



TEEN BOOK REVIEWS

MAY 2025

GUIDE

BOOKS IN THE
YOUNG ADULT
COLLECTION

BOOKS IN THE
ADULT
COLLECTION

BOOKS IN THE
CHILDREN
COLLECTION



THE ISLAND OF MISSING TREES

BY ELIF SHAFAK

CALL #:

Fic SHAFAK

COLLECTION:

FICTION

RATING:



GENRE:

LITERARY FICTION

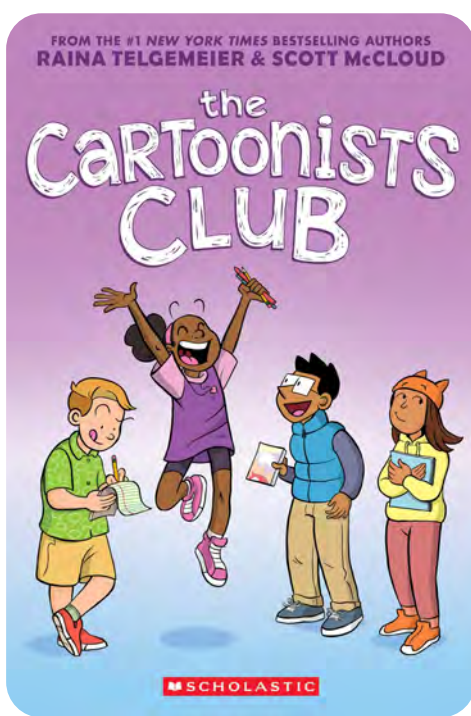
Book Review:

The Island of Missing Trees is a stunning novel that weaves together stories of love, family and nature. Set in the small island of Cyprus, the story follows Kostas, a Greek Cypriot, and Defne, a Turkish Cypriot, as they fall in love during a period of steep ethnic tensions and violence. During their secret meetings at a local tavern, The Happy Fig, a fig tree bears witness to their tumultuous love story. Decades later, the same tree grows in London in the backyard of Kostas and his teenage daughter, Ada. Ada feels lost after the death of her mother, and frustrated at her lack of connection to her Cypriot roots. The fig tree, meanwhile, has witnessed everything and has its own story to tell. Through alternating perspectives of the fig tree, Ada, and her parents, the book beautifully explores the importance of connecting with one's roots and the harm that is caused when hatred and division take hold.

This book was unlike anything I've ever read. The writing is lush, lyrical, and surprisingly funny. I loved reading from the perspective of a tree, and the author does a great job of making the fig tree feel like a real person. The exploration of plants and the ways that nature is linked to human events was so fascinating to learn about, and it really made me think about trees in a new light. Additionally, all the human characters are lovable, despite their flaws, and you can't help but get attached to them as they endure hardship after hardship. The author didn't shy away from depicting the violence and brutality that occurred within Cyprus, so the book felt pretty heavy at times. However, this also helped to make the book's message about the impact of war all the more powerful. My favorite part of the book was getting to see how each storyline connected to each other and clicked into place at the end. I was glued to my seat the entire time while reading, fully invested in these characters and their stories.

This book would be perfect for people who love plants and natures, as it is brimming with interesting facts about botany. The author's passion for the subject truly shines through in the writing, making it so that anyone who reads this will probably leave with a newfound interest in nature. Additionally, anyone looking for a moving story about love, family, and history will definitely enjoy this book!





THE CARTOONISTS CLUB

BY RAINA TELGEMEIER

CALL #: J GN CARTOONISTS

COLLECTION: J GRAPHIC NOVEL

RATING:



GENRE: REALISTIC FICTION

Book Review:

The Cartoonists Club by Raina Telgemeier is a graphic novel that showcases the amazing talent, teamwork, and friendship of four middle schoolers.

The main character in this book is Makayla, who is fond of writing stories, and how she forms this amazing and talented group of students who come together to form a Cartoonists club, all interested in making comic books. With the support of a teacher, they not only form a club but also learn details on how to make real comic books! The story includes information on how to illustrate different facial expressions, body language, posture, etc. This book shows that all are welcome and all talents are accepted and appreciated. It shows how one can learn from the other and support and help each other. It shows that it is okay to make mistakes and that humans learn from their mistakes.

