the newspaper. She thinks that all the kind words Mack is saying are just lies to get clout, but she's really not. Mack really likes Jordan, but because of their rivalry in the past, Jordan does not like Mack. Jordan finds out that she didn't get the editor-in-chief spot, which is the part she wanted, but she was also assigned to do the volleyball beat, and Mackenzie (Mack) is on the volleyball team. This was the perfect time to get her revenge on Mack, but close to the end of the book, it backfires on her.

This book was very enjoyable to read. It's in the first person, so we see the guilt and happiness Jordan feels. My favorite character was the father, who ran a D&D game. I loved his supportive nature and his love for his daughter. The book itself was amazing and enjoyable to read and left on a very satisfying note.

I would definitely recommend this book to teens and young adults looking for more representation in the media. It was very enjoyable to read. I liked how sometimes it switched to texting with Jordan's friends, and I loved how they interacted with one another. It was genuinely a good book, five out of five stars. It was truly an amazing book, and I would recommend it to anyone interested in LGBTQIA+ media.



I KISSED SHARA WHEELER BY CASEY MCQUISTON

CALL # YA FIC MCQUISTON

COLLECTION: YOUNG ADULT FICTION

RATING: ★★★★★

GENRE: ROMANTIC COMEDIES

Book Review:

I Kissed Shara Wheeler follows the story of Chloe, a senior in High School who's aiming for Valedictorian, and her "mortal nemesis", Shara Wheeler, who has the same goal. One day, however, perfect, pretty Shara Wheeler goes missing, leaving only pink envelopes leading to her location. As Chloe tries to find her, because she won't accept the title of Valedictorian without having fairly beaten her, she discovers the true feelings she has for Shara, feelings Shara reciprocates.

I really enjoyed this book because of how comforting it was. The writing style was immaculate, and it felt like I was breathing in warmth while reading. The characters are really easy to connect to, the romance is super sweet, and the friendships the characters have with each other in the end are ones everyone should aspire to have. I also loved the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ characters. One of the characters Chloe works with while finding Shara has struggled with identity and sexuality, and the book illustrates the situation super well. All in all, it was a great read, and I've reread it many times now already.

I would recommend this book to people looking for a cozy, coming-of-age story with LGBTQIA+ topics. It was a really fun read and is definitely the book I would go to after a long day. It's a warm and comforting book, and it's a perfect read on hot summer days when the humidity is too high for you to do anything. This is the perfect book for those who want to cozy up with a cute story.