



Drama

Raina Telgemeier , Gurihiru (Colorist)

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PLACES, EVERYONE!

Callie loves theater. And while she would totally try out for her middle school's production of *Moon Over Mississippi*, she can't really sing. Instead she's the set designer for the drama department stage crew, and this year she's determined to create a set worthy of Broadway on a middle-school budget. But how can she, when she doesn't know much about carpentry, ticket sales are down, and the crew members are having trouble working together? Not to mention the onstage AND offstage drama that occurs once the actors are chosen. And when two cute brothers enter the picture, things get even crazier!

Drama Details

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Author : Raina Telgemeier , Gurihiru (Colorist)

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From Reader Review Drama for online ebook

Calista says

Drama Love! I love theatre geeks and people of the theatre. I was in the pit of the musicals and I got to be around the actors and I loved it. Theatre culture is amazing and I adore the people. It is a great experience.

I feel like this little story captures those high school theatre days so well. Raina hits the notes perfectly. There is drama everywhere. There is drama on stage and to top it all off there is the school dance in there to make sure there was enough drama. There is also the main character falling for several of the guys and being the theatre, one of them turns out to be gay. She bounces back pretty well.

The subject is handled very well and I love this story. Raina has some good stories but this is my favorite story of hers. I love this little book. I need to add it to my collection.

Nat says

I went into this graphic novel a bit wary, since I had read Telgemeier's **Smile** and wasn't the biggest fan... But with this newest addition I was ecstatic to find that **Drama** was nothing like I'd anticipated.

Callie loves theater. And while she would totally try out for her middle school's production of *Moon Over Mississippi*, she can't really sing. Instead she's the set designer for the drama department stage crew, and this year she's determined to create a set worthy of Broadway on a middle-school budget. But how can she, when she doesn't know much about carpentry, ticket sales are down, and the crew members are having trouble working together? Not to mention the onstage AND offstage drama that occurs once the actors are chosen. And when two cute brothers enter the picture, things get even crazier!

The characters in this comic seemed a lot more mature to me than the ones in **Smile**, so I was surprised to find that they were mostly just 7th and 8th graders. On a totally separate note, **Drama** had a number of enjoyable moments that left me grinning from ear to ear. The tons of laugh-out-loud moments, plus the cast of characters being a bunch of loving and dedicated kids kept me satisfied from start to finish.

Also:

- The color schemes and palettes in **Drama** were vibrant, spellbinding, and incredibly fitting to the ongoing theme.

- I loved getting an inside look to what happens behind the theatre stage. It reminded me a lot of this incredible video I watched awhile back but still think about.
- The exploration of sexuality and coming out. I'm sad we didn't get to see it from the character's perspective, but still... I loved the turn of events that lead to this iconic moment:

Dream big, kids.

- This iconic clap-back:

This Callie girl is bold, like the time she auditioned for fun in front of everybody to calm down Jesse's nerves. I love her.

On that note, I'll wrap up my review to say one last thing: **Drama** is a noteworthy graphic novel jam-packed with kids full of talent, courage, and dedication. I'm excited to check out more works by Raina Telgemeier in the near future.

*Note: I'm an Amazon Affiliate. If you're interested in buying **Drama**, just click on the image below to go through my link. I'll make a small commission!*

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Lola says

This is my fifth book from Raina Telgemeier, so I'm familiar with her style. That said, I find this book to be the weakest, less captivating and most dramatic graphic novel she's written/illustrated.

Drama is to be expected. After all, the title is literally DRAMA. So I did expect it and was able to tolerate it – Actually, in many cases, drama can make a story more interesting. If I'm watching Grey's Anatomy, it's not because the medical cases are so darn fun.

It's because of the drama. But unfortunately, although I found the story realistic and enjoyed reading about the behind-the-scenes of plays, I could not connect with the heroine as well as I could with the other heroines Miss Telgemeier introduced us to in her other works.

I mean, she's "ok". Naïve, overenthusiastic and a little too obsessed with finding a boyfriend, but she's not unpleasant or unlikeable per se. Someone to read about but not someone to remember for a long time. Just... sort of forgettable.

Fortunately, there were other things to enjoy, as I mentioned above. Since I've never been in a play in my life—which kind of surprises me since I went to the same middle school as my brother and he got to do one—I had no clue about what transpires behind the scenes or how to actually organize everything for a play

to happen. Now I know more about the subject.

And as always, the author's illustrations made my day. They are so cinematographic that I had no trouble making an animated movie in my mind about the story I read about. If you ask me who I think was born to become a graphic novelist, the name Raina Telgemeier comes to my mind almost immediately.

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Kellee says

Raina Telgemeier does it again. She has a knack for telling a serious yet humorous story with colorful, fun artwork. I loved her main character Callie- she was a very real 7th grade girl. I also loved that this book was not about the lead actress in a musical- it was about the stage crew (though some actors did play a part). Raina also does a wonderful job at introducing middle school boys who are questioning their sexuality in an unbiased, nonjudgmental way. It is completely appropriate for middle grade and it is very accessible to readers. Well done!!!

Shannon says

It might be difficult to tell from the page count, but this is actually a graphic novel. I took this with me to the gym today, I've been going to the gym regularly for the first time in my life to try to correct some injuries instead of succumbing to surgery and I wanted to try to read while exercising. So I thought I'd bring something easy that didn't require a lot of concentration since they play music in the gym and I normally can't read if I hear music with words, but there was just enough ambient noise for me to block it out. I actually rode one of the bikes and was sitting in the front row where people walk past and I probably couldn't have chosen a more children's-looking book. Heh, whatever! I finished the whole thing AND kept my heart rate in the 130s the whole time. So, there.

/random anecdote

What made me sad though, **was coming home and reading the negative reviews.** Note: don't even BOTHER with Amazon if you're looking for, lack of a different term, *better* opinions. Just ... don't.

You might be wondering why the negative reviews made me sad though, since I myself gave this 2 stars. **Well, go read the top 1 star review here.** I'll wait.

Yeah.

So.

I gave this book 2 stars because I thought it was "just ok." Here was my thought process while reading it: "Oh, this is fun, it's reminding me of my time in drama, huh, well, the side love stories are kind of blah and I want to read more about the musical and set design and everything, oh, I totally saw that 'twist' coming, well, this book was ok but I wish it was longer and I wanted more character development and less emphasis on

any sort of romance."

NEVER, did I ONCE think, "Oh my god this is so inappropriate! How could this have an age rating of 10 and up?! This should have a warning label! Parents should know about the deviant sexual behavior this contains! Ugh, I was totally misled and this was just wrong on so many levels."

Never, did *anything* of the sort cross my mind. **Tell me, oh people who gave this 1 star** because (view spoiler), tell me, if this story was about a boy and a GIRL would you say it shouldn't be on library shelves where kids could see a picture of them kissing? Would it need a warning label then? **Should it be banned because there would be, horror of horrors, heterosexual activity in it?**

Actually, DON'T tell me. I have no desire to hear your opinion whatsoever since I already know the answer.

I gave this 2 stars because I thought the romance made the main story weaker and I didn't particularly care for the lead character. I had no idea what this book was about besides the drama (as in, musical "drama") aspect and I wanted so much more of that and then was disappointed that it was more about a boy-crazy girl than anything else. It also contained a lot of cliches as well, even the much lauded (view spoiler)

If you're going to read this book, I hope you rate it because you liked (or disliked) the story and not because it contains "the gay." Well look, *now* you've been warned. **If gay people bother you and you don't want your kids to read about them, don't give them this book.** There, you're welcome, I just did your parenting for you.

Seriously, with that being said, **to all of the parents** that handed this book over to their kids and then got "fired up" because they didn't realize this book has gay kids in it; **shame on you.** Shame on you for not paying attention to what your kids are reading, shame on you for being so disgustingly close-minded and bigoted, and shame on you for teaching your children those same disgustingly close-minded and bigoted views.

Sarah says

Guest Post by Addie, my 9-year-old daughter

DRAMA is about girl named Callie who is in a acting class at school. She likes a boy who finds out he is gay in acting class. Callie loves to read acting books at the library. In this book Callie is a set designer and at the end of the she becomes the stage manager.

I would recommend this book to my friends because I think they would like it. Callie learns about gay people and how she can still be friends with them.

My reaction: Well, I guess I probably should have read this first before giving it to Addie! I think the topics covered were a bit over her going-into-4th-grade mind. She'll understand it better when she's in 6th or 7th. I do think it's funny that when I asked what she liked about the book or what she learned from it, she wrote the

2nd paragraph. She then told me that she doesn't have any gay kids in her class at school, so I had to explain that they may not know it yet or not want to share. It was quite the interesting conversation!

I thought the book was adorable. Sweet read about junior high romance--for those who are straight, bi, gay or questioning. The graphic novel is written like a play in acts, and the fact that the characters are all involved in the middle school play only supports the play-within-a-play concept.

Estelle says

Review originally posted on RatherBeReadingBlog.com:

I am absolutely giddy in love with Raina Telgemeier's work.

Drama is the first graphic novel I've ever read and while it only took me about an hour to get through it, I couldn't stop going back and smiling over the details in these colorful scenes and how perfectly Raina has been able to capture the middle school experience.

And for the theater lovers, finally: a book that celebrates those dear people who work on the stage crew, the kookiness that ensues, the intertwining love stories, budget constraints and trying to actually get people to the shows. (Plus the book was divided in Acts with an Intermission – such a cute set up.)

Callie is a theater dork in a way that I geek out over theater and books and Disney. She cannot contain her love of the performing arts and I love that about her. She doesn't give a crap what other people think and good for her. Embrace what you love, Callie, and don't let that go. She also falls for boys pretty easily and gee, don't we all remember being like that in 8th grade? If it wasn't one boy it was another. Raina's creation of Callie's wide eyes in particular scenes brought such comedy to the page. It was only one of the many small details that made such an impact. (I also loved the attention paid to Callie's bedroom. You can learn so much more about a character's background without reading words.)

Raina also does a great job of integrating a crew of multi-cultural kids (I came from a very diverse middle school so this was great to see) and also blending in a variety of characters with different sexual preferences. As I read more and more books that include LGBT characters, I am so inclined to hug these writers who are so keen on depicting TRUE life.

I can only describe Drama as a total delight. It has surprising depth but doesn't weigh down the flow of the story or even the lighter moments. There are so many details to look at and take in when it comes to this novel, and I could see myself flipping through it again and again and always finding something new to love. The awesome illustrations and bright colors paired with a sweet story make Drama a highlight in anyone's book pile.

Mike says

I'll be honest: the only reason I read this book was that I heard it had a gay character.

That's not something I'd normally do; I have no problems with gay characters in books, but I don't normally go out of my way to look for them. What made this book different was that it was a middle-grade book, meant for kids as young as second grade. I didn't know such a book *existed*, let alone one published by Scholastic. After I heard about Katherine Applegate and Michael Grant's story with *Remnats*, I sort of gave up on a book like this existing in the near-future. (Ask me about that if you're curious; I'd love to ~~rant~~ explain.) But apparently it not only existed, but my sister was obsessed with it. The second I realized it had a gay character, I demanded to read it.

And the gay characters were handled really well, for the most part. I liked that Justin was fleshed out, that he wasn't a queer stereotype. (Well, he was in that he was into theater, but he wasn't at all girly or perverted or anything like that.) I liked that he was portrayed as being entirely comfortable with his sexuality, and that everyone around him was, too. I liked that Telgemeier didn't make it an informed attribute, that he mentioned boys that he was attracted to more than once. The one thing that I didn't like in how the gay characters was the ending; I'll discuss this more later.

The other characters were just as well-rendered from the wild and outgoing Callie to the quiet and funny Jesse. I loved how their interactions were handled; their conflicts were realistic, but they were nicely resolved in a way that I think is healthy for kids to see. And I liked that Callie made mistakes and had flaws, but that she was redeemed in the end, and that she in turn forgave the people around her. It was all very positive, but still realistic.

It helped that the plot was well done. There were just enough events to support the character interactions (which are really what the book is about), but it never threatened to overcome them. It was well-paced, and there were no plot holes or contradictions. Again, the only thing I didn't like was the ending. (I will discuss this later, I promise.) Other than that, the plot worked for me, in a way that most MG realistic fiction doesn't.

My opinion on the artwork is a little more mixed. I wasn't a huge fan of the character designs; there was something slightly too cartoony about them; they should've been a bit more realistic looking. But other than that, the artwork was really good; it was bright and fun to look at, and it was very evocative of real motion and real life. Still, I'm not sure I can get over something that was with us as much as the character designs.

