



TEEN BOOK REVIEWS

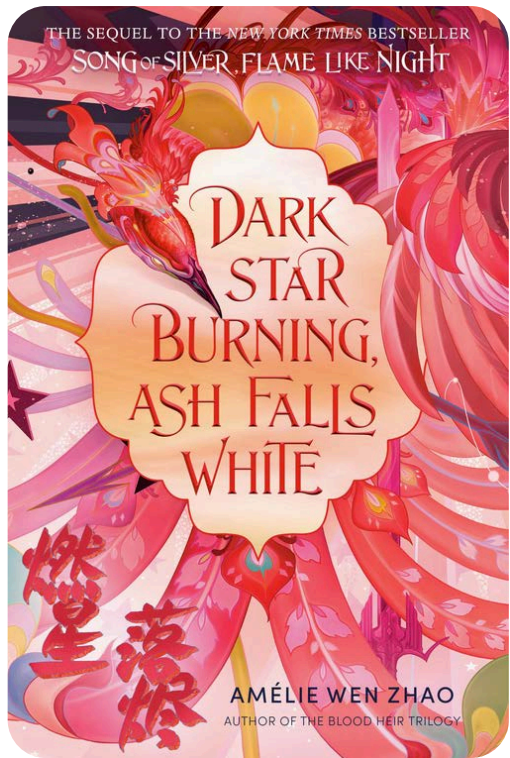
MARCH 2024

GUIDE

BOOKS IN THE
YOUNG ADULT
COLLECTION

BOOKS IN THE
ADULT
COLLECTION

BOOKS IN THE
CHILDREN
COLLECTION



DARK STAR BURNING, ASH FALLS WHITE BY AMÉLIE ZHAO

CALL #

YA FIC ZHAO

COLLECTION:

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

RATING:



GENRE:

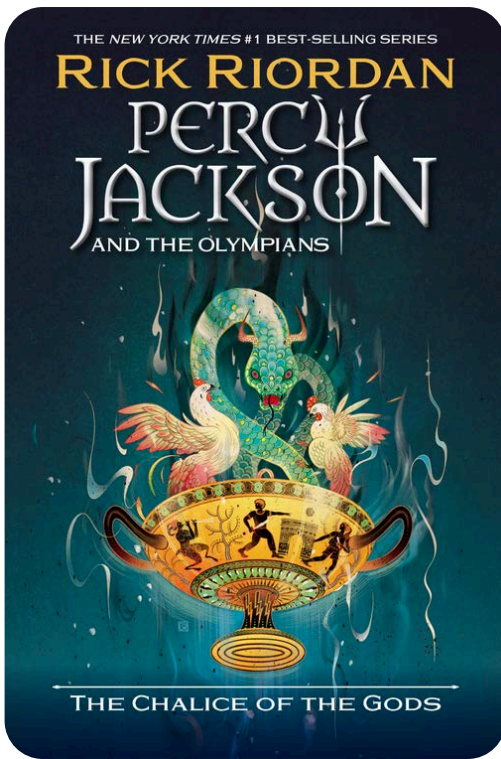
FANTASY

Book Review:

Dark Star Burning, Ash Falls White by Amelie Wen Zhao, is the sequel to Song of Silver, Flame Like Night, and is about lovers Zen and Lan. Zen is the last of his clan and wants to free the Last Kingdom by using the power of the Black Tortoise, one of the four demon gods. Lan is a song girl who also inherited the power of one of the four gods, the Silver Dragon, from her passed mother. They share a common goal: to free the last kingdom from colonizers. Zen believes the only way to free the last kingdom is to use the demon god's power, knowing the consequences: losing his mind and soul. Lan, on the other hand, believes the demon god's power will only cause destruction. As a result, she goes on the journey of looking for the godslayer, the only destroyer of these demon gods, to save her people. Lan and Zen, throughout the story, face difficulties in being on opposite sides and in love, as well as fighting for the people of the last kingdom from the Elantians, the colonizers.

I enjoyed this book as it was a nice ending to Song of Silver flame like night. As someone who likes fiction, I like the plot and overall message of the story. My favorite character was Shan Jun, a caring medicine practitioner. He was my favorite character because of how sweet and kind he was to others. The book shows the difficulties Lan and Zen had, being basically enemies but still loving each other and showing it. I liked the enemies and lovers dynamic and the character's relationships with others. Something I dislike about the book is how fast it is. I feel like things went by quickly, and there wasn't enough build-up and suspense.

