



## Children's Book and Media Review

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### Undertow

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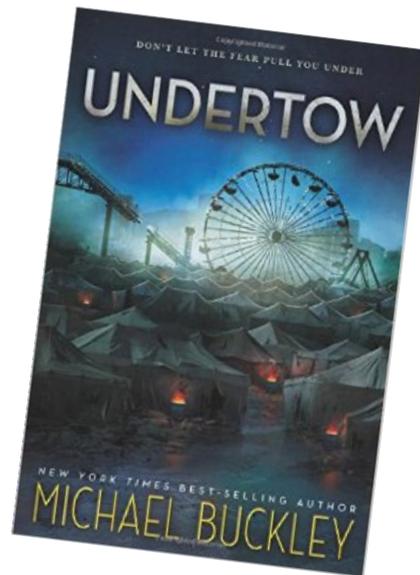
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# Book Review

**Title:** Undertow  
**Author:** Michael Buckley  
**Reviewer:** Aylea Stephens  
**Publisher:** Houghton Mifflin Harcourt  
**Publication Year:** 2015  
**ISBN:** 9780544348257  
**Number of Pages:** 376  
**Interest Level:** Young Adult  
**Rating:** Dependable



## Review

Three years ago, an aquatic race called the Alphas came to the beach at Coney Island and set up camp, forever changing the world for the people who lived there. Many humans want to do whatever it takes to get rid of the Alphas. Lyric Walker's mother was one of the original Alphas sent to integrate with and spy on the humans. If anyone finds out who she is, her family could lose their lives or disappear along with the other original Alphas. When a law is passed that requires Alpha students to attend human school, violence and tension escalate. Lyric tries to stay inconspicuous to keep her family's secret, but when the principal forces her to spend time with Fathom, the Alpha prince, she learns more about his mysterious culture and develops feelings for him in the middle of the tumult. She discovers that both humans and the Alpha are in danger, and her unique abilities that come from being half human and half Alpha is the only way she can save the lives of everyone she cares about.

Written in first person and in present tense, the book is gripping and intense. Although a lot of the background is based on the violence surrounding their situation, the book turns to focus more on the relationship between Lyric and Fathom, possibly leaving some readers wanting more action in the intense world surrounding them instead of detail about their relationship. *Undertow* is dramatically different from Buckley's previous books. While his previous books are fun and appropriate for all ages, this book needs an older audience capable of dealing with the racism, violence, domestic abuse, and mild discussion of sexual topics. The portrayal of these issues feel real, even in the fantasy setting. This book could be a powerful way to discuss race riots, gangs, and other difficult topics that teenagers face.

\*Contains violence, language, and mild sexual content.