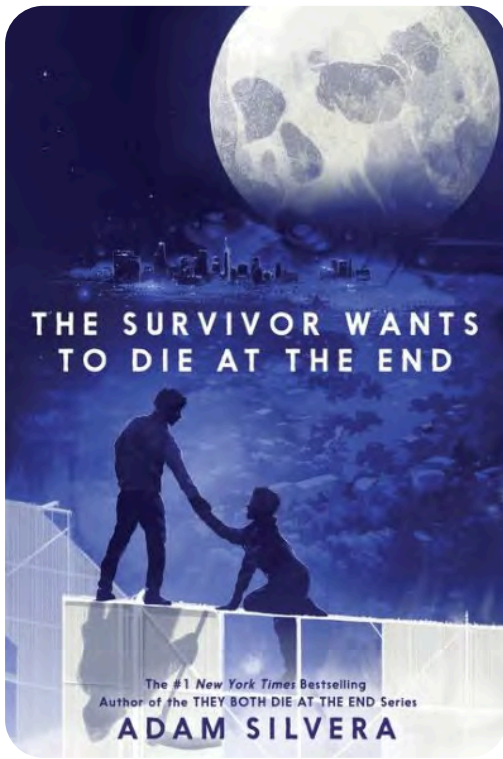
My favorite part of the story is how a shy girl leaves her inhibitions and joins the group. What an amazing artist she is, and the pictures that she has made are so realistic! Her story about her family shows her bravery in overcoming her inhibitions through her artistic talent. Throughout the story, we see her friendship with the other three growing stronger. That makes me feel so happy for her! Another character in the book is also very real as he is not only interested in making comic books but also interested in multiple things, just like all the other kids!

Another good part about the book is that it teaches a little about the business side of publishing a book. We feel the excitement the kids must be feeling as they market their books in front of readers. That would be such a good experience!

The illustrations in the book are great. Not only does it include illustrations about the story itself but also the lesson on creating comic books. My favorites are on pages 146 and 147, which show all the facial expressions. They remind me of the emojis!

Last but not least, I feel that the teacher played a very important role in guiding the kids toward their ambitions, helping them realize their individual talents, and recognizing that each one of them is special in their own way. It is a great, happy story for kids to read at home and for teachers to read in class! I highly recommend this book!





THE SURVIVOR WANTS TO DIE AT THE END BY ADAM SILVERA

CALL #: YA FIC SILVERA

COLLECTION: YOUNG ADULT FICTION

RATING:



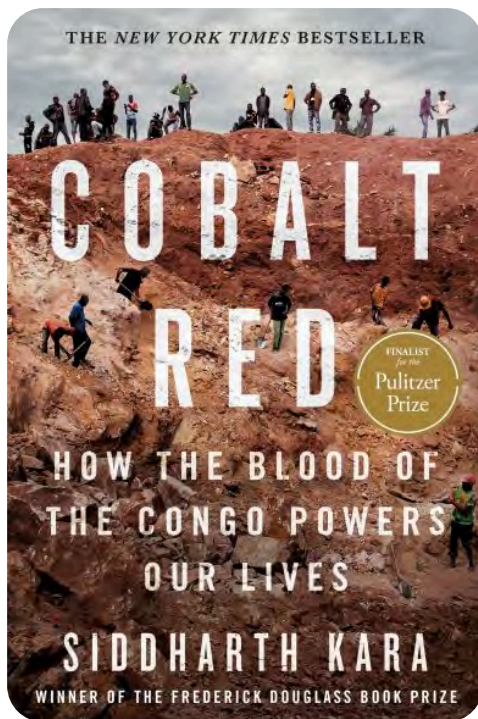
GENRE: SCIENCE FICTION

Book Review:

This emotional novel is Silvera's third book that takes place in an alternate world with an organization called Death-Cast. Death-Cast notifies people when it is their last day alive, which is a beautiful gift that lets many people live their last day to its fullest. However, Paz and Alano have been deeply hurt by the existence of Death-Cast. On the inaugural day 10 years ago, Paz shot his abusive father in an attempt to protect his mother and has been haunted by that trauma ever since. Meanwhile, Alano holds the intense pressure of being the heir to the hugely powerful—and controversial—Death-Cast company. In a complicated event of fate, the two boys meet. Will they be able to heal together, or will their relationship just lead to more hurt?

I really enjoyed the detailed world-building. It feels very lifelike, and realistic science fiction is always fun. I also was impressed with the complexity of the characters. You never stop learning more about them up until the last page. I found it sad that there was never truly a moment of rest or happiness for the characters, but the constant moving plot and the cliffhanger at the end made it a quick read, (despite it being 700 pages!) It also had a nice undercurrent of romance without overly focusing on that aspect.

If you have read Adam Silvera's previous Death-Cast books, you will enjoy *The Survivor Wants to Die at the End*. The story has tons of references to the characters in the other books, which are really fun to find. If you haven't read the other books, you could totally start with this one, but I'd recommend *They Both Die at The End* first.