I would recommend the Dark Star Burning, Ash Falls White series to people who enjoy fantasy fiction and ancient Chinese stories. It isn't a very long series and is easy to understand, which is why I think many fantasy fiction enjoyers should read it. The book reminded me of the "Untamed" series, and I think fans of ancient Chinese stories or the "Untamed" would very much enjoy this.



THE CHALICE OF THE GODS

BY

RICK RIORDAN

CALL # J RIORDAN

COLLECTION: J FICTION

RATING: 

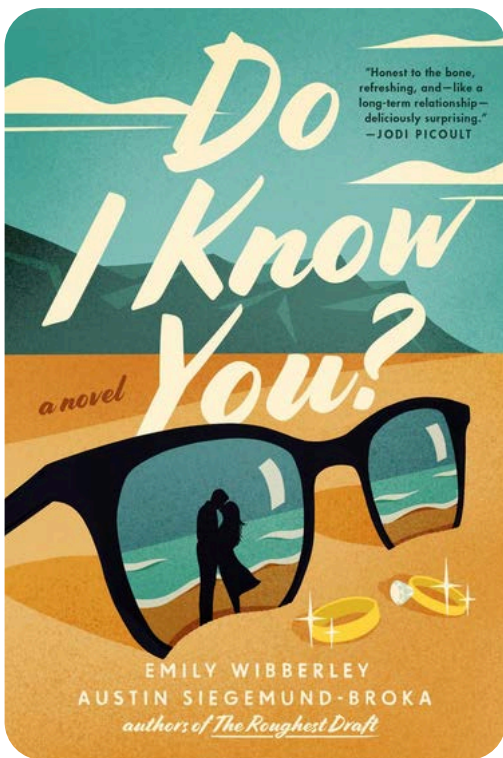
GENRE: MYTHOLOGICAL FICTION;
FANTASY FICTION

Book Review:

The Chalice of the Gods follows the heroes from the Percy Jackson Series: Percy himself, Annabeth, and Grover. Percy, now a senior in High School, must apply for a college that will benefit his needs as a demigod. In order to get into the college he wants, however, he must get three letters of recommendation from three different gods. The story follows his first mission: recovering the lost chalice for the god Ganymede, the cupbearer of the gods, before a big feast.

I loved this book because of its dedication to the fans. It made me super nostalgic for when I first read the books, which I'd give anything to experience reading Percy Jackson for the first time again, and this book really made me feel like I was. We got the main three on an adventure again, with Percy's sass, Annabeth's wisdom, and Grover being Grover. The book was a gift to the fandom, and that gift was well appreciated.

I'd recommend this book to all lovers of the PJO series. It was a nice read. We got Rick Riordan's excellent writing, and it hyped up the new PJO series. It was an excellent book that helped me get back into PJO, and it was genuinely a really good time.



DO I KNOW YOU? BY EMILY WIBBERLEY

CALL #

FIC WIBBERLEY

COLLECTION:

FICTION

RATING:



GENRE:

CONTEMPORARY ROMANCE

Book Review:

This is the story of Eliza and Graham, who met through online dating at the age of 23 and fell in love quickly. While Eliza is a promising artist who brings characters to life for audiobooks, Graham is a law student. Their close friends first had doubts about their rapid romance because of their young ages, how they met, and the hasty choice to be married.

This kind of romance is unique; It's about getting a second chance with your husband, who you almost let get away because you have grown so far apart in your marriage that you feel more like strangers than lovers.

For the most part, I enjoyed the book, but I wouldn't say I would remember it in the long run. I felt there wasn't enough pre-trip material on Eliza and Graham; instead, we were pushed into this situation without knowing enough background about the reasons behind Eliza and Graham's first relationship problems. Despite my frustrations with it, this book was unquestionably lovely and enjoyable to read. The way the writers portrayed the main couple's five-year marriage to readers, complete with tension, excitement, butterflies, and a will-they-won't-they feeling, was just amazing. If you're searching for a romance about a married couple working through their troubles set in a fancy hotel, give this book a try!