Now, as promised, I'll discuss the ending. (See, I told you I would do it. What, you didn't believe me? Well, you should've. Asshole.)

(view spoiler)

Still, this was a well-written, well drawn graphic novel, and - I still can't get over this - *it's a middle grade piece with a gay character*. I'd highly recommend it both to kids and older readers.

K. says

This has consistently been one of the most popular graphic novels for middle graders in every school library I've worked in. It's fun, it's an interesting story, and the art is great.

Essentially, it's the story of a year 7 kid who's working on the set design for the school play. Along the way, she makes new friends, overcomes obstacles in her vision for the play, and struggle buses her way through friendships and crushes.

I loved the fact that it's a middle grade graphic novel with LGBTQIA representation, and that said representation is handled as well and as explicitly as it is. There's no hinting that these characters are attracted to people of the same gender. They get literal heart eyes for people of the same gender. And it's great.

Honestly, the only reason I hadn't read this earlier is because I can never get my hands on a copy because it's always on loan!

Jeff says

This book was something that you can really connect to! Callie is a normal teen that deals with typical boy drama along with handling a romantic play. However, if you want some advice for boy drama, I wouldn't go to her if I were you. :)

Marie the Librarian says

Okay im officially a Raina Telgemeier fan. Her stories and characters and illustrations are sooo good and relateable. Down to earth and realistic. And so cute.

Jenna says

I'm not someone who Googles old acquaintances much; I tend to leave the past in the past, and I'm also a bit of a digital recluse. (Who am I kidding: a bit of a recluse in general!) By this I mean that I never got much into Facebook and have limited myself to only dabbling in other platforms. GR is pretty much the only mechanism I regularly use to virtually interact with others, and I like it because it's focused precisely on the literary aspects of life rather than, you know, All Of Life.

Nonetheless: I did recently, and really out of nowhere, compulsively Google an old friend/acquaintance from high school, someone who'd been a grade ahead of me and whom I knew from having done the annual Shakespeare play together for three autumns at the small suburban Detroit Catholic high school we attended. Though my Googling was fairly random and unusual overall, it was neither terribly unusual nor random in that my Googling was centered on an acquaintance from my high school drama club circle. I've found that years and years later, even after having wandered the world and attended some of its fine universities and wrested out an existence in some of its major cities, these fellow adolescent Midwestern amateur thespians, clad in their finest early-90s goth attire, are still the folks I think of most often, and most fondly, and hope to find well. Why is this?!

I guess I believe, or at least can hypothesize based on my personal experience, that a significant portion of one's best self - including the part that constructively solves problems and contends with challenges, and the part that empathizes and connects with others and develops a sense of self in relation to them - is developed during a critical high school window that, in the case of myself, and presumably many others, happens to occur right around the peak time period of prospective involvement in school drama club, a place where even

the most introverted kids can be compelled to safely push comfort zones, interact with others, formulate and share opinions, and be encouraged to use one's unique talents to contribute to the betterment of a community. I often feel like my personal journey of self-actualization in the decades after high school can in some ways be viewed as an unnecessarily elaborate full-circle return to many values and sensibilities I initially formulated in high school, only after having figured out what they'd actually look like IRL.

And likewise: I've been thinking lately, as one might in my line of work (as a sexual assault counselor) and also just as a post-November-2016 citizen of the U.S., that I owe a debt of gratitude to the fellow young men in my high school drama club circle for always treating me and other young women and men with acceptance, kindness, and respect. Maybe it's because the drama club attracted sensitive and empathic and outsider-identifying kids; maybe it's because it was an itty bitty Catholic school; maybe it's because I'm just old enough to have dodged the bullets of social media, cellphone cameras, and high-speed Internet (porn) that have made school environments so harrowing, confusing, and devaluing for so many young women and men today. In any case, I'm fortunately able to remember high school as a time of safe and happy coeducational interaction for me and for my friends.

The old acquaintance I Googled was someone who helped make this safety and comfort possible. I distinctly remember the caring and polite manner in which he treated me and others, even just in quiet and seemingly insignificant everyday encounters.

