



TEEN BOOK REVIEWS

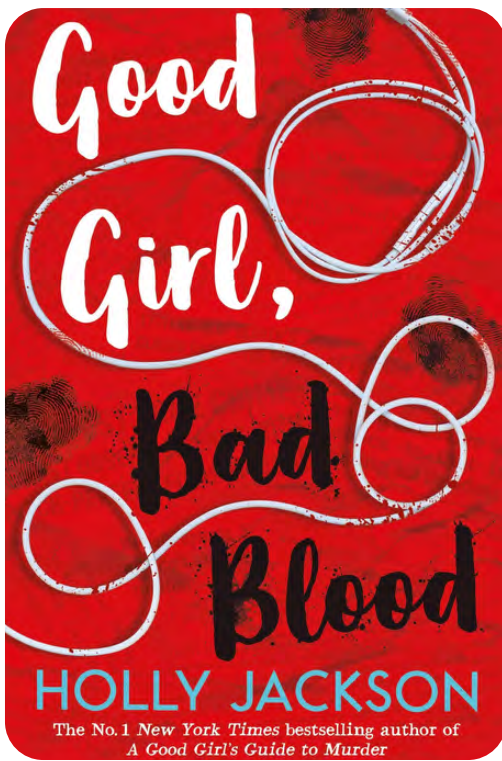
JANUARY 2024

GUIDE

BOOKS IN THE
YOUNG ADULT
COLLECTION

BOOKS IN THE
ADULT
COLLECTION

BOOKS IN THE
CHILDREN
COLLECTION



GOOD GIRL, BAD BLOOD BY HOLLY JACKSON

CALL # YA FIC JACKSON

COLLECTION: YOUNG ADULT FICTION

RATING:



GENRE:

THRILLERS AND SUSPENSE

Book Review:

Good Girl, Bad Blood by Holly Jackson is the thrilling sequel in the 'A Good Girl's Guide to Murder' series. The story continues with Pip Fitz-Amobi, a teenager turned into an amateur detective who settled on leaving detective work behind after the traumatic events of her last case. However, she is dragged back into crime-solving when a friend's brother goes missing, and the police seem to do little about it. Pip feels obligated to act, launching a podcast to gather clues and rally public support for her investigation.

The strength of "Good Girl, Bad Blood" lies in its compelling narrative and well-rounded characters. The story distinctively uses a complex set of suspense and intrigue that keeps you in the book. Pip's character stood out as my favorite. Her tenacity and dedication, laced with vulnerability from her past, make her a relatable and engaging protagonist. The book's format, which incorporates podcast transcripts, interviews, and Pip's personal thoughts, adds a unique touch and draws you deeper into the mystery. However, there are times when the storytelling becomes a bit convoluted with numerous subplots, making it difficult to keep track of everything. As the tension mounts, the book successfully evokes a sense of anxiety and anticipation, perfectly capturing the essence of a crime thriller.

I would definitely recommend "Good Girl, Bad Blood" to anyone who enjoys a good mystery. It's an interesting read that keeps you invested until the very end. While the plot can be complicated at times, it's well worth the effort for the suspenseful payoff. Fans of "One of Us Is Lying" by Karen M. McManus and "Truly Devious" by Maureen Johnson would likely enjoy this book as it shares a similar tone and theme. However, I would suggest reading the first book of the series, "A Good Girl's Guide to Murder," before reading this one to fully understand Pip's backstory and the events that have shaped her. In conclusion, "Good Girl, Bad Blood" is a great read that successfully combines the elements of mystery, suspense, and character development.



WHAT WAS THE DONNER PARTY? BY BEN HUBBARD

CALL # J 978.02 HUBBARD

COLLECTION: J NON-FICTION

RATING:



GENRE: NON-FICTION

Book Review:

What Was the Donner Party? is a book by Ben Hubbard in the “Who Was” series. It details the Donner party’s expedition and how they were caught in a terrible winter and forced to be rescued. The book also has a quick summary of the group’s trail and the series of unfortunate events that led them to be stuck on the Truckee River. It also has mini-sections that branch off into other subjects of interest throughout the story.