OKSI BY MARI AHOKOIVU

CALL #

YA GN OKSI

COLLECTION:

YOUNG ADULT GRAPHIC NOVEL

RATING:



GENRE:

FANTASY;
FAIRY TALE AND FOLKLORE-INSPIRED

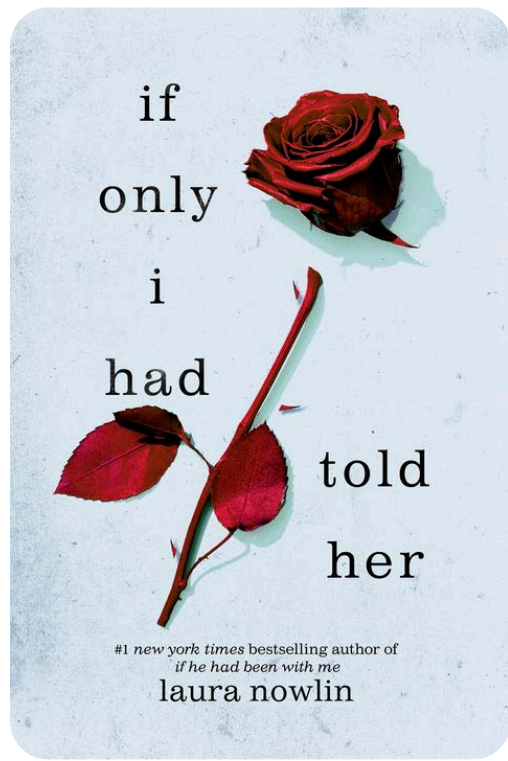
Book Review:

Oksi by Mari Ahokoivu is a graphic novel based on Finnish folklore. Through beautiful watercolor illustrations, a tale of mothers, children, and old gods unfolds. The story follows a mother bear named Umi and her cubs as they navigate through the dangerous forest, always being followed by the old gods. One of Umi's children does not appear to be a bear cub at all, but rather an erratic magical creature that they call Poorling. Poorling just wants to fit in and please Umi but is constantly ridiculed by her siblings for being different, which leads to an outburst of magical power. Umi is afraid and believes Poorling to be a curse sent from her mother, the great sky god, for leaving. Umi disowns Poorling, who is persistent but doesn't realize how powerful and dangerous she really is. As the mother and daughter face more dangers, they realize the error of their past ways. However, the gods do not have a happy ending in mind. Can the two forest-dwelling creatures avoid their fates?

I liked this book because there was always more than meets the eye, which was well represented by the author's choice of illustration and color usage. It was a little bit hard to follow because of the minimal dialogue and because I am unfamiliar with Finnish Folklore, but the plot was deep and full of meaning and feeling - almost poetic. It was easy to feel connected to these characters, especially Poorling, who just wanted to be loved.

I would recommend this beautifully detailed graphic novel to anyone interested in folklore or anyone who wants a deeply meaningful read. Between the plot based on Finnish folklore and the alluring haunted illustrations, this memorable book was unlike any other I've read.

*Content Warning: Although the illustrations are majorly abstract, there are some graphic images with possibly upsetting content.



IF ONLY I HAD TOLD HER

BY

LAURA NOWLIN

LOCATION: Available as an E-book on Libby

RATING: 

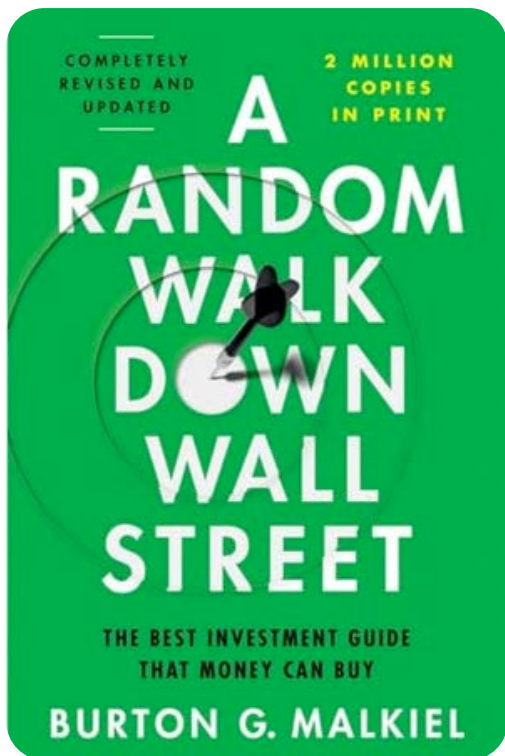
GENRE: LOVE STORIES; REALISTIC FICTION

Book Review:

If Only I Had Told Her, by Lauren Nowlin, is the sequel following the bestselling book, If He Had Been With Me. In this heart-wrenching story, we are finally able to read about Phineas Smith's (the main male character of If He Had Been With Me) perspective on everything that occurs throughout the first book. Autumn and Phineas, or Finny, as Autumn calls him, have been raised together their whole lives by their mothers, who are longtime best friends. Though they were best friends when they were young, as they grow up, they begin finding new friend circles and have somewhat of a falling out. Still, neither party can shake the impact the other has left on them. This book is split into 3 points of view- one of Finny's, one of Jack's, Finny's best friend, and one of Autumn's. From Finny's point of view, we see his feelings about Autumn throughout adolescence despite them not spending much time together. In Jack's and Autumn's, we see how they cope with the tragedy that struck in the initial book.

Although I don't think this compares to the original book, I still enjoyed revisiting the complex characters and dynamics this story contains. None of the characters try to be perfect, particularly Autumn. Throughout both If He Had Been With Me and If Only I Had Told Her, Autumn consistently remains unapologetically her authentic self, embracing her weirdness and quirks. The characters and their lives are never shown to be perfect, and the hardships they face feel genuine, something I find is common in Young Adult books. The way Nowlin writes is unlike any other author I've read. She expresses so much teenage angst without ever making the characters and their words unbearably cringy. There is so much to read between the lines- even just simple words hold so much meaning in the context of the plot.

For anybody looking for a complex story and is up for the emotional rollercoaster, this is an excellent read. After reading If He Had Been With Me, one will undoubtedly want more of the characters and their stories, and this book provides exactly that. But do make sure to check trigger warnings before reading.



**A RANDOM WALK DOWN WALL STREET :
THE BEST INVESTMENT GUIDE THAT
MONEY CAN BUY
BY
BURTON GORDON MALKIEL**

CALL # 332.632 MALKIEL

COLLECTION: NON - FICTION

RATING: 

GENRE: FINANCE; INVESTMENT

Book Review:

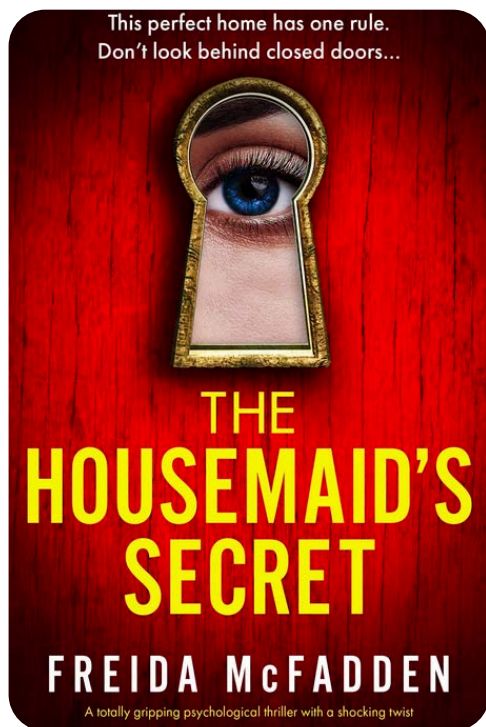
Burton Gordon Malkiel's investment guide, "A Random Walk Down Wall Street," gives readers a rundown of numerous investment methods and techniques. The book applies to both new and seasoned investors. Its readable writing style and ability to simplify complicated financial topics so that the common reader may understand them contribute to its appeal.

Malkiel presents the idea of the random walk theory in "A Random Walk Down Wall Street," which contends that stock values fluctuate and are not predictable. He makes the case against the wisdom of trying to timing the market or choose particular stocks in favor of a passive investing strategy like index funds. Malkiel uses both research and real-world examples to provide readers with helpful guidance on asset investments, portfolio diversification, and risk management throughout the whole book.

