



2018

Second Star

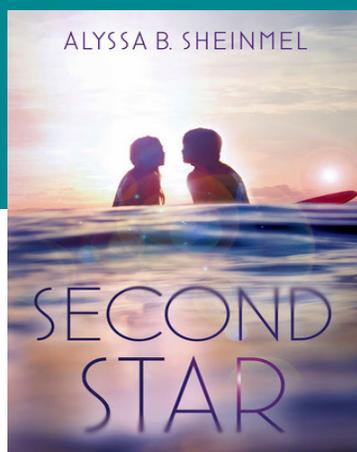
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Book Review

Second Star

Author

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Illustrator

Reviewer

Rachel Aedo

Rating

Excellent

Level

Young Adult

Pages

256

Year

2015

Publisher

Square Fish

ISBN

9781250062987

Michael and John are missing, and Wendy is going to find them. The classic story of Peter Pan has been reset to take place next to the ocean, where Pete flies with Belle and the Lost Boys on surfboards, and Jas lives by selling a drug called fairy dust to hopeless addicts. Wendy is frantically denying that her brothers are dead, instead she is convinced that they have run away to search for the perfect wave. She falls in with Pete, and falls in love with him, but leaves after finding that her brothers have come and gone from Pete's hideout. She then turns to Jas, who was last rumored to be in contact with Michael and John, and they set out together to search. However, she loses both Jas and Pete to a dangerous storm at sea, and returns home questioning if she just imagined the whole thing.

Though this story is superficially sweet and simple, the horrors and trauma underlying Wendy's search for her brothers propels the story forward. Wendy continually deals with questioning her own mental health. The dangers of surfing are laid bare for the reader, erasing any quaintness from Michael and John's death. Jas and Pete both represent real elements of regret and loss. Taken together, these themes bring a classic children's story forward into a mature retelling. Wendy's own insecurities and desperation are realized and relatable, and create a palatable setting for the exploration of grief and trauma. This retelling almost mocks the childish attitude that things in life can go back to normal after an "awfully big adventure," and instead lets Wendy develop as a character fighting her own grief in favor of trying to move forward and take control of her own mind.

*Contains mild language