Background Information for Library Materials in Review

Book Title: *Beautiful*	**Synopsis** Haunted by serious problems in her recent past, thirteen-year-old Cassie makes a fresh start at a Seattle school but is drawn by dangerous new friends into a world of sex, drugs, and violence, while her parents remain oblivious. Source: Novelist Plus - accessed via SCDiscus
Book Author Reed, Amy	
Copyright Year: 2009	

Professional Reviews of *Beautiful*

Source: Follett Titlewave

Booklist (October 15, 2009 (Vol. 106, No. 4))
Grades 10-12. This book is meant to shock, and it does. Fed up with her good-girl existence, 13-year-old Cassie uses her family's relocation as a chance to reinvent herself as an acid-dropping, dope-smoking, vodka-guzzling, coke-snorting, needle-using cypher who will dutifully sleep with any boy, provided he is popular. Cassie's journey down the road to ruin is guided by the volatile Alex, who soon welcomes into her hovel a girl named Sarah, who is fleeing her molester father . . . well, you get the picture. It's a stew of depravity delivered in emotionless, repetitive language meant to convey Cassie's numbness; at times, it reads like poetry. But never do we get a sense of why Cassie chose this path or what she was like before. Almost certainly this loss of identity is part of the point, though many readers will be forced to assume Cassie is mentally ill. Details of Cassie's debauchery nevertheless ring true, and there's no doubt that Reed's debut will enthrall as many teens as it will repel adults.

Kirkus Reviews (September 1, 2009)
Thirteen-year-old Cassie makes a snap decision to reinvent her nerdy, unpopular self when she moves to a new school district in Seattle. When green-haired Alex invites--actually drags--her over to the table where the "dangerous" ninth-grade boys sit, she goes along. And from there she goes along, unresisting, with everything else: heavy drinking, constant use of myriad drugs, sexual encounters that she dislikes and theft. Her dysfunctional, self-absorbed parents are numb to her growing despair, which results from her out-of-control behavior. Cassie shows remarkable insight in her first-person narration, even through her drug-induced fog. When another teen, sexually abused by her father, falls under Alex's thrall and reaches out to Cassie for help, the seventh grader hits rock bottom. Rather than acting as a cautionary tale, this novel often seems to function more as a roadmap to a dark but realistic underworld of young unsupervised teens drifting from one unsavory experience to another. A conclusion that seems implausibly optimistic, considering the life Cassie's recently led, slaps a bandage on an oozing sore. (Fiction. 14 & up)

School Library Journal (December 1, 2009)
Gr 9 Up-Thirteen-year-old Cassie has bloomed. Following her family's move from an island off the coast of Washington to a Seattle suburb, she has a new attractiveness that earns her the moniker "the beautiful seventh grader." Her good looks and willingness to conform are a passport to her school's powerful clique of druggies led by Alex, a frightening but charismatic fellow seventh grader who adopts Cassie as her best friend. Cassie's compliance with Alex's demands-to burn photographs of former friends, to take acid, to have

sex-secures her a position as Alex's second in command but threatens her health and safety. When Alex's half sister Sarah moves in with Alex and her wasted mother, Cassie finds her allegiance shifting from her best friend to Sarah. Reed's first novel owes a tremendous debt to Catherine Hardwicke's 2002 film Thirteen; however, where the filmic treatment of its 13-year-old heroines' dangerous experimentation is complicated by the richness of their characters and their interactions with one another and the supporting cast, this novel is less complex and more sensational. It is difficult to discern motivation for many of the characters, whose actions-Alex's in particular-are explained in almost cliched form, and the secondary characters are one-dimensional.-Amy S. Pattee, Simmons College, Boston Copyright 2009 Reed Business Information.

Awards/Distinctions Awarded to *Beautiful*

Source: http://booklists.yalsa.net/book/12610/beautiful

YALSA Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers: 2011

Background Information for Library Materials in Review

Book Title: *Grl2grl: Short Fictions* **Book Author** Peters, Julie Anne **Copyright Year:** 2007	**Synopsis** In this honest, emotionally captivating short story collection, renowned author and National Book Award finalist Julie Anne Peters offers a stunning portrayal of young women as they navigate the hurdles of relationships and sexual identity. From the young lesbian taking her first steps toward coming out to the two strangers who lock eyes across a crowded train, from the transgender teen longing for a sense of self to the girl whose abusive father has turned her to stone, Peters is the master of creating characters whose own vulnerability resonates with readers and stays with them long after the last page is turned. Grl2grl shows the rawness of teenage emotion as young girls become women and begin to discover the intricacies of love, dating and sexuality. Source: Follett Titlewave

Professional Reviews of *Grl2grl: Short Fictions*

Source: Follett Titlewave

Booklist Reviews

The author of the novels Keeping You a Secret (2003) and Luna (2004) shows she's an even better short story writer. Continuing with her themes of coming out and the experiences of young lesbians, the 10 stories here present different but equally polished facets of varied experience and emotion. Characters include a transgendered youth who identifies as a "boi," a teenage girl with a crush on her young teacher, campers who share a passion for one another as well as for music, and a brazen young woman who questions the ambiguities of terms such as virginity and abstinence when applied to herself. Accessible and credible, the stories belong in teen collections not only because of their sympathetic yet clear-eyed depictions of minority sexual orientation but also for their exemplary crafting. Copyright 2007 Booklist Reviews.

Kirkus Reviews

Peters portrays a variety—but an inadequate one—of queer teenage girls. Though most of the protagonists are lesbians, some display other forms of queerness: a genderqueer girl, a female-to-male transitioning boi. Multiple lesbianisms are explored: In “Can’t Stop the Feeling”, Mariah wrestles with coming out; the anonymous heroine of “On the Floor,” unconcerned with closeting, relishes the earthy sensuality of basketball; and Scar_tissu, the instant messaging protagonist of “TIAD,” falls victim to a online emotional predator. The positive stories are emotional and sensual, with only tales of abuse offering any explicit sex. In a collection with myriad presentations of sexuality, the absence of bisexuality (except from one scornful comment) is glaring. Equally disturbing is the sole instance of asexuality, resulting from sexual abuse. After offering such a multitude of voices, this collection’s removal of bisexuality from the queer spectrum furthers the invisibility bisexual readers already experience in queer and straight communities. None of these stories is strong enough to stand alone; a collection whose raison d’être is ideological should be more inclusive. (Fiction. 13-15)

Publisher's Weekly
Peters's (Luna) short stories focus mostly on young lesbians but also take in teens struggling with other gender and sexuality issues. Their conflicts range from commonplace (Mariah tries to summon the nerve to attend a Gay/Straight Alliance meeting; Kat wonders if the cellist she likes at music camp returns her feelings) to extreme (Cammie, sexually abused by her father almost nightly, worries that she will never feel pleasure; transgendered Vince, née Eva, is assaulted by a group of guys after work). Regardless of the intensity of the characters' struggles, girls of any sexual orientation will feel quickly drawn into the lives glimpsed here, thanks to the authenticity of Peters's voices. However, many of the stories feel like the beginnings of intriguing novels rather than standalone works, and endings can seem arbitrary. On the other hand, teens searching for a fast read, especially in an underserved subject, will be gratified to find this collection, and the author's ability to bring such a diverse cast to life is impressive. Ages 15-up. (Sept.)

School Library Journal
Gr 9 Up— This collection consists of 10 short stories, all written in first person, about being a girl—in love with another girl, hurt by another girl, abused by a parent, born into the wrong body. The selections read like personal journal entries about the characters' secret thoughts and feelings. Aimee questions her sex ed teacher about abstinence, asking if it applies to her, and the teacher replies, "I guess that's between you and your god." Another teen describes herself as a "stone cold butch"; after a lifetime of sexual abuse from her father, she doesn't know how to feel. Peters's stories deal with mature subject matter but are quick and easy to read. The author does not shy away from difficult or controversial topics, and these selections may appeal to someone exploring GLBTQ literature for the first time.—Corinda J. Humphrey, Los Angeles Public Library [Page 141]. Copyright 2007 Reed Business Information.

Voice of Youth Advocates Reviews
In this short story collection, Peters navigates the varied emotional terrain of the lesbian teenager. There is something for everyone here, gay and straight alike. The issues that the stories explore encompass a wide range of teen emotions and experiences, from the girl who keeps returning to an emotionally abusive relationship to the teen with a crush on her teacher. Teens spend their adolescent years coming to grips with self-identity; however, as these stories tenderly reveal, that process takes on an added poignancy when the identity in question is still a cultural taboo. Peters provides readers with a window into the worlds of a transgender teen, a stone-butch abuse survivor, and ordinary teens in various stages of self-acceptance.Not every teen will pick up this book, but those who do will find their efforts rewarded with beautifully written prose, characters who are hauntingly real, and honestly portrayed emotions. Peters gives eloquent voice to a marginalized group, which alone merits this book's inclusion in teen collections. Librarians and teachers should be aware of the clear descriptions of each character's experiences, which include incest, sexual situations, and a gay-bashing scene. It also contains stories of great beauty, strength, and courage. For straight teens, this collection will be a haunting revelation and a chance to feel someone else's experience; for gay teens, these tenderly written stories will provide an emotional lifeline of acceptance.-Amy Fiske

Awards/Distinctions Awarded to *Grl2grl: Short Fictions*

Source: https://glbtrt.ala.org/rainbowbooks/archives/153

ALA Rainbow List: 2008

Background Information for Library Materials in Review

Book Title: *Layla*	**Synopsis** When the personality of the woman he loves is changed by the trauma of a severe accident, Leeds takes her to the bed-and-breakfast where they first met, before her escalating behavior complicates his ability to help another guest. Source: Novelist Plus - accessed via SCDiscus
Book Author Hoover, Colleen	
Copyright Year: 2020	

Professional Reviews of *Layla*

Source: Follett Titlewave

Booklist Reviews

In a departure for Hoover (Regretting You, 2019), Layla is part psychological thriller and part paranormal romance. Rising musician Leeds falls in love with Layla when they meet just before her sister's wedding. They grow close quickly, but things take a dire turn when Layla is nearly killed in an ambush by one of Leeds' ex-girlfriends. After months of recovery, Leeds takes Layla back to the bed-and-breakfast where they met to recuperate, and soon notices strange things. He realizes a spirit is living there, and he learns to communicate with her. He falls for the spirit, who calls herself Willow, and realizes that Layla is no longer the woman he loved. With the help of a paranormal expert, Leeds learns that Willow is tied to Layla and the violent events that harmed them, and if he does not find a way to help Willow, Leeds may be stuck with the wrong woman forever. The love between Leeds and Willow has a very appealing, slow build, while the many plot turns will keep readers guessing through to the shocking resolution. Copyright 2020 Booklist Reviews.

Kirkus Reviews

An aimless young musician meets the girl of his dreams only to have his newfound happiness threatened by several inexplicable—and possibly supernatural—events. The story opens as Leeds Gabriel meets with a detective while his girlfriend, Layla, is restrained in a room one flight above them. Through the interview, readers learn that Leeds was wasting both his time and his musical talent playing backup for a small-town wedding troupe called Garrett's Band when he spied Layla dancing her heart out to their mediocre music at a wedding. When Leeds approaches Layla, their connection is both instant and intense. A blissful courtship follows, but then Leeds makes the mistake of posting a picture of himself with Layla on social media. A former girlfriend–turned-stalker wastes no time in finding and attacking Layla. Layla spends months recovering in a hospital, and it seems the girl Leeds fell for might be forever changed. Gone is her special spark, her quirkiness, and the connection that had entranced Leeds months before. In a last-ditch effort to save their relationship, he brings Layla back to the bed-and-breakfast where they first met. When they get there, though, Leeds meets Willow, another guest, and finds himself drawn to her in spite of himself. As events unfold, it becomes clear that Willow will either be the key to saving Leeds' relationship with Layla or the catalyst that finally extinguishes the last shreds of their epic romance. Told entirely from Leeds' point of view, the author's first foray into paranormal romance does not disappoint. Peppered with elements of mystery, psychological thriller, and contemporary romance, the novel explores questions about how quickly true love can develop, as well as the conflicts that can imperil even the strongest connections. Despite a limited cast of characters and very few setting changes, the narrative manages to remain both fast-paced and

engaging. The conclusion leaves a few too many loose ends, but the chemistry between the characters and unexpected twists throughout make for a satisfying read. A unique story of transcendent love.

Publisher's Weekly
Bestseller Hoover (Regretting You) explores the power of love in the face of tragedy in this engaging contemporary romance with a supernatural twist. Aspiring singer-songwriter Leeds Gabriel happens to meet Layla on the night of Layla's sister's wedding, and immediately knows that they're meant for each other. The pair embark on a whirlwind romance, but Leeds is left reeling when his obsessive ex-girlfriend, Sable, attacks and almost kills Layla. Layla recovers physically weeks later, but the incident leaves her emotionally and mentally scarred. Desperate to salvage their relationship, Leeds surprises Layla with a trip back to the bed and breakfast where they first met. But Layla's behavior takes an erratic shift once they arrive, followed by a string of strange events, including displaced objects and a piano that plays itself. Feeling disconnected from Layla, Leeds finds relief from his loneliness in the mysterious Willow, another guest at the B&B—but Willow is more than she appears and her connection with Leeds puts Layla at risk. Though the ending is slightly rushed, the unusual twist on a typical love triangle plot adds intrigue. Surprising and emotionally tense, this paranormal romance is sure to entertain. Agent: Jane Dystel, Dystel, Goderich, and Bourret. (Dec.)

Awards/Distinctions Awarded to *Layla*

Source: n/a

Background Information for Library Materials in Review

Book Title: *The Infinite Moment of Us* **Book Author** Myracle, Lauren **Copyright Year:** 2013	**Synopsis** For as long as she can remember, Wren Gray's goal has been to please her parents. But as high school graduation nears, so does an uncomfortable realization: pleasing her parents once overlapped with pleasing herself, but now . . . not so much. Wren needs to honor her own desires, but how can she if she doesn't even know what they are? Charlie Parker, on the other hand, is painfully aware of his heart's desire. A gentle boy with a troubled past, Charlie has loved Wren since the day he first saw her. But a girl like Wren would never fall for a guy like Charlie—at least not the sort of guy Charlie believes himself to be. And yet certain things are written in the stars. And in the summer after high school, Wren's and Charlie's souls will collide. But souls are complicated, as are the bodies that house them . . . Source: Author Website

Professional Reviews of *The Infinite Moment of Us*

Source: Follett Titlewave

Booklist (September 1, 2013 (Vol. 110, No. 1))

Grades 10-12. In this sweet and steamy romance, Myracle captures first love, in all its topsy-turvy, tangled, passionate, and breathless glory. Wren Gray, only child and perfect daughter, is desperate to break free of her family's predetermined plans for her, and so she defers Emory for a chance to travel to Guatemala with an organization for a year. Charlie Parker, on the other hand, has bounced around foster homes finally finding a family to call his own and earning a scholarship to Georgia Tech. Charlie has always loved Wren, and when their eyes lock at graduation, they fall hard and deep. There are intimate conversations: "Sometimes the things we hide—aren't they the parts that matter most?"; cute text messages; and meditations on an uncertain future. And, yes, there's sex—sensual, erotic, and meaningful—between two responsible people in love who trust one another wholeheartedly. While there are some plot missteps towrds the end, many teens will gravitate to this sensitive and emotionally wrought update of Judy Blume's classic Forever and will see themselves reflected back in the characters, who love fiercely, as if life were one infinite moment. HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: Myracle's stellar reputation, plus sexy subject matter, equals a surefire hit with teens.

Kirkus Reviews starred (July 15, 2013)

A sweet and sizzling love story from Myracle. Wren and Charlie are just about to graduate from their Atlanta high school when their eyes lock and everything changes. Single-child Wren is beginning to take her first baby steps away from her loving but overprotective parents, eschewing freshman year at Emory for a gap year in Guatemala with a service organization. Foster-child Charlie is struggling to separate, too, but from a long-standing toxic relationship, not his supportive family; he's got a scholarship to Georgia Tech. Alternating chapters that move between Wren's and Charlie's third-person perspectives describe their gorgeous summer romance, capturing each as they work to define themselves as individuals and as part of a couple. Myracle applies a light touch even with heavy issues--Charlie's life has not been an easy one--allowing readers to discover the characters even as they get to know each other. She wisely restrains herself from a potentially melodramatic foreshadowed meltdown, turning what could have been a narrative disaster into another opportunity for the characters to grow. The scenes of sexual intimacy are described with innocently erotic

frankness, offering an ideal (if not idealized) model for readers on the cusp; this is Forever... for a new generation, offering character depth Cath and Michael never achieved. Summer love has never been so good. (Fiction. 14 & up)

Publishers Weekly (July 8, 2013)
Myracle is no stranger to having her work challenged on the basis of "inappropriate" content, and this love story between two high school graduates may attract similar attention. But underlying some explicit and erotic scenes in which Wren Gray and Charlie Parker open their bodies to each other-along with their hearts, minds, and souls-is a rewarding account of two young people whose insecurities and personal histories weigh on the romance they work to build with each other. Poised and accomplished, Wren has always done what her parents have expected of her, while Charlie is a foster child, self-conscious about his often unpleasant upbringing, but fiercely protective of his current family. Will some readers be unable to see past the sex in the book? Yes. Will they be adults? Probably. In contrast to unhealthy depictions of sex and relationships that teenagers (and adults) are often exposed to in media and entertainment, Myracle offers up a passionate romance built on a bedrock of love, respect, and trust. And it's difficult to see that as a bad thing. Ages 14-up. Agent: Barry Goldblatt, Barry Goldblatt Literary. (Aug.) (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

School Library Journal (October 1, 2013)
Gr 10 Up-Wren Gray has spent her first 18 years pleasing her parents, earning perfect grades and early acceptance into the school and program her dad was hoping for, and, of course, keeping clear of boyfriends. Charlie Parker has spent his first 18 years navigating through foster homes and maintaining his position under the radar. He has loved Wren since the first time he saw her. When chance brings them together for their first conversation, it's electric, and they both know that neither one of them will ever be the same. Wren just might have the courage to look for what she wants out of life-and Charlie just might finally know what true love is. This charming romance has multidimensional characters, straightforward sexuality, and a pace that lets readers fall in love with the main characters. Myracle expertly captures the intense connection of first love, from the need to spend every moment together to trying to figure out how to communicate with one another. The abrupt ending feels out of sync with the rest of the book, but readers should be pleased with it nonetheless. Myracle does not remove the physical aspects of two teens in love, bringing to mind Judy Blume's Forever. A romantic read that doesn't shy away from steaminess.-Emily Moore, Camden County Library System, NJ (c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Horn Book Guide (Spring 2014)
Charlie and Wren start dating just after high school graduation. They have an immediate intellectual bond, sharing secrets and dreams, as well as a quick sexual connection. They spend the summer growing closer, uncertain of what will happen when fall comes. The explicit but tender sex scenes feel honest in this story of love, trust, and finding your path.

Awards/Distinctions Awarded to *The Infinite Moment of Us*

Source: Young Adult Library Services Association Book Finder Database

YALSA Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers: 2014

Background Information for Library Materials in Review

Book Title: *YOLO*	**Synopsis** Through "instant messages," chronicles the struggles best friends Maddie, Angela, and Zoe face during their freshman year in college, each of them in a different state, two wondering if their romantic relationships will last, and one determining that roller derby is the key to keeping the trio close. Source: Novelist Plus - accessed via SCDiscus
Book Author Myracle, Lauren	
Copyright Year: 2014	

Professional Reviews of *YOLO*

Source: Follett Titlewave

Booklist starred (August 2014 (Vol. 110, No. 22))
Grades 10-12. Best high-school friends Angela, Maddie, and Zoe have graduated and are off to different universities. Maintaining the characters, voices, and accessible replication of text and instant messaging as the narrative mode, Myracle succeeds in showing resonant and varied views of the first semester of college. Angela, who has stayed in Georgia, pursues sorority acceptance. Zoe, in Ohio, has a bad breakup but finds an emerging sense of her internal strength. Maddie, lonely in California, hides her own troubles from her old friends by getting them through the vagaries of their new lives with the rallying cry of you only live once. Myracle manages to portray depth in all those messages: the friends acknowledge their incipient racism, openly discuss sexual experimentation, and help each other through such misadventures as harboring a homeless man, feeling domestic alienation, and enduring a professor's soul-crushing put-down. This honest, nuanced, accessible, and credible account provides teen girls with an authentic and skillfully told description of college life. The story, which can stand independently from the rest of the Internet Girls series, offers readers realistic, engaging, and provocative perspectives on scary first semesters away from home and sage advice about drinking, partying, and shutting down socially, all without ever leaving the perfectly crafted text-message flow. HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: Myracle's Internet Girls series made the New York Times best-seller list, and those fans will want to know how Zoe, Maddie, and Angela handle college.

Kirkus Reviews (July 15, 2014)
Instant-messaging champs Maddie, Angela and Zoe return to hash out their first year away at respective colleges in this fourth installment of Myracle's popular series that began with ttyl (2004). Geographically speaking, the trio has some serious distance separating them. Thoughtful, reserved Zoe is enthralled with her classes at Kenyon in Ohio, even as she misses her boyfriend, Doug. At the University of Georgia, fashion-conscious Angela contends with a freaky roommate who seems to be stealing her stuff while she pledges to a sorority, causing her to become increasingly unsure about the Greek system. And confident Maddie, usually the one who takes charge, finds herself the odd girl out with her suitemates at the University of California at Santa Cruz. As in the first three books, the entirety of this novel is written as texts and instant messages among the young women. While there are a few instances in which this format feels a little forced--usually when a character requires more than two or three lines to sum things up--it remains an incredibly appealing narrative device. The friends' honesty with one another, even about things like embarrassing sexual experiences and depression, is lifelike (and heartwarming, to boot), and their jargon--"fugly," "ex-fucking-scuse me?"--will ring true to many a teen reader. Funny, deceptively smart and just in time for those going off to college. (Fiction. 14-20)

Publishers Weekly (August 18, 2014)
The girls from Myracle's Internet Girls series are starting college and an array of new adventures. Bubbly Angela is pledging a sorority at the University of Georgia, quiet Zoe is trying to keep long-distance love alive at Kenyon College in Ohio, and daring Maddie heads west to UC Santa Cruz, where she makes her longtime best friends promise to "try everything that comes our way, and we won't be afraid, because even tho we're spread out all over the country, we're still here to support each other." Myracle employs the same instant messaging formula of the earlier books, though there are some smart updates, including references to autocorrect and Instagram, and a topical issue as Angela struggles with whether Greek life is for her, especially after stopping a rape at a fraternity Halloween party. Not all the plot points are completely plausible, but these memorable friends remain highly relatable as they share racy details about their lives, call each other out for bad behavior, and are there to help each other "through dark time." Ages 13-up. Agent: Barry Goldblatt, Barry Goldblatt Literary. (Aug.) (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

School Library Journal (September 1, 2014)
Gr 9 Up-Maddie, Angela, and Zoe are beginning their biggest adventure yet-college-and they are doing it on their own. They encounter many challenges-failure, drunkenness, heartbreak, and successes- and ultimately discover their true friends. Maddie embraces the California lifestyle and is assigned to a suite with three other girls referred to as the "Esbees" because they are from Santa Barbara. Maddie tries hard to find her niche within this group, but soon becomes aware of how challenging it is to be accepted into an already-established social circle. In the first few months of college, Maddie is almost unable to continue with the yolo (you only live once) mission especially when her parents can't afford to fly her home for Thanksgiving break. Angela enters college drawn to the Greek lifestyle of partying, fraternity socials and the appeal of belonging but sees that she may not agree with all of the initiation rituals and the unwritten rules. Through her association with the Zeta's, she finds herself in some questionable situations and one specifically alters the rest of her college choices. Zoe decides to attend a liberal college and try a long-distance relationship with her boyfriend, Doug but realizes that they have both moved on. After overcoming her depression, she also learns that she loves to run to release stress, and she experiments with her sexuality. Zoe faces failure in a creative writing class when a professor does not recommend her to keep moving through the program, but she is not discouraged. Told in Internet-age style of text messages and tweets first seen in Myracle's ttyl (Abrams, 2004), the girls try to embrace the free-spirited yolo philosophy as they grow into their young adulthood.- Jessica Lorentz Smith, Bend Senior High School, OR (c) Copyright 2014. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Horn Book Guide (Spring 2015)
Now at college, Angela, Zoe, and Maddie (ttyl; ttfn; l8r, g8r) keep each other updated on their lives through (gimmicky and tiresome) IMs, texts, and tweets. Maddie wants them all to try new things (YOLO!), and college brings no shortage of new situations. The girls navigate sex, drinking, hazing, jealousy, depression, and more in this frank look at transitions, identity, and friendship.

Awards/Distinctions Awarded to *YOLO*

Source: n/a

Background Information for Library Materials in Review

Book Title: *A Lesson in Vengeance*	**Synopsis** While helping the eccentric new girl research the Dalloway Five, five students who died mysteriously and were said to be witches, Felicity finds history repeating itself, forcing her to face the darkness in Dalloway--and in herself. Source: Novelist Plus - accessed via SCDiscus
Book Author Lee, Victoria	
Copyright Year: 2021	

Professional Reviews of *A Lesson in Vengeance*

Source: Follett Titlewave

Booklist starred (June 1, 2021 (Vol. 117, No. 19))

Grades 10-12. Felicity is haunted by the ghost of her dead girlfriend, Alex. She's equally haunted by her research on the Dalloway Five, students of Dalloway School who mysteriously died in impossible circumstances on the grounds of Godwin House, where Felicity has returned to finish senior year—amid rumors that she murdered Alex. Felicity captures the attention of writing prodigy Ellis Haley, who is working on a novel inspired by the Five. Ellis wants Felicity's help; she's a strict method writer interested in proving to Felicity that murder is the work of a psychopath, not the dark magic Felicity believes is woven into the fabric of Dalloway. This novel explores how we are defined by the choices we make, even unintentionally or in harrowing situations. With a cast of morally ambiguous characters, it makes the reader want to look away from the truth, as Felicity often does, but cuts to the bone in such a way that the pages keep turning. Lee paints a sharp picture of what happens when intelligent women are painted as witches and when women's anger is viewed as hysteria and psychopathy. Felicity is an unreliable narrator who compels readers to empathize as she grieves Alex and tries to find her way back to herself. This twisty, immersive thriller is about the fine line between passion and drowning in the darkness of obsession.

Kirkus Reviews (June 15, 2021)

A young woman's return to her monied boarding school is haunted by the trauma of her girlfriend's recent death and the school's rumored history involving witchcraft in this contemporary thriller. Felicity Morrow's senior year was cut short after her girlfriend Alex died, and her decision to return to the Dalloway School because "being friendless at Dalloway was better than being friendless anywhere else" makes clear her feelings of isolation. It's seemingly inevitable that she'll be drawn into the orbit of infamous new student Ellis Haley, who, despite her young age, has already written a Pulitzer-winning novel. Amid a fantastical, darkly atmospheric haze of cigarette smoke and hard alcohol, Felicity agrees to assist Ellis in her research about the Dalloway Five, girls whose gruesome deaths centuries earlier at the school are shrouded in mystery and who were the subject of her own abandoned senior thesis. Richly imagined queer characters, including Ellis' older nonbinary sibling, Quinn, are the stars of this story, which incrementally reveals truths about Alex's death as it winds the bond between Felicity and Ellis ever tighter, spinning a tale rife with literary references, magnetic romance, and occasionally melodramatic but menacing gothic tropes out to its end. The protagonists are cued White; there is ethnic diversity in secondary and background characters. A layered, stylized, brooding mystery that will draw readers in. (Thriller. 14-18)

Publishers Weekly starred (June 7, 2021)
In Lee's (the Feverwake series) deliciously unsettling standalone thriller, 18-year-old Felicity Morrow, who is white, is reattempting her senior year at Dalloway, a small prep school in the Catskills. The year before, her obsession with the Dalloway Five-purported witches who were brutally murdered in and around Felicity's residence hall 300 years ago-led, she suspects, to the mysterious death of her girlfriend Alex. Though she's determined to abandon magic following the previous year's events, she's soon drawn into the orbit of eccentric white, gray-eyed novelist Ellis Haley, 17, a fellow Godwin House denizen who persuades Felicity to help her research the murders for Ellis's next book. As the girls grow closer, forming a coven with their housemates, Felicity, haunted perhaps literally by both Alex and the Five's leader, begins to realize that everything is not as it seems-not within her own mind, and not within Godwin House. Lee touches on abusive familial and romantic relationships, classism, mental health stigma, racism, and sexism while providing clever commentary on-and near-constant references to-women in the genre of horror. With queer primary characters, an irresistible gothic atmosphere, and unrelenting creeping dread, this propulsive work of dark academia is both thrilling and thought-provoking. Ages 14-up. Agent: Holly Root, Root Literary. (Aug.) © Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

School Library Journal starred (August 1, 2021)
Gr 9 Up-Eighteen-year-old Felicity Morrow has returned to Dalloway School after time away recovering from the trauma of her exgirlfriend's death. The blonde teen is determined to finish her thesis and break her obsession with the witchcraft rooted deep in the school's history. But Dalloway's occult past is everywhere, and Felicity's first obstacle appears in the form of 17-year-old writing prodigy Ellis; Felicity's other new housemates--Kajal, Clara, and Leonie- fall under Ellis's spell as quickly as Felicity. Felicity is certain she's being haunted. Is it the ghost of her ex-girlfriend back for revenge? The spirit they let loose last term? Or is it the contradictory Ellis, who ensures magic and witchcraft are never far from Felicity's mind? Through a multilayered plot described in devastatingly poetic prose, Lee crafts a dark academic environment of secrets and shadows. As Felicity unravels, she instinctively turns to tarot, candles, and herbs, and Ellis encourages and discourages Felicity in turn. Felicity's trauma and mental illness and Ellis's manipulation are intensified by substance abuse, violence, and death. Social issues such as class privilege, sexuality, and racism are also touched upon. With two unreliable main characters in a story rich in uncertainty and suspense, readers will rush along the work's twisty path to a very satisfying ending. Kajal has brown skin; Leonie is Black. Everyone else is presumed white. VERDICT Teens will be as haunted by this narrative as the characters within its pages.-Maggie Mason Smith, Clemson Univ., SC © Copyright 2021. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Awards/Distinctions Awarded to *A Lesson in Vengeance*

Source: https://www.goodreads.com/award/show/6252-rainbow-award

Goodreads Rainbow Award for LGBTA Young Adult: 2021