



2022

Kiss Number 8

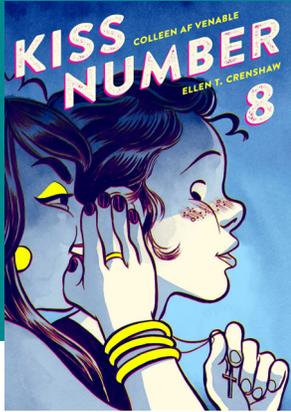
Emma Patton

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Patton, Emma (2022) "Kiss Number 8," *Children's Book and Media Review*: Vol. 41: Iss. 1, Article 17.
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Book Review

Kiss Number 8

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Illustrator

Ellen T. Crenshaw

Reviewer

Emma Patton

Rating

