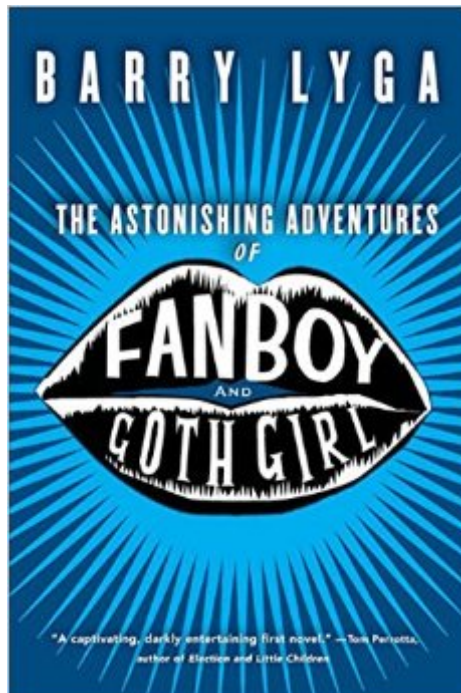


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The Astonishing Adventures Of Fanboy And Goth Girl



Synopsis

A School Library Journal Best Book of the Year *â œFanboyâ ™s whip-smart, often hilariously sarcastic voice . . . adds fresh, urgent perspective to age-old questions about how young people cope with . . . being misunderstood as they try to discover themselves.â • â ”Booklist, starred review â œA captivating, darkly entertaining first novel.â • â ”Tom Perrotta, author of Election and Little ChildrenFanboy has never had it good, but lately his sophomore year is turning out to be its own special hell. The bullies have made him their favorite target, his best (and only) friend seems headed for the dark side (sports and popularity), and his pregnant mother and the step-fascist are eagerly awaiting the birth of the alien life form known as Fanboyâ ™s new little brother or sister.Fanboy, though, has a secret: a graphic novel heâ ™s been working on without telling anyone, a graphic novel that he is convinced will lead to publication, fame, andâ ”most important of allâ ”a way out of the crappy little town he lives in and all the people that make it hell for him.When Fanboy meets Kyra, a.k.a. Goth Girl, he finds an outrageous, cynical girl who shares his love of comics as well as his hatred for jocks and bullies. Fanboy canâ ™t resist someone who actually seems to understand him, and soon he finds himself willing to heed her adviceâ ”to ignore or crush anyone who stands in his way.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Things are going from bad to worse for 15-year-old comic book geek Donnie, aka "Fanboy." He keeps getting bullied in school. His parents are divorced and now his mother is pregnant with the "step-fascist's" baby. "The List" of people he'd rather have far away from his school keeps getting bigger and bigger. And now, his only friend Cal is becoming more obsessed with sports than comic books. Donnie has several tools that help him in his struggle with high school survival. He carries in his pocket a bullet, which is like a security blanket; just knowing it's there soothes him. But the thing that gets him through it all is the graphic novel he is working on, SCHEMATA. He's convinced that if he shows his work to the famous author Bendis, he'll get signed --- and a ticket right out of town. As he deals with his daily struggles, Donnie starts going through another torture. In gym class, Mitchell Frampton keeps punching him in the same spot on his arm over and over again. Nobody seems to notice --- nobody but a flash of white and black from the bleachers, that is. And then Donnie gets an anonymous IM from Promeatha387 asking, "Why do you let him hit you?" Promeatha is the name of an Alan Moore comic book character, and it immediately gets Donnie's attention. They meet at the playground after school. Promeatha387 turns out to be Kyra, aka "Goth Girl," who wears all black and has black dyed hair. "Her face is so pale...that I can't even think of something to compare it to. Chalk? Kabuki makeup? Liquid Paper? Her eyes are brown stamps on it, her nose a bump that sparkles with a red stone through one side. Her mouth twists in a sneer, her lower lip is pierced at the corner, and the ring somehow makes the sneer broader.

This is the second novel I've read in the last several months in which the protagonist is a precociously clever young teenage boy whose main outlet is the secret creation of a comic book/graphic novel. Evan Kuhlman's "Wolf Boy" is an excellent --sometimes painful, sometimes funny -- portrait of a 13-year-old whose big brother has died and whose parents are drifting apart. Here, the titular "Fanboy" is a 15-year-old whose parents are already divorced and has exactly one friend. He's kind of a classic sophomore smart geek loner -- the kind one could well imagine going TCM on everyone if he weren't too smart for that (although he does fantasize about just such a scenario and keeps a list of people he's like to see dead). Fanboy's into superhero comics and his schoolwork, hates the school jocks (although his one friend is a lacrosse player), and pines for the school beauties. At home, he resents his pregnant mother and tries his best to ignore his "step-fascist", hiding out in his basement room as much as possible, devoting endless hours to his secret project. His fairly miserable balance is upset when a reckless classmate (aka "Goth Girl"), semi-befriends him. This leads to great confusion for him, as he struggles to say the right thing to the ultra-sarcastic, whip-smart, defensive girl, who challenges his notions about how to get through

high-school. Lurking in the background to all this is an impending comic book convention where Fanboy plans to show his masterwork to Brian Michael Bendis (a prominent real-life comic creator). This meeting, he assumes, will be the catalyst for his rise to fame as a creative genius and will herald end his current misanthropic lifestyle.

This book was the first novel published by Barry Lyga and it is the first of four in the Brookdale High series, which I just happened to read in reverse order. The strength of Lyga's writing is evident from this first novel and gets better with every book he writes. Lyga has an incredible gift as a storyteller. He captures life in and around high school in this series in a wonderful way. His stories are about real people with real problems and real life. Each of his books has something the reader can take away and it will help them be better at being. But I think the greatest testament to Lyga's craft as a writer is that even though I just finished this book, I am already planning to reread it. Brookdale High or South Brook High is an interesting school. Not the worst school and not the best. There are cliques, and jocks, and geeks - all the usual groups you would find in and around a high school. And like most high schools, some of them get it and some do not. For Kyra Sellers and Fanboy (aka Donnie) it is just putting in time. Both want to be somewhere else. Both need things to change. Kyra witnesses Fanboy being punched repeatedly in gym class and wonders why he allows it to happen. Soon they have a strange friendship developing. They both have a love of Graphic Novels but prefer different styles. Fanboy is working on one and Goth Girl wants to help make it better. But as we all know, life in high school or life in general is usually not easy and things often go wrong or at least not the way we expect, and in this story that is definitely the case. There are a number of strengths that make this novel so good. First, there are the characters.

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