



TEEN BOOK REVIEWS

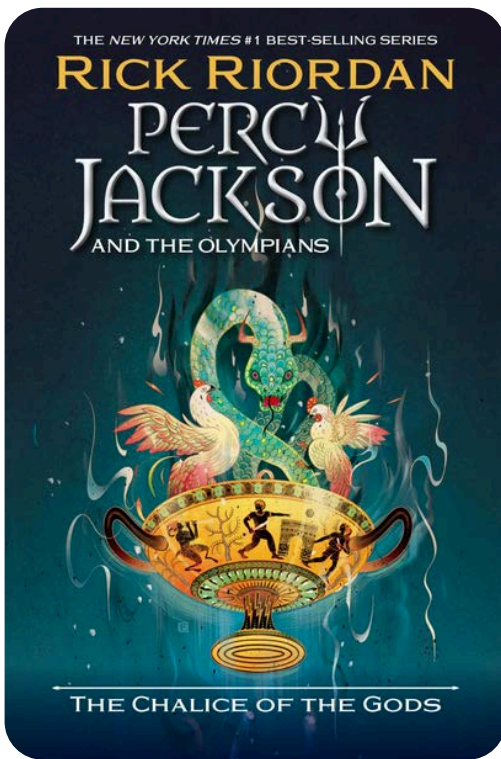
JULY 2024

GUIDE

BOOKS IN THE
YOUNG ADULT
COLLECTION

BOOKS IN THE
ADULT
COLLECTION

BOOKS IN THE
CHILDREN
COLLECTION



THE CHALICE OF THE GODS BY RICK RIORDAN

CALL #: J FIC RIORDAN

COLLECTION: J FICTION

RATING: ★★★★★

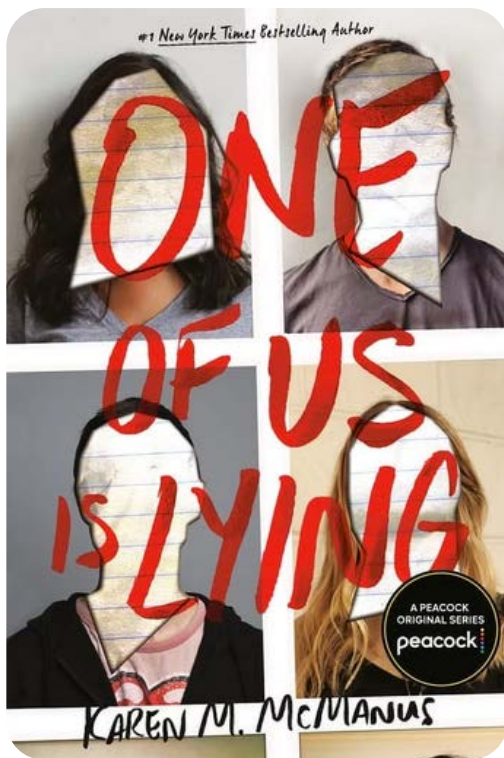
GENRE: MYTHOLOGICAL FICTION; FANTASY

Book Review:

Percy Jackson has survived various monster attacks, trekked through Hell, and saved the world twice, but now he must face his biggest challenge yet: getting into college, which should've been easy with Annabeth on his side. The only problem is that he needs three recommendation letters from three different gods, and the only way to get them to write those letters is by completing a quest for them. His first quest is to try to find Ganymede, the cupbearer's missing chalice. Once again, he, Annabeth, and Grover are off to do a god's dirty work, and they couldn't be happier.

This installment in the Percy Jackson universe has the same character dynamic charm, but the stakes are more toned down than the previous books, which is a nice change of pace when you consider that Percy has almost died dozens of times (After all, protagonists need a break, too). Unlike past books, the setting stays in New York City, where we get a look into Percy's average life, another nice change of pace.

I would recommend this to nostalgic Rick Riordan fans and to readers new to the PJO universe. This book can be used as a breather when transitioning between the Heroes of Olympus series and the Trials of Apollo books.



ONE OF US IS LYING

BY

KAREN MCMANUS

CALL #: YA FIC MCMANUS

COLLECTION: YOUNG ADULT FICTION

RATING: ★★★★★

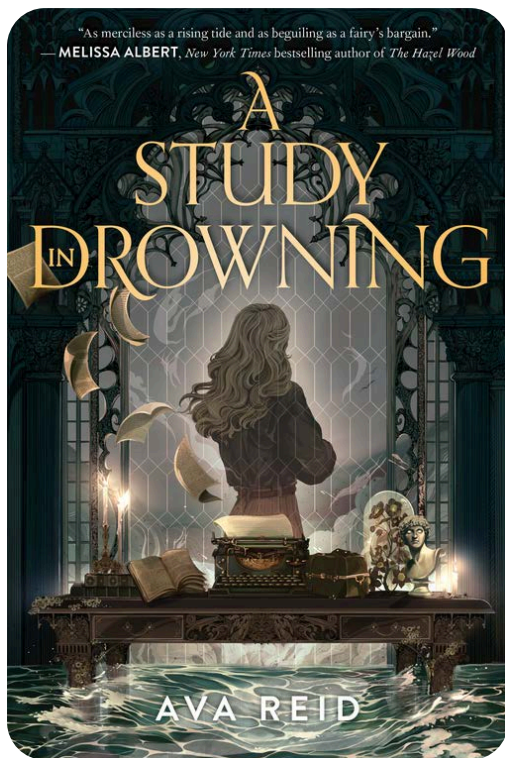
GENRE: MYSTERIES

Book Review:

One of Us Is Lying is a thrilling murder mystery that tells the story of a mysterious death at Bayview High. On Monday afternoon, five students walk into detention. Bronwyn is a model student who never breaks a rule. Addy is a picture-perfect beauty queen and homecoming princess. Nate is a criminal already on probation. Cooper is an all-star baseball player. Simon is an outcast and runs Bayview High's infamous gossip app. However, Simon never makes it out of that room. He dies in detention, and it isn't an accident. Someone has murdered Simon. The next day, Simon had planned to post juicy gossip about all four of his classmates, making them the main suspects. Is one of them the killer, or are they just the perfect cover for the real murderer?

I very much enjoyed reading this book. It tells us the story through the views of all four characters, alternating between perspectives. I find this very clever. Reading the mystery through all of the character's views makes it difficult to decide who to believe. Every character has different theories and feelings about the situation. The author went into great detail about each aspect of the story. She described each event so vividly that you felt as if you were standing right there. The storyline is fantastic, mixing mystery, romance, and sadness to give us a rush of emotion. There are a few negative aspects to the book. The alternating perspectives of the characters can be confusing at times. The book's pacing could be improved as well. The author gives details in important places, but some sections that are unimportant to the main plot feel slow. The book's themes and content may not be suitable for all readers, particularly those looking for a more lighthearted or straightforward mystery novel. Still, overall, it is a very good read.

I would recommend this to people who like thought-provoking books and enjoy mystery. I would not recommend this book to kids under the age of 13. It has some descriptions that are not suitable for lower ages. The book is a very fun read, and many teens might like it. It gives you the fun of trying to solve the mystery yourself before the characters of the book get to it. It is a very interesting story with well-thought-out twists and plots. It is a captivating read that will keep you guessing until the very end.



A STUDY IN DROWNING BY AVA REID

CALL #

YA FIC REID

COLLECTION:

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

RATING:



GENRE:

HISTORICAL FANTASY

Book Review:

The book, A Study in Drowning by Ava Reid, takes place at Llyrian Architecture College, where Effy, an 18-year-old girl, studies. She then finds a contest, asking to redesign her favorite late author's estate, and agrees, heading to the Hiraeth Manor. There, she meets a young literature scholar, Preston Heloury, and he tries to convince her that her favorite author is not who she thought he would be. Together, both of them search for and investigate the author's past life and history and find out the truth between the estate and her favorite late author.