COBALT RED: HOW THE BLOOD OF THE CONGO POWERS OUR LIVES

BY
SIDDHARTH KARA

CALL #: 338.2748 KARA

COLLECTION: NON-FICTION

RATING:



GENRE: POLITICS AND GLOBAL AFFAIRS

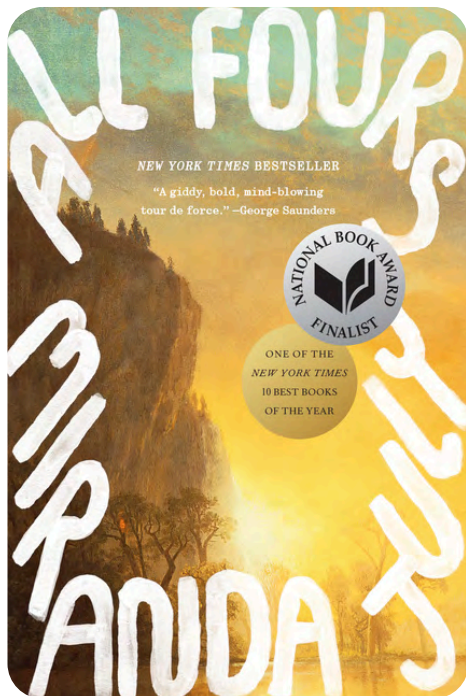
Book Review:

Cobalt Red: How the Blood of the Congo Powers Our Lives, by Siddharth Kara, is something more than a bundle of stories of smiles and heroism. It is a collection of the author's real life experience of the Congo's power system and economy through 2019 to the present. Kara writes a heavy hearted and hard hitting novel about the corrupted past leading to the current Congolese lifestyle, the unfortunate realities some are thrown or born into, and the political status and thoughts on current companies and candidacies; All done in order to power the very machines and batteries common folk use without hesitation or thought.

Cobalt Red: How the Blood of the Congo Powers Our Lives is an eye-opening novel and experience that is unlike many books a common ninth grader would read. However, the message remains unchanged, no matter the age, and I personally believe that books of this type should be promoted more. Something that I appreciate about not just the book but also the author is the fact that they were personally at the scene of this upside-down world, interviewing the local miners, testing their luck with higher-ups and soldiers, etc. Knowing this, combined with their style of writing, creates a blend of writing that feels friendly, responsible, and wanting to do more. Besides being informed of the problems that exist in this country, which would otherwise be looked over like many others without this book, is learning the causes and roots of it all, which is very interesting to see, as it creates a better understanding of the human mind and its sins and more.

The novel may seem to be a quick read; however, don't be fooled. The amount of information packed into the book is enough to make you stop and think at every turn of a page. Which I must say is not a bad thing at all. Instead, it made the reading experience more captivating and interesting. I recommend this book and its messages to everyone as technology has truly begun to grasp this world. As technology becomes more and more of a daily phenomenon, it is just as important to learn what is actively or who is actively working to power the machines, phones, and laptops we all love and desire. In conclusion, this book was really good at revealing the harsh lifestyle and environment of those sent to live in the Congos.





ALL FOURS BY MIRANDA JULY

CALL #:

FIC JULY

COLLECTION:

FICTION

RATING:



GENRE:

LITERARY FICTION

Book Review:

All Fours by Miranda July is a bold, unconventional novel that follows a semi-famous, forty-five-year-old artist who sets out on a cross-country road trip from Los Angeles to New York. Instead of making it far, she impulsively checks into a roadside motel just minutes from home, where she embarks on an unexpected affair with a much younger man. The story becomes less about the journey and more about her internal reckoning with aging, sexuality, marriage, and the search for meaning in the midst of midlife stasis. July's protagonist is unnamed, but her voice is unmistakably sharp, self-aware, and often very funny, making this novel as much a meditation on the absurdities of modern womanhood as it is a narrative about personal reinvention.

What I liked most about *All Fours* is Miranda July's willingness to be fearless and honest in her exploration of female desire, aging, and the messy contradictions of adulthood. The writing is witty, unpredictable, and at times disarmingly candid, especially in its depiction of the narrator's sexual and emotional awakening. July's comedic timing and penchant for the absurd kept me engaged, even when the protagonist's choices were frustrating or baffling. My favorite aspect was how July managed to make the mundane-like redecorating a motel room-feel both hilarious and profound. However, the novel's meandering structure occasionally felt aimless, and the main character's self-absorption could be off-putting. Some readers might find her lack of accountability and emotional messiness hard to sympathize with, but I appreciated the raw honesty. The book made me feel both amused and unsettled, often at the same time.

I would recommend *All Fours* to readers who enjoy literary fiction that pushes boundaries and isn't afraid to make you cringe, laugh, or reflect on your own life. Fans of authors like Ottessa Moshfegh or Jenny Offill, or anyone interested in stories about women's interior lives, will likely find a lot to appreciate here. While it might not be for everyone-especially those who prefer tidy plots or wholly likable protagonists-it's a daring, memorable read that stands out for its originality and humor. I'd give this book 4 out of 5 stars for its inventive style, emotional depth, and the way it captures the chaos and possibility of midlife.