



2018

Caraval

Karen Abbott

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Book Review

Caraval

Author

Stephanie Garber

Illustrator

N/A

Reviewer

Karen Abbott

Rating

Outstanding

Level

Young Adult

Pages

416

Year

2017

Publisher

Flatiron Books

ISBN

9781250095251

Scarlett has longed to participate in Caraval for as long as she can remember. She has written to the host of Caraval each year with hopes of receiving tickets for herself and for her sister, Donatella. One day, with barely a week before her wedding, the Caraval tickets arrive. Scarlett is afraid to miss her wedding even though she has never met her groom, but Donatella tricks her into going. This year's Caraval game will separate the sisters and require both of them to be willing to sacrifice everything in order to win. The final prize is a wish for the winner. Scarlett races to reunite with Donatella, learning who to trust, how to trust, and how to love in the process of solving the clues in the game. In the end she discovers within herself the freedom she has always desired and that she cannot settle for a marriage not of her own choosing.

This is a great, fast-paced read with a lot of adventure, heartache, and magic. Scarlett is a heroine worthy of the challenge presented her in the game. Her persistent will to do what she can for her sister and to maintain her virtue are rare in a main character. She isn't always as quick on the uptake as she could be, but making the reader feel a little smarter than the protagonist is probably in every successful writer's contract anyway. The romance is intense in parts and may be too suggestive or ever-present for young or reserved readers. The mystery and adventure are well and compellingly written so that a reader is equally confused by the twists and turns taken by an intriguing plot and setting. Readers will ask themselves the same questions Scarlett must face which brings the various themes home to the heart. This is a wonderful book for adults and young adults alike.

*Contains mild sexual content.