I found it good that Malkiel could simplify complicated financial concepts into easily understood writing. His focus on avoiding typical mistakes like market timing and the value of long-term investing spoke to me and was consistent with my own investing philosophy. Malkiel does an excellent job of explaining these ideas to the reader, even though some of the book's sections can be heavy on technical words that are hard to understand.

Overall, I highly recommend "A Random Walk Down Wall Street" to anyone interested in gaining a deeper understanding of investing. Whether you're a seasoned investor looking to gain knowledge on your strategy or a newcomer seeking guidance, this book offers valuable insights that can help you through the complexities of the financial world. It's especially well-suited for those who prefer a data-driven and evidence-based approach to investing. While it may not provide get-rich-quick solutions, it lays a solid foundation for building wealth over the long term. If you enjoy books on economics and the stock market, then you will also enjoy this book.





THE HOUSEMAID'S SECRET

BY

FREIDA MCFADDEN

LOCATION:

Available on LINK+

RATING:



GENRE:

PSYCHOLOGICAL SUSPENSE

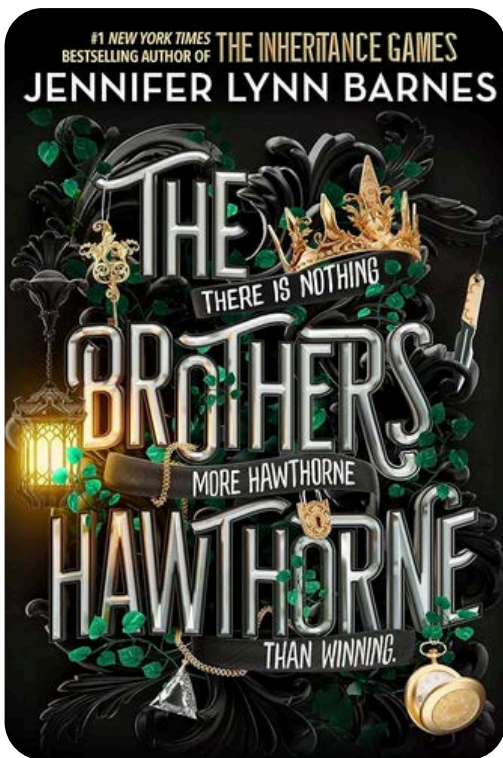
Book Review:

The Housemaid's Secret by Freida McFadden is the twisty sequel to The Housemaid, where the protagonist, Wilhelmina (Millie) Calloway, embarks on another dangerous adventure in New York as a watchful maid. In the previous book, Millie is known to have a criminal record and a reputation for getting abused wives out of their toxic relationships, keeping an eye on them while posing as a maid. After her faithful companion, Enzo, leaves for Italy and Millie is fired from her previous job as a maid, she is forced to search for a job as a cleaning lady by an employee who accepts her criminal record. Conveniently, a wealthy man named Douglas Garrick requests Millie as his maid, bringing her to his enormous penthouse to work. However, she is not allowed into the guest bedroom where his ill wife Wendy stays, drawing suspicion from Millie. Millie begins to notice that something is severely wrong with Wendy. Still, whenever she asks her if she's alright, Wendy immediately agrees and will not allow Millie into the guest bedroom. However, as sobbing noises, red-rimmed nightgowns, bloodstains around the house, and sounds of abuse all point to the guest bedroom, Millie decides to check it out - and what she finds shocks her to her core.

I rarely find sequels as well-written as the first book, but The Housemaid's Secret is one of the best jaw-dropping thrillers I have read. I liked how McFadden elaborately led the reader through twists and turns by introducing new suspects and characters into the plot. Just as in the first book, the perspective switches towards the end, where everything from Wendy's point of view is revealed, enabling the reader to connect the dots. In addition, I appreciated that Millie, unlike other characters, was selfless and humble about her abilities and appearance and that her most important trait was that she was willing to help others at any cost. The book made me feel like I was in the story because of how well the author used descriptions and emotions throughout the plot.