I enjoyed the short and interesting read since it is very relevant to where we live since Donner Pass is only a couple of hours away. The story was easy to follow, and the author did an excellent job keeping it family-friendly, as it may not be such an appealing topic. Furthermore, one part that I disliked was the fact that the book did not cover other aspects of the story, such as the life at the camp after the forlorn hope left to find rescuers. I liked the tale of James Reed, who was banished from the party but came back and ended up saving the people who exiled him. The book made me appreciate the settlers who came before and took the long trip to California back in the gold rush.

I would recommend this book to people of all ages. The book is easy enough for kids to understand and is also much simpler than reading another book on the subject for adults. This book reminded me of other books on tragic subjects, such as What Was Pompeii by Jim O’Connor. I enjoyed this book and would rate it 4 stars.

MONEY: THE TRUE STORY OF A MADE-UP THING BY JACOB GOLDSTEIN

CALL #

332.49 GOLDSTEIN

COLLECTION:

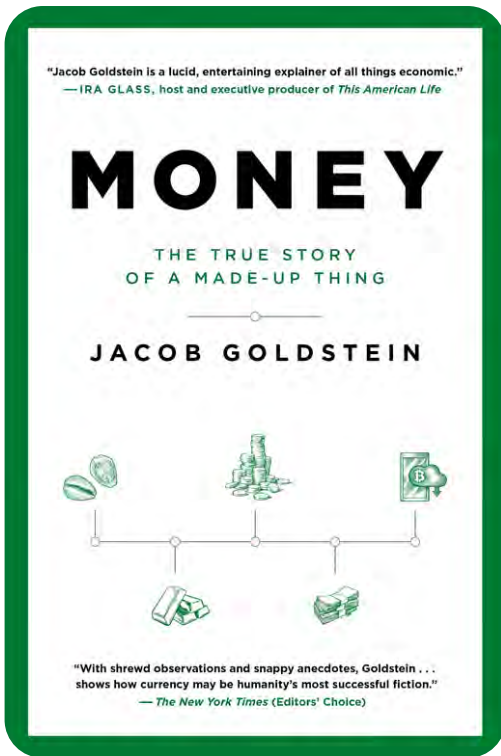
NON-FICTION

RATING:



GENRE:

BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS



Book Review:

Money: The True Story of a Made-Up Thing explores the history and evolution of money. The author provides insights into how the concept of money has shaped human societies and influenced various aspects of our lives.

I found the book insightful and engaging, especially in its exploration between money and society. The author skillfully weaves historical anecdotes and economic concepts, making it accessible to a wide audience. It doesn't have any characters in the narrative; still, the storytelling keeps the reader intrigued. I appreciated the author's ability to simplify complex economic ideas, but the pacing sometimes felt a bit weird. There wasn't a specific character to latch onto, as the focus is more on the overarching concept of money itself.

I would recommend this book to anyone curious about the history and societal impact of money. It's accessible to readers with varying levels of economic knowledge. Those interested in non-fiction exploring the intersection of economics and culture will likely find it enjoyable.



GLACIERS BY ALEXIS M. SMITH

CALL #

FIC SMITH

COLLECTION:

FICTION

RATING:



GENRE:

PSYCHOLOGICAL FICTION;
LITERARY FICTION

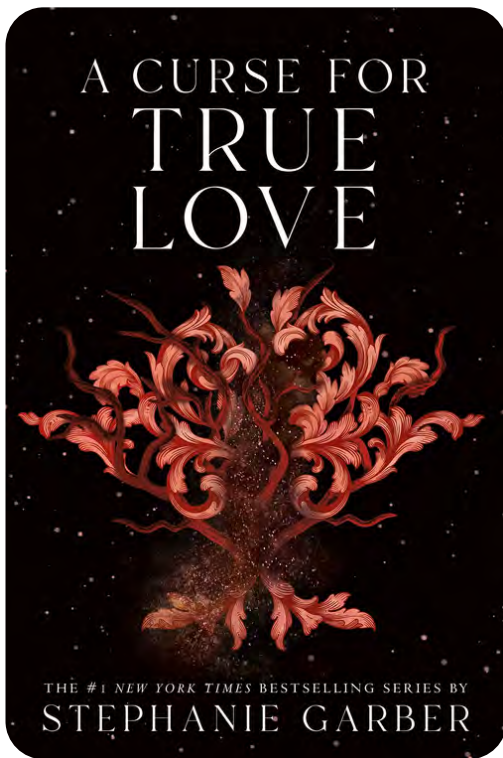
Book Review:

The book Glaciers by Alexis M. Smith follows a young woman named Isabel in her twenties. It's told in alternating timelines, with one timeline following Isabel through a day in her present life in Portland and the other consisting of Isabel's various childhood memories of growing up in Alaska. In the current timeline, Isabel has an unrequited crush on her coworker and is searching through every vintage store to find a perfect dress for an upcoming party. The story focuses on the little details of Isabel's everyday life and demonstrates the bittersweet feeling of growing up and losing parts of your childhood.

Although I was hesitant going into this book because there didn't seem to be much of a plot, I ended up really enjoying it. Despite being a story about an ordinary woman with an ordinary life, I never felt bored while reading it. The author does a good job of capturing the beauty of small, seemingly unimportant moments of Isabel's life. The writing style is lyrical and flows very well, which makes the novel interesting and easy to breeze through. I also really liked how sentimental Isabel was as a character. She treasured small things that other people might have dismissed as junk, like old photos and postcards from thrift stores, and made up stories about the people in them. I really liked reading her inner monologue because she had such a creative imagination, and it really felt like being in a real person's head. I also connected a lot with her love of stories, whether books, memories, old objects, or made-up tales.

Additionally, I loved the themes of nostalgia and childhood throughout the book. Isabel holds on to a lot of memories from her childhood in Alaska, including memories of seeing the glaciers with her older sister. The author conveyed Isabel's sadness at seeing the glaciers and her childhood melt away while also showing how people's memories never really leave them and help shape who they become. I thought this book was beautiful and touching, but I gave it four stars because I think the short and sometimes meandering plot makes the story a little forgettable.

I would recommend this book to anyone who is feeling nostalgic or sentimental. It's perfect for people looking for a short and light read that is both heartwarming and wistful. The detailed and loving descriptions of vintage stores and old photographs also make it a perfect book for anyone who loves thrift stores or vintage things. Overall, I think this is a great book that will resonate with a lot of people through its themes of loneliness, growing up, and romanticizing the little things in life.



A CURSE FOR TRUE LOVE

BY

STEPHANIE GARBER

CALL #

YA FIC GARBER

COLLECTION:

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

RATING:



GENRE:

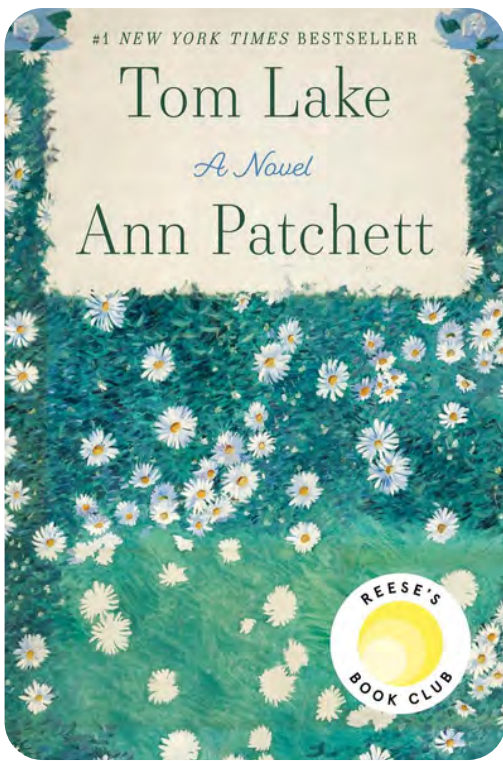
EPIC FANTASY

Book Review:

A Curse for True Love by Stephanie Garber is the final book in the “Once Upon A Broken Heart” trilogy. The entire trilogy follows a young girl named Evangeline Fox, who, in an effort to heal her broken heart, consults the Prince of Hearts- otherwise known as Jacks. Jacks is a fate, meaning he is immortal and holds powers, so Evangeline hopes that these powers can help her get back together with the love of her life. Though he willingly helps Evangeline, he does so with methods that aren't only against Evangeline's morals but also quite dangerous. Throughout the first two books, Evangeline and Jacks develop a close friendship, but one that is toxic at times, filled with betrayals and secrets. Evangeline has to navigate her way through life, unsure of who is being honest and who she can trust. In this particular book, Evangeline begins with no memories of her life, married to somebody she cannot remember. Although readers know her past and what her husband has done to her, she has no choice but to trust him. As time goes on and she regains bits and pieces of her memory, she begins remembering who her friends and foes are and what she was hoping to accomplish.

Even though the second book in this trilogy was my favorite, I still thoroughly enjoyed this story. I think it was a solid and satisfying conclusion. An interesting feature was that the author, Stephanie Garber, included bonus epilogues in various versions that had alternative endings, which I enjoyed as well. Additionally, despite Evangeline being annoying and kind of an airhead at times, she is pretty relatable. The decisions she makes about the people in her life and her journey may be naïve, but I think many of us would do the same things given her situation. Jacks is also a likable character, especially when, in this book, we can read from his point of view and witness his thoughts about Evangeline. The fantastical world, in conjunction with the characters and their dynamics, makes this book difficult to dislike.

All in all, I would definitely recommend this trilogy, particularly to those looking to get into fantasy. Many fantastical stories tend to be very complex, with so much world-building and intricate politics, both of which can be hard to follow. However, although this world is fascinating, there isn't much complexity, allowing readers not to use too much brain power and simply have a fun time reading. Additionally, the characters and their dynamics are super fun to witness- especially between Evangeline and Jacks. Watching their relationship develop and seeing how they talk and treat each other throughout the stories will provide fun for anybody.



TOM LAKE BY ANN PATCHETT

CALL #: FIC PATCHETT

COLLECTION: FICTION

RATING: ★★★★★

GENRE: LITERARY FICTION

Book Review:

The book Tom Lake takes place in 2020, the first year of the COVID outbreak. The story is told from Lara's point of view. All three of her daughters are now back home on the family's cherry orchard, thanks to Covid. To help pass the time while harvesting cherries, they implore their mother to tell them about her past romance with now-famous actor Peter Duke.

The story seemed a little too ordinary at first. I became distracted and began to fear that this book would not live up to my expectations like the last few books Ann has written. But I was never able to put the book down because of the exquisite way she wrote, and before I knew it, I was lost in Lara's story and had forgotten everything else. That's precisely the type of book it is—it surprises you without warning. Lara tells them about living the one life she has ever genuinely desired. The children beg Lara to tell them everything about that summer, especially about the actor and how Lara eventually fell in love with their father. I enjoyed the idea that the reader learns about some of the stories she withholds from her girls, opting to keep some things secret. The writing is excellent, seamlessly transitioning between past and present, even within chapters.

Although some people tend to dislike this book, I really enjoyed it. It's a light, simple novel that will appeal to readers who like stories of young love, marital love, maternal love, and the love of stories.