Sometimes when I listen to the stories of sexual assault survivors (most of whom already knew and worked or studied or hung out with or dated the perpetrator), I'm amazed that socializing used to be so safe, that there once existed the kind of simple, essential, reliable, unwavering kindness and concern demonstrated by my friend. While being treated according to the principles of basic human rights and dignity shouldn't be a privilege, in a U.S. high school or elsewhere, it still seems rare to me today. I'm sure that being treated this way as a young woman positively impacted my self-regard and in some part made it possible for me to subsequently take on the tough business of post-high school living with the best and fullest effort I could muster.

So it was amidst a grateful curiosity that I impetuously Googled my old acquaintance. I discovered that he is no longer living, and had died very suddenly and young, in the vicinity of 40, from a previously undiscovered heart defect. By all available accounts, he had remained to the very end as kind a soul to all as I'd ever remembered him. His kindness is corroborated by many independent online voices of those who knew him throughout time and place. Many of these online anecdotes of his kindness rang so true to my memory that I could have written them myself.

This graphic novel, *Drama*, has been reliably lurking in my library for years, and I've gathered it's become a kind of modern classic. On a whim I reserved it, picked it up, and read it shortly after learning about my friend's death, only a while thereafter making the connection that this act of reading was likely a fond, if initially subconscious, memorial to my friend. Suffice it to say that you should probably read this book, and will likely appreciate it, if you have any good memories of your own scholastic drama club experiences. I wish I could draw well enough to share with others the story of the supportive community that I was fortunate to experience in my youth, and in the company of my friend who probably never realized the full extent of his positive impact or how widely it was appreciated. I couldn't hope to draw any of it, but luckily I

think Drama captures the essence well enough to function as a tribute for any fellow drama kids out there, and to illustrate the power of these formative interactions and their subsequent influence on a developing young life.

Rachel Reads Ravenously says

3 stars

Callie is a middle school girl who loves theater, ever since she was a little girl. So when she finds out her school is putting on a production of the famous show *Moon Over Mississippi* she is ecstatic. Not a good singer or actress, she becomes a part of the production crew as the set designer. Along the way her best friend becomes in charge of costuming and her new friend gets a great roll in the play. Pretty soon her personal life and the play life becomes intertwined for everyone, and drama onstage and offstage ensues.

Anyone who has ever had anything to do with a school play, or even a professional play will adore this book. It perfectly captures all of the drama that surrounds being in the drama department. Placed in middle school, Callie is still struggling to find herself and discovering what she wants. I found it interesting that she had two romantic interests in the book and neither of them were exactly right for her. A great lesson to teach young girls is that just because someone is nice to you doesn't mean you should fall in love with them right away. It's not logical.

One moment that I thought was cute that parents may not was when the two boys ended up kissing on stage. It was such a typical moment of a performance, but some parents may object to the gay subject matter. I hope most won't. The graphics themselves were well done, the book flowed really well and none of the pictures were distracting, they complemented the story perfectly. A cute book perfect for readers in middle or early high school.

Kelly (and the Book Boar) says

Find all of my reviews at: <http://52bookminimum.blogspot.com/>

Drama was meant to be a Banned Books Week selection, but the wait list at the library was a little longer than anticipated (and hopefully full of children who were taking a stand against censorship and not just old ladies like me). Why it's banned or challenged? Homosexuality – in the form of first crushes. In all actuality it's about the cast, but mainly crew, of the school play and all the goings on while they try to make it to opening night while battling first crushes, first heartbreak, mean girls, best friends, and all the other goings on of your typical 8th grader.

Dear Other Humans: It shouldn't be that hard of a choice to make . . .

ANY book that a person wants to read is a book that should be available for reading.

As for any kiddo who might come across this "review?" Do you, little boo. Be true to yourself –you can play

sports or be in the band or be in drama or want to kiss a girl or a boy – just be a good person. And now Imma borrow someone else's much better words than my own do the talking . . .

**??? When the sharpest words wanna cut me down
I'm gonna send a flood, gonna drown them out
I am brave, I am bruised I am who I'm meant to be, this is me**

**Look out 'cause here I come
And I'm marching on to the beat I drum
I'm not scared to be seen I make no apologies**

THIS IS ME! ???

And for my little BoobTube lovin' buddy – here's a clip that made me have all the feelings . . .

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLFEv...>

Marpapad says

[3.5]