I recommend this book because the plot twists always keep you guessing who the real villain is. If you enjoy thrillers, mystery books, and horror, this book is a good fit because it immerses you in the plot. As a fast reader, I swept through this book in about three days because of how intense every chapter was; if you don't enjoy slow books (like me), this is just for you. This book reminded me of The Good Girl's Guide to Murder and Local Woman Missing because of the strong female protagonists and the overlapping perspectives that keep you hooked until the last page.





THE BROTHERS HAWTHORNE

BY

JENNIFER LYNN BARNES

CALL #

YA FIC BARNES

COLLECTION:

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

RATING:



GENRE:

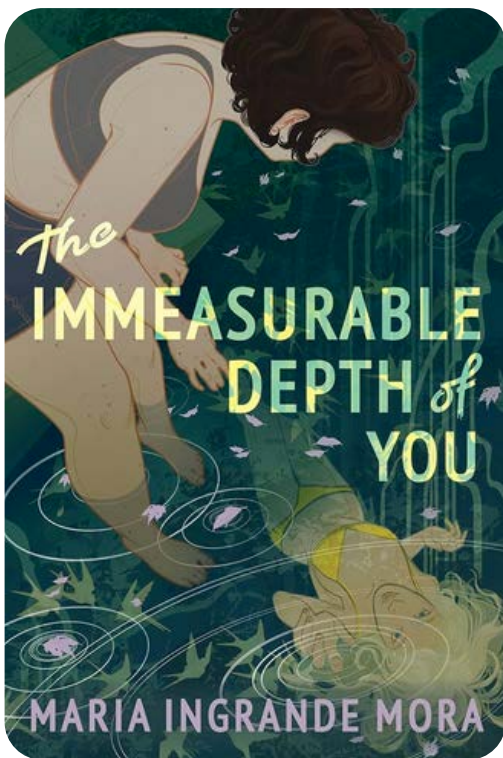
MYSTERY

Book Review:

In The Brothers Hawthorne, two brothers, Grayson and Jameson Hawthorne, find themselves with a mission of their own. Grayson has half-sisters who don't know about him, and when he finds them in trouble that can harm Avery's reputation, the main character from the Inheritance Games Trilogy, he steps up to help and take care of the problem. On the other side, Jameson's father makes an appearance and asks Jameson for a favor, but as Jameson sees it, it is a challenge. No matter how hard he tries to decline it, he can't help but accept it. He finds himself in an underground club in London, a very old club for the powerful and rich, to win an impossible game with a prize most people dream of. These missions only end up bringing new riddles and games for the future that will be solved by the 4 Hawthorne brothers and Avery, hopefully, in the next book, The Grandest Games.

I loved this universe the moment I picked up The Inheritance Games, so when I learned there was going to be a fourth book, I was really excited. Even though I prefer Grayson over Jameson, I still enjoyed both POVs. It's very sweet how Grayson tries not to care about his sisters but ends up loving them and cares about them as much as he cares about his brothers. When Jameson and Avery entered the game, I felt like I was a competitor, with them trying to solve the mysteries and riddles! The cliffhanger left me shocked for days, which is why I can't wait for The Grandest Games' release. I just wish we had more of Nash and Xander, especially with Gigi, because they were so hilarious.

If you enjoyed the previous trilogy, then give this a read! I recommend this book to people who focus on every other detail and love solving mysteries in books with barely any romance. The book has the same vibes as "The Naturals", another book series by Jennifer Lynn Barnes, and One of Us Is Back, but just without the murder.



THE IMMEASURABLE DEPTH OF YOU BY MARIA INGRANDE MORA

CALL #

YA FIC MORA

COLLECTION:

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

RATING:



GENRE:

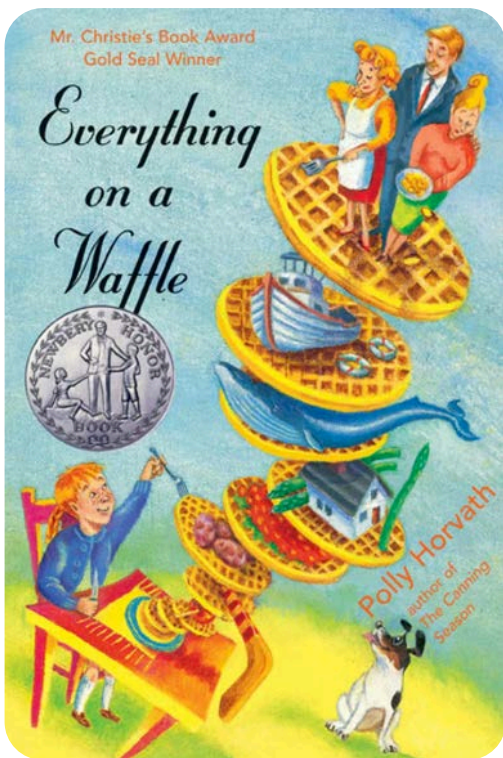
PARANORMAL FICTION

Book Review:

Brynn was always an anxious kid. With her intrusive thoughts and panic attacks preventing her from interacting with other kids, she always turned to the internet as her comfort zone. But after one of her recent posts leaves her mother shook, she is forced to be uprooted from her comfort zone and sent to live with her father and his houseboat in Florida for the summer. It seemed like the summer would be boring and torturous without her devices. But then she meets Skylar, a powerfully confident girl Brynn admires and wants to be more like. But there is something strange about Skylar that she doesn't seem keen on telling. After Brynn learns the shocking truth that Skylar is actually dead, she sets out on a mission to find out how she was murdered. (Or was she?)

A story about finding courage within oneself is a commonly used storyline, but the author, Mora, uses gritty storytelling and metaphors to beautifully illustrate Brynn's adventure. She also successfully portrays atmospheric passages according to Brynn's mood. I like how the author portrays feelings and emotions realistically. Instead of overcoming an obstacle entirely, Brynn is taking slow baby steps.

I would recommend this book if you relate to having anxiety and intrusive thoughts. I would also recommend it if you love mysteries. It's the perfect book to read on a cloudy day, a cup of tea, and your favorite snack.



EVERYTHING ON A WAFFLE BY POLLY HORVATH

CALL # J HORVATH

COLLECTION: J FICTION

RATING: ★★★★★

GENRE: FICTION

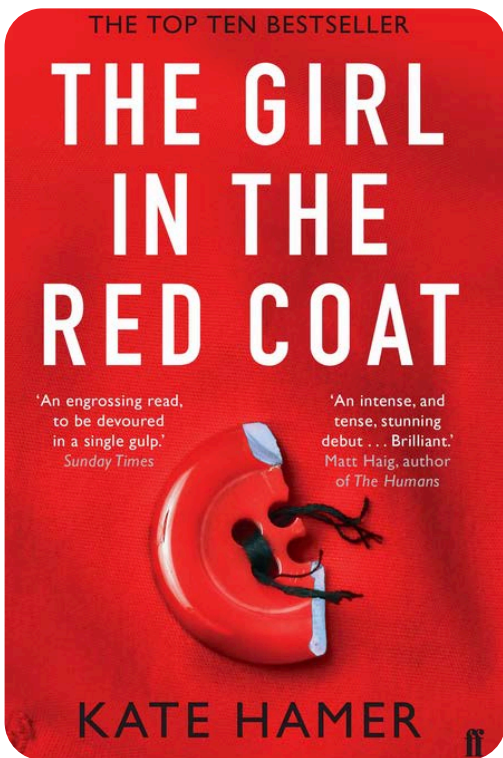
Book Review:

Primrose Squarp, a young and hopeful girl, finds her life turned upside down after her parents get lost at sea. While she remains hopeful that her parents will come back, she has to deal with the grownups and the kids at school who shake their heads at her “rebellious” behavior. But no matter how many times she is gaslighted by doubtful grownups, she always comes out on top.

Horvath combines a persistent girl with signature charm storytelling in this slice-of-life novel, each chapter having a well-paced premise similar to Pippi Longstocking. The story has interesting characters that have more depth than the typical background actor, and it reminds the reader to look at things from another angle. Horvath successfully gives her characters personalities that don't dry out. Along with the story, we are treated to delicious recipes at the end of a chapter.

