



## The Seclusion

*Jacqui Castle*

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In the year 2090, America has walled itself off from the rest of the world. When her father is arrested by the totalitarian Board, a young woman sets out to escape the only country she's ever known.

While on a routine assignment scouting the viability of dwindling natural resources outside the massive urban centers most American citizens call home, Patricia 'Patch' and her co-worker Rexx discover a relic from the past containing dangerous contraband?unedited books from before *The Seclusion*. These texts will spark an unquenchable thirst for the truth that sees Patch's father arrested by the totalitarian Board.

Evading her own arrest, Patch and Rexx set out across a ruined future United States, seeking some way to escape the only home they've ever known. Along the way, they learn about how their country came to be this way and fall in love. But their newfound knowledge may lead to their own demise.

## The Seclusion Details

Date : Published September 4th 2018 by Inkshares

ISBN : 9781947848511

Author : Jacqui Castle

Format : Paperback 300 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Dystopia, Young Adult, Fiction

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## From Reader Review The Seclusion for online ebook

### **Bella says**

I received this ARC in exchange for an honest review:

Wow what a ride! The Seclusion was a mixture of The Giver, 1984 and V for Vendetta all rolled into a nice package with a little touch of Trump thrown in. WOW again.

The Characters:

Patch: What an amazingly strong female lead character. We need more strong females like this in books. She was intelligent, questioned things on her own and didn't have to depend on others to rescue her in every situation.

Rexx: My sweet boy, what a doll. While I wished we had seen his family and gotten to know them like we did Patch's family it was still amazing to get to know him. He had such an openness towards everything and was strong and resourceful. Great character to compliment Patch.

Oliver: I love you Oliver, I hope there is a book two and we see you there. A remarkable representation of the good in humanity even when it feels like there is none left.

Robbie: I hope, like Oliver, we see you in book 2. You deserve your story to be told.

Plot:

Like I said it's such an amazing mix of all that makes dystopian novels such wonderful reads. It plays on the fears of Trump's America just enough but allows for other extremest ideas to be explored within it. Well worth the read and it opens up so many opportunities for both books about 2029 and the current situation with Patch.

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### **Michelle says**

In real life, the idea of building a wall to keep people out illegally sounds like a good idea to some people. But what if they built a wall that kept you in? Everyone in a place of authority lied the same lie, only let you know what you needed to know to do your job, and you couldn't speak of it outside of work? And then you find evidence of the real truth...I need the next book! This was amazing, easy to relate to reality.

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### **Diego Sanchez says**

I received this ARC in exchange of my honest opinion, which does not affect any of my comments.  
"Daddy? Will you shoot me if I say something I'm not supposed to?":

Imagine a world where you cannot read, watch tv shows, travel, work and be who you are because you are

being controlled by the government. Not very good, right?. The Seclusion is your perfect book if you love stories related to dystopian worlds. As you know, I have always wanted to go back to this kind of stories, since I was a huge fan of "The Hunger Games". I was not disappointed. In this story we have Patch, a girl who works for "The Board" taking samples of different environmental things. She lives in the United States, in the part that is close to Arizona and its surroundings, but this country is secluded by a Board (Which could be the famous Trump' Wall) and they are not allowed to pass it. Till one day, she and her best friend start questioning everything

I really enjoyed the characters. As you know, I'm very honest when reading a book, but this time, I didn't feel that a character lacked of something or it was way too descriptive. I really enjoyed the female here, we can see her transition from stability to insecurity. The same with the secondary characters, who I cannot describe properly in order to not spoil you, but those were my favorites and I was very anxious for them. I also could hate the officers, since I could not only but relate them with the actual situation between the US and Mexico

I liked that there is a huge description of the places (trees, roads, sky) because that totally helps my imagination to see where they are living in. I think that there are two options, love all the benefits you have or hate it and try to be free without any money. Due to this fact, I think the book has a good progress, since we can see in every chapter a "soap opera ending", meaning that you will always discover something new, and definitely, you need to read till the end of the book to guess what is happening.

Finally, Jacqui is doing a good job at writing, this is perfect if you want to go from happiness to sadness, anxiety, fear and joyful. I was having a lot of emotions and definitely, this will be at my top this year. Rating: 4 stars.

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### **Audrey says**

This was dystopian sci-fi with a 1984 type totalitarian government. The basic premise is that the United States has built walls on all of its borders and now The Board monitors and controls every aspect of everyone's lives. As an American, it made me think, "what if we really did start building walls?"

I liked that this book is set in a near enough future that there is still some history in the minds of a few citizens. The main characters are young and they don't know any other way of life. Their lack of knowledge plays an important role in their journey. This book did a really good job of not giving you too much information before you needed it. It kept the story moving along at a fast pace, but I never felt lost or confused. I really enjoyed it and I thought the ending was great.

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### **Isabel says**

I received an ARC through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

I thought this was kinda be a bad or shittier Matched. Like, the love aspect is there in the book and I didn't really believe it but it was nothing like Matched at all. When I first read Matched, it was a favorite. I devoured the books but it hasn't really stood the test of time. I'm sure a lot of us can relate to that. I don't know why I did think it was gonna be like Matched by Ally Condie, but I'm glad it wasn't. While it has some

similar aspects such as "The Board" in the book can be related to "the officials" in Matched, and there are similarities, in this book it feels more developed. It feels a bit more organic, and some of the things honestly reminded me about The Handmaid's Tale (obs! not the book but the series). There are some problematic things in the book I really didn't get such as the love aspect which just left me ???? okay ??? but I'm not gonna go into spoilers.

One thing that also slightly bothered me was information dumps. There was a lot of them, and they didn't really seem to be in the right place most of the time even though I get WHY they were there.

I think I'd read this book again or definitely check out the author with more books.

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### **Cheryl says**

This book was so scarily wonderful. I will be asking every teen and fan of YA to read this book when it comes out. While not intended as a cautionary tale, its premise is so plausible in today's world that the dystopian setting does not seem that far in the future. The premise is engaging, the characters are wonderful and well developed and the writing flows. As soon as I finished reading it, I wanted to start it again, I cannot wait until others can read and start talking about this book! It has an ending that leaves the reader satisfied. I sure do hope that the author writes a sequel soon, though, because I want more more more!

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### **Jenny Yergin says**

This was a quick read for me because once I started it, I couldn't put it down! With the political themes it hit very close to home. I think it will be successful, I worry though since it isn't set very far into the future if it will be outdated in 5/10 years. I believe teens and adults that enjoy dystopian story lines will enjoy this book and those that see the comparisons with the current political climate in our country right now. I highly recommend the book.

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### **The Nerd Daily says**

Originally published on The Nerd Daily | Review by Blake Smith

"Our entire nation had been lied to for decades. Millions murdered to fit a narrative. We had no idea what was taking place outside the Walls. Whether we were being protected as we were told, or caged. We lived lives guided primarily by fear."

I was given The Seclusion in exchange for an honest review! I am so happy to have had the opportunity to read and review Jacqui Castle's debut novel!

Set in a dystopian future in the year 2090, America has enclosed itself to the outside world by building walls around all surrounding borders to keep out unwanted immigrants and terrorists. The Wall is meant to protect the residents of America. Sound familiar? The government controls everything. Where people live, what they

watch, what they eat, where they go; every aspect of their lives is controlled by a faceless entity referred to as “The Board”.

“The Board provides. The Board protects. I am grateful for the protection.”

This phrase is ingrained into every citizens’ brain—including Patch. Patch is the protagonist of the story and wants nothing more in this life than to keep her head down. She wants to do her job by taking samples of the earth to determine the toxicity levels, and tend to her tiny garden in front of her apartment. Patch has always obeyed the laws, taking every video and public service announcement the Board sends out to heart. She shuns and steers clear of others who have turned their backs on the government and is constantly questioning why anyone would ever question the Board or want to leave the comfort of the Walls.

However, her point of view starts to shift when Patch and her friend Rexx discover an old broken-down van while on one of their assignments. Despite her initial reaction to immediately report the van, Patch and Rexx search the vehicle for any clues of what life was like before the Wall. What they find is simply a glimpse into life many years before their time. The van is loaded with maps and books; contraband that is illegal now that The Board is in charge. Hiding this discovery would surely mean punishment or perhaps even death. It’s too late to turn back now though, as Patch’s curiosity has sparked into a burning flame.

The duo decides to confide in her parents and show them the vehicle to hopefully garner some more information and truly understand what is happening. After an awkward car ride to the van, Patch and Rexx show them their discovery. Although shocked at the finding, her father is familiar with the books and recounts what his life was like during The Board’s overtaking of the country. Patch and Rexx are dumbfounded and can’t believe what they are hearing. They have been lied to their entire lives; knowing nothing other than what their parents and the Board has been feeding them.

After digesting this information, they return to their homes. However, after dropping off her parents and taking Rexx back to his apartment, they receive a message. “Geoffrey Collins is being held in federal custody on charges of treason. An investigation into the charges has begun. You will be informed of the results.” Patch’s father had already been taken into custody only shortly after returning home. Thoughts and fears race through their minds as they know it’s only a matter of time before The Board will be after them as well. They must decide—run and try to find life beyond the Wall, or stay, and most likely face their death for committing treason.

Rexx and Patch ultimately decide to take their chances to try to find a new life for themselves beyond their polluted city. The journey they embark on is filled with adventures, quirky new characters, and dangerous encounters.

I don’t want to further spoil anything, but this novel has been a fun surprise to read. The world that Jacqui Castle creates could potentially be a very relatable one sooner than we think and it is interesting to even think about this type of dystopian future.

Overall, I give this book an 8 /10. If you’re a fan of The Hunger Games or Divergent series, I highly recommend The Seclusion to you. The only reason I didn’t rate it higher is because of detail. I wish she would have delved into life before the Wall and maybe even did a deeper back story on Patch’s family. The full book is around 290 pages, but I sincerely believe it could have easily been 600 if she would have added more detail. Other than that, the book was a fantastic and exciting novel. I look forward to following Patch’s journey and other work from Jacqui Castle.

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## **Dave Milbrandt says**

I received a complimentary copy of this book in exchange for an honest review of its merits.

As we are living in a time where we are discussing the height and depth of a wall separating America from its southern neighbors, and we have a president focused on putting America First, there is definitely some timeliness to this piece. The story was well told and engaging, serving as a dystopian warning that if certain trends continue, the result may be something we should not encourage to continue.

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## **Fernando says**

The Seclusion is a fascinating and frightening YA book about what the United States could look like in the near future if border walls were built and an oppressive government took power. Jacqui Castle created a timely story, acutely relevant to current events and our current governmental situation. My word cloud about this book: border walls, isolationism, oppression, evil, oligarchy, authoritarian nationalism, total control. These are heavy themes but the story is fashioned beautifully for a YA audience, those who might benefit the most from this prescient forewarning.

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## **Robert Batten says**

The Seclusion is the debut novel from journalist Jacqui Castle and it's a ripper. The story is set in a dystopian future America that has been twisted into an isolationist authoritarian nation, separated from the rest of the world by the enormous Northern and Southern Security Borders. All history predating the walls is banned and information is tightly controlled. In this new America, the people are ruled by a faceless board and mindless patriotism is favored above all else. Into this setting we meet Patricia. As an environmental scientist, she's one of the few people permitted to roam beyond the city walls. It's while on one of these research trips she stumbles upon a trove of forbidden information that triggers a harrowing sequence of events.

There's no pretending The Seclusion isn't political. It was written before the election of Trump, but many will see it as prescient, with the world it paints an extreme conclusion to the right-wing populism currently sweeping not just the USA, but many other countries as well. Basically, if you're a racist, right-wing conservative who doesn't believe in human rights, you're probably not going to enjoy The Seclusion. Suck it.

I loved this novel. Patricia is a great protagonist who grows throughout as events spiral out of control. The world, though extreme, is well realized and the journey from present-day to dystopian future all too believable.

Disclaimer: I read an advance review copy of this novel. However, I had already pre-ordered and paid for a retail copy before receiving the version I reviewed. The author, Jacqui Castle, and I are both contributors on the Writing Bloc website.

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## **Michelle says**

My full review can be found on the Epilie Aspie Chick blog!

This story starts out strong and quickly turns into a very frightening tale of how protection can easily be distorted into complete control and manipulation of a people. The world created by the author is so real you can taste it as its painted as this lovely, equality based society where everyone has a place to be, health coverage, and a job. It doesn't take long before that mirage is twisted into what it really is: that these people are a select few from those who were originally here, the age of those who live is much shorter than it used to be, and the "rehabilitation" of those who don't follow the society's rules isn't nearly as heroic as they make it seem.

Patricia, known as Patch, starts out as a believer in the system. Her world was perfect and she loved her place in America until that van appeared and than Rexx spilled his guts on what he knew to be shortly after. Everything about what she believed in falls apart and all she can do is run forward or face the consequences of going against the Board in control of America now. Realizing that your entire life is a fabricated lie is huge and somehow she takes it entirely in stride in a way that's almost unbelievable.

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## **Becky says**

This was everything I want in a post apocalypse book. The world was as we know it is gone and the one Particia or "patch" is living in is a world where everyone and everything they do is monitored the place she lives is surrounded by a giant wall and they are told by the "board" (government as we know it is gone) that everything on the other side of the wall is bad and will kill them.

To say during this time we are in this book is a possible future for the U.S. may still be a stretch but it's far closer to being a possible reality than it was 3 years ago. The character building for Patch was perfect weak mild to brave was a steady build. I absolutely loved this book and can not wait for the next installment.

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## **Kevin Walker says**

"The Seclusion" is a thought-provoking novel that offers a possible future for America if leadership is left unchecked and the people fail to exercise their democratic authority over their government.

Echoes of "1984", "Atlas Shrugged", "The Hunger Games", and "Divergent" can be heard in its pages. The final chapters left me wanting more. Don't pass up Ms. Castle's new book!

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## **Kerys Howard says**

Note: I was offered an arc through NetGalley in exchange for my honest opinions. These opinions are my own and no one else's. Also, this is a slightly different review based on my thoughts WHILE reading the book. I will publish a more in-depth (not bullet pointed !) review on my blog, nearer the time of publication.

This book was really good! Here are some of my thoughts on the book! It has spoilers so sorry but not like major spoilers.

\* So it started off by telling us about the wall and also hinting how nobody knows how secure it really is

\* 'The devil lies in the details'

\* Ooh... I like secrets. And that's a pretty good idea

\* Mc is 22. I thought it was too old but not really.

\* She likes the feeling of dirt and doesn't want to enhance herself with beauty things.

\* The girl's clever! She knows science and stuff!

\* YAY!! She has flaws and she has real life struggles like forgetting to go shopping!!

\* But she has that friend who doubts? Maybe too similar to other plots

\* Cos it's always like oh no after a disaster world. We've got a great world but there must be some secrets. Looks for secrets. Realises whole life is a lie. Torture. Pain. And I'm guessing there's going to be a revolt in the next book????

\* OMG!!! They find a secret suitcase full of 'printed, bound, ink and paper books'

\* Love that description but they should Obviously LEAVE.

\* The fact that Patricia thinks there are only patriots or traitors made it quite unique. You can't really be just one or the other.

\* 'Musty, aged paper - that grassy, vanilla smell' oh no ? YOU CANNOT BURN THE BOOKS?!?!

\* The betrayal was really sad but the fact that Patricia isn't like super mad means that she's really stupid or too kind.

\* She's also cool in an intense situation! She knows what to pack and stuff but also has emotions and freezes.

\* I like how quotes from other books are used

\* That's pretty cool

\* Patricia also knows what's important and doesn't mope or throw a tantrum because Rexx didn't tell her about the letter

\* but NOOOOO DOES THERE HAVE TO BE ROMANCE BETWEEN THE TWO MAIN CHARACTERS??????

\* I'd have preferred it if Rexx stayed a bit broken and so did Patricia and the romance came like right at the

end of the book.

\* i mean they lost they're best friend and Rexx lost his girlfriend and he should be acting all broken and guilty not like 'I've wanted to do that for a long time?????'

\* ughhhh.

\* Seriously? His girlfriend's probably dead and he can't just fall in love with his girlfriend's (and his) best friend???

\* But it was sweet

\* if Rexx stayed broken, tho, it would have hurt my heart more and made me love him even more but I guess I can get over him and Patricia

\* oh and there wasn't a love triangle between Oliver Rexx and Patricia which is always good

\* I think the statement 'It felt like a lifetime' is quite overrated. You'd probably find something like that (if not the exact words) in probably every dystopian story?

\* I like how her pain wasn't under or over exaggerated so it made it easy for me to sympathise with Patricia

\* Also made it seem as if they'd never get out which kept me wondering cos they'd have to get out somehow.

\* I love the bit when she said the five details about her father! It was so sweet!

\* The chapters ended on cliffhangers and made me want to keep reading

\* The ending wasn't like a MASSIVE cliffhanger which is good but I NEED a second book.

\* Omg what happens next??? Does Rex come back?? Omg he can't be dead!?!?!? I neeed my small broken baby to come back!!!!

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