I loved how the book was written so that you would want to continue reading until the end; you couldn't just stop at a page. It pulled you into the story, adding mysterious and magical moods to the characters and their surroundings. Although it was fun to read, it was a bit hard to understand, and it was not really an easy book to read. But overall, this book gave me a magical and a bit of a spooky feeling when reading it. My favorite character would probably be Effy since she is a patient, quiet, and gentle person who tries to help as much as she can.

I would recommend this book to teens who like a magical and romantic story with a bit of a mysterious twist in it. This book was fascinating and exciting to read, even though it was challenging to understand some parts of the plot. Whoever likes a little dark mystery and some magical fun should totally take a chance to read this ghostly, astonishing book.



ONE ITALIAN SUMMER BY REBECCA SERLE

CALL #

FIC SERLE

COLLECTION:

FICTION

RATING:



GENRE:

RELATIONSHIP FICTION

Book Review:

One Italian Summer is a contemporary novel that follows a woman named Katy who is reeling over the death of her mother. The two were supposed to take a mother-daughter trip to the idyllic Positano, Italy before Katie's mom passed away suddenly from cancer. As a way to clear her head after weeks of grieving, Katy decides to embark on the trip alone. Impossibly, she encounters her mother while in Positano--only this time, she's thirty years old. Katy is determined to spend as much time as possible with this younger version of her mom, who is so different from the woman she knew. She must come to terms with the fact that she might have not known her mom as well as she thought she did.

This book had me fully teleported to the quaint coast side town of Positano, from the author's lush descriptions of food, scenery, and the locals. I felt like I was right next to Katy during the entire trip, seeing all the beautiful sights and experiencing the magic of the town. The side characters, especially the hotel staff, were all lovable and added to the charm and whimsy of the setting. It also did a great job of portraying grief and the bond between Katy and her mom. I loved that their relationship was the entire focus of the story. The beautiful Italian coast was the perfect backdrop for this because being there made Katy feel closer to her mom but also forced her to see her in a new light. The plot twists were also really well done because they added some interesting elements of magical realism and helped to tie up the end of the story nicely.

This is the perfect summer book to read in one sitting on the beach or on a plane. It's simple, emotional, and easy to breeze through, and it'll definitely make you wish you were on vacation in Italy.



THE OTHER GUEST BY HELEN COOPER

CALL #

FIC COOPER

COLLECTION:

FICTION

RATING:



GENRE:

PSYCHOLOGICAL SUSPENSE

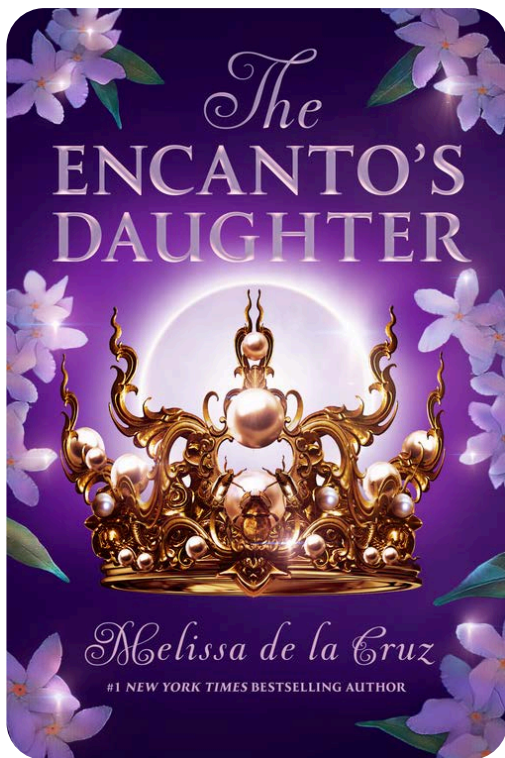
Book Review:

The Other Guest by Helen Cooper is a thriller centered around the death of Amy Wynne. Taking place in the luxurious family-owned resort, Il Mandarino, her accidental drowning left family and guests in utter shock. The story is told from the perspective of three women: Amy, her aunt Leah, and Joanna Greenfield. As Leah visits her sister's family in Italy, she finds herself divulging deeper into the mysterious circumstances to further see what happened to Amy. On the other hand, Joanna, a woman with a considerate heart, has recently dealt with a breakup from her long-term boyfriend. This gave her the opportunity to meet a bartender at a local bar who plays a significant role in her life. Cooper explores the unexpected connection between the two, weaving together a plot about how challenges dealt within a family-owned resort and personal relationships can entangle hidden truths.

The book gave me mixed opinions. Cooper constructed a well-planned plot line that was able to indicate the connection between Leah and Joanna, but at times, the consistent narration switches interfered with the flow. As a reader who enjoys fast-paced books, this leaned more toward the slow burn side, so it didn't provide the effect of keeping me on the edge of my seat until more than halfway. I had quite a difficult time getting into Joanna's storyline because it went into a lot of detail rather than diving into compulsive action. Regardless, I liked the character itself because of how emotionally intelligent she was. The storyline that kept me intrigued the most though was Leah's. While facing challenges to express feelings of consolidation and love towards her sister's family during a time of grief to taking risky actions to uncover the truth about her beloved niece, her storyline drove the suspense, keeping me engaged.

While Cooper writes about an enticing narrative of how two women undergo a journey full of twists, eventually intertwining paths, this book was not for me personally. I was unable to find a connection to the storyline due to its slow-burn style, which went in-depth into a lot of the events but never ended in a suspenseful feeling, which lost my attention a bit. Nonetheless, I would still recommend this book to anyone. It's an interesting read that combines unexpected events with themes of mental health and the importance of family, all being integrated into this slow-burn thriller.

Content Warning: material discusses sexual assault



THE ENCANTO'S DAUGHTER BY MELISSA DE LA CRUZ

CALL # YA FIC DE LA CRUZ

COLLECTION: YOUNG ADULT FICTION

RATING: 

GENRE: FANTASY

Book Review:

The Encanto's Daughter by Melissa de la Cruz is about MJ Roberston-Rodriguez, who is half encanto, mostly growing up in the human world. Her father, King Vivencio, suddenly passed away. As the only heir, MJ takes his place in Biringan. MJ has to prove to the council and especially the Sigbin Court to allow a half-human ruler. As she is learning how to be a queen, she discovers information that leads her to believe that her father's death was not natural but murder by a sorceress. During her time there, she also needs to discover her hidden magical talent; otherwise, she wouldn't be able to claim the throne.

I liked the many magical creatures and the search for the sorceress. The dynamic between the councils and characters is also interesting. It is also a fast book to read. I feel like the book was a bit fast-paced for me, but I like how there was some murder mystery, and I wish there had been more.

I would recommend this book to most teens who enjoy fantasy romance and murder mystery. Although there isn't much murder mystery in this book, I still thought it was interesting. This book is similar to the book series "Princess Diaries."



SMALL THINGS LIKE THESE BY CLAIRE KEEGAN

CALL #: FIC KEEGAN

COLLECTION: FICTION

RATING:



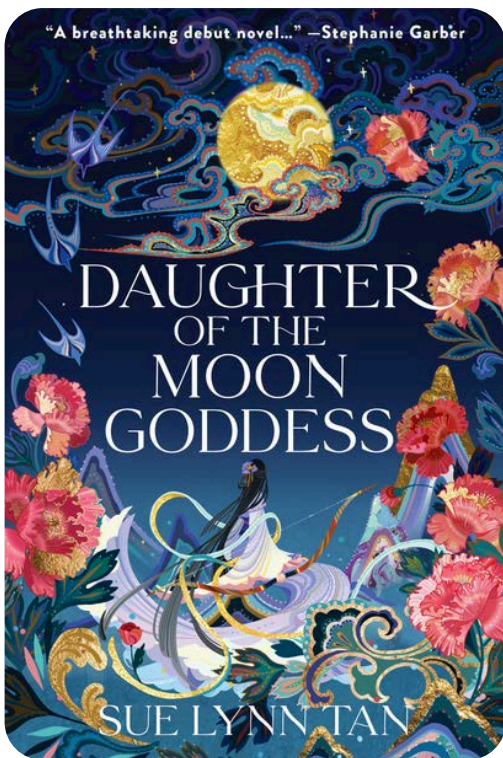
GENRE: LITERARY FICTION; NOVELLAS

Book Review:

Small Things Like These is set in the 1980s in a tiny Irish community during Christmastime. The main character, Bill Furlong, is a father and coal merchant who must make tons of deliveries across town to supply everyone in town with coal during the busy season. During a delivery to the local convent, Bill encounters a strange girl, leading him to slowly uncover the truth behind what really happens in the convent.

I really enjoyed this book overall. It's a short and simple story with cozy, descriptive writing that perfectly encapsulates a tiny town in the middle of winter. My favorite part of the book was how the author focused on the quiet, day-to-day life of Bill and the people and places he interacted with throughout each day. I also liked seeing the sweet relationship between him and his five daughters and wife. All of these things helped to ground the story and make it feel really charming, which made it all the more shocking when certain truths suddenly got revealed. I liked how the revelations contrasted the early optimistic tone of the book because I think it's a good reflection of how blind everyone in town was to the darker things that were really happening. Although the book ends on a hopeful note, I thought the ending could have had some more closure because it ended right after the major event happened.

I would recommend this book to anyone looking for a short, powerful story to read in one sitting. It's very short, but its message and themes of community and bravery still leave a big impact.



DAUGHTER OF THE MOON GODDESS BY SUE LYNN TAN

CALL #

S TAN

COLLECTION:

SCIENCE FICTION

RATING:



GENRE:

EPIC FANTASY

Book Review:

Daughter of the Moon Goddess, by Sue Lynn Tan, is about a girl named Xingyin, who is the daughter of the moon goddess Chang'e. She and her mother live peacefully on the moon, but unknown to Xingyin, her mother is actually hiding her from the feared Celestial Emperor, who exiled her mother after stealing the elixir of immortality. However, everything changes when Xingyin's existence is discovered. Xingyin is forced to flee her home and ends up in the Celestial Kingdom. While in the Celestial Kingdom, she manages to learn archery and magic with the emperor's son. However, through this all, Xingyin still remembers her reason for coming here, her journey to free her mother, even as passion flames between her and the prince. To free her mother from punishment, Xingyin embarks on a perilous quest after striking a dangerous bargain with the ruthless Celestial Emperor. Daughter of the Moon Goddess is part of a duology followed by Heart of the Sun Warrior.

This novel was so beautiful and full of love, honor, hope, and sacrifice. I loved how the book included Chinese mythology and great descriptions of everything from people to food. However, I didn't like the first part of the book since it was rather slow-paced compared to the later half of the book. My favorite character in the book was Shuxiao, whom Xingyin befriended in the army. I liked Shuxiao the most because she was always there to support Xingyin, from the army to outside life. She was the perfect friend for Xingyin; she was so brave, but she was also so kind to everyone.

For anyone who likes books with romance, action, and maybe Chinese mythology, I would recommend this book to you. However, if you are someone who doesn't like reading long books, you might not like this novel because it is roughly 500 pages long. This book was such a pleasure to read, especially since the writing style was so elegant, and the world in the book was described to make the novel so fascinating. If you were to ever read this book, I would be sure that it wouldn't disappoint you one bit!