I like how this book shows that every person, no matter what place in your life, can impact you. Primrose doesn't wish to turn back time but instead focuses on what might happen in the future. With her uncle, who seemingly popped out of nowhere, and a sassy restaurant owner by her side, readers can join Primrose as she navigates her ‘tragedy’ in a “pep-in-her-step” way. From losing her toe to setting a Guinea pig on fire, each chapter gives substance to the story in a whimsical manner.

I would recommend this book for readers who want a happy, simple, but charming book for days with intermittent clouds.



THE GIRL IN THE RED COAT BY KATE HAMER

CALL #

FIC HAMER

COLLECTION:

FICTION

RATING:



GENRE:

PSYCHOLOGICAL SUSPENSE

Book Review:

Newly single mother Beth had her worst fear come to life: losing her only daughter, Carmel. After being separated from each other at a book festival, both mother and daughter have separate journeys. From Beth searching for a reason to move on and stay alive and Carmel growing up without a proper guardian to set her morals straight, this book will leave you on edge and feeling like you can't turn the page fast enough.

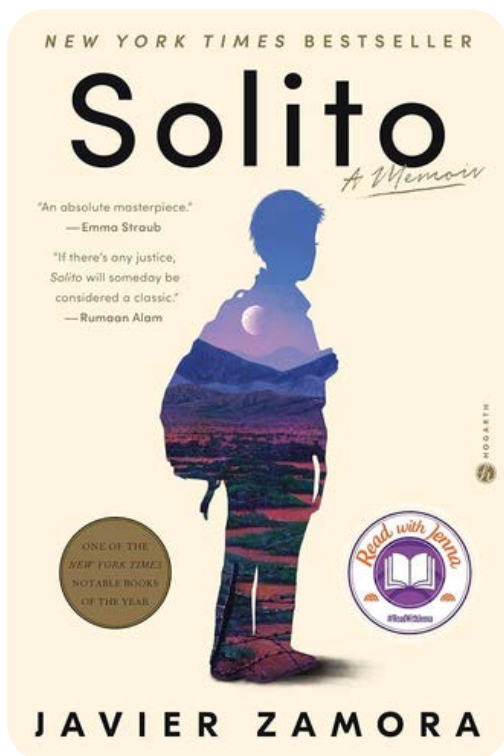
Through the years that Carmel's missing from Beth's life, we get to look into how she tries not to spiral into despair, developing new relationships with people she didn't know she needed to reconnect with, and building a new life outside of her fear and anxiety.

Meanwhile, Carmel is trying to hang on to herself as the strange man who introduced himself as her grandfather tries to make her believe she is a girl named Mercy. With nowhere else to go, she is forced to follow her oddly religious grandfather as they drive through an unfamiliar country.

Hamer, the author, creates a strong but diverse dynamic between each character. Written in gripping prose and having a thrillingly cryptic atmosphere, Hamer successfully leaves the reader begging for more at the end of each chapter. I like this book because of the characters and how they evolve over the course of the story and how it portrays basic human instincts, like teenagers becoming naturally independent, no matter the circumstances.

This book is for 'True Crime' lovers or people who like enigmatic stories. While it's not extreme on the horror genre, it will still give you chills down your spine.





SOLITO BY JAVIER ZAMORA

CALL #

B ZAMORA, J.

COLLECTION:

BIOGRAPHY

RATING:



GENRE:

AUTOBIOGRAPHIES AND MEMOIRS

Book Review:

Solito is a memoir by Javier Zamora about a nine-year-old boy who goes on a life-altering journey from El Salvador to America. He migrates to the United States, seeking his family and the dream of a better, more secure life. In this book, you will discover the strength and hardships he goes through in order to see his parents again and the realization of what millions of people had to do before him. Solito is a heart-wrenching and touching story that will keep you reading until the last page.

I really liked this book. It made me appreciate the privileges that I was born into and opened my eyes to a different world than my own. Solito connects you to the characters and makes you feel like you're living every moment and detail with them. As a 12-year-old reading this book through the eyes of a nine-year-old, I felt bonded to Xavier while he tried to navigate his way through a dangerous world. It makes it even more powerful and meaningful that it is based on a true story, and the author is the little boy in the story.

I would definitely recommend this book. It is a gripping tale of courage and hope. If you like books that make your heart ache and your mind race, Solito is the book for you. Every page is beautifully crafted and keeps you occupied until you've finished.