

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	Gannon	School:	Hyatts Middle School
Book Title:	Romiette and Julio	Genre:	Realistic Fiction
Author:	Sharon Draper	Pages:	320
Publisher:	Simon & Shuster	Copyright:	1999

In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.

Book Summary and summary citation: (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

When Romiette Cappelle meets Julio Montague, she feels as though she has met the soul mate who can rescue her from her recurring nightmare about fire and water. But like the Shakespearean characters whose names echo theirs, Romiette and Julio discover that not everyone approves of their budding romance. In their case, it is because Romiette is African-American and Julio is Hispanic, and the Devildogs, a dangerous local gang, violently oppose their interracial relationship. When the Devildogs threaten to teach them a lesson, Romiette and Julio come up with a risky plan to escape from the gang's fearsome shadow. But things go terribly awry, and the two find themselves caught up in a deadly reality more frightening than Romiette's nightmare -- and in a desperate struggle to avoid the tragic fate of Shakespeare's famous young lovers.

Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s): (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)

CCS - Fiction- Reading Literature - Statement Standards #1 #2 #3 #4 #6

Include two professional reviews of this title: (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be "cut and pasted" (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

Review #1

From Booklist

When Romiette Capelle, aka Afroqueen, and Julio Montague, aka Spanishlover, meet in an Internet chat room, neither of them has any idea they both go to the same Cincinnati high school. Afroqueen is from a prominent African American family; Spanishlover is Hispanic and the new kid in town. When Romiette and Julio meet in person, they know they are fated to be together. In keeping with their Shakespearean counterparts, they are thwarted in love: a local gang, the Devildogs, is set on keeping Romiette away from the "foreigner." The dialogue (and there's lots of it) is jarring and stilted, and Romiette's father and some peripheral adult characters are overdone. But Draper has created Julio's parents and Romiette's mother with sensitivity and has given readers a pair of intriguing, unusual protagonists with the sort of real thoughts and feelings that will make this interracial story satisfying despite its stylistic problems.

Review #2

From School Library Journal

Grade 6-10-A contemporary retelling of the Romeo and Juliet story with a happy, upbeat ending. Sixteen-year-old Julio Montague's parents have moved their family to Cincinnati, OH, in order to get their son out of his gang-ridden high school in Corpus Christi, TX. Romiette Cappelle, also 16, is the daughter of successful African-American parents and the granddaughter of college professors. When these two young people, both from proud heritages, begin a romance, they must deal not only with their parents' prejudices but also with the threats of a local gang called The Family. At times, Romiette and Julio effectively parallels and contemporizes the original story. The young couple meet, not at the Capulets' feast, but in an Internet chat room. Julio's friend, Ben Olsen (read Benvolio), who looks like a punk rocker, has an optimistic and irreverent attitude that balances Julio's passion and volatility. At other times, the allusions to the play are obvious and heavy-handed. Nonetheless, this novel is more than simply a carefully plotted teenage romance. Draper gives a realistic portrayal of the interactions among high school students as well as their relationships with their parents. The book also examines how gangs can gain power and take control. All of the characters have unique voices and the writing style shifts according to the action. Romiette and Julio would be a wonderful curriculum tie-in book, but it also stands alone as a first-rate novel about contemporary teens.

Jane Halsall, McHenry Public Library District, IL
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What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?

<u>Title:</u> Tears of a Tiger	<u>Author:</u> Sharon Draper
<u>Title:</u> Forged by Fire	<u>Author:</u> Sharon Draper
<u>Title:</u> Darkness Before Dawn	<u>Author:</u> Sharon Draper
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>

Document any potentially controversial content:

Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)

Gifted/Accelerated Regular At Risk

GRADE LEVEL(S): 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Reading level of this title (if applicable): Ages 10 and up

Date Submitted to Department Chair: 5/8/12

Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:

School Library Journal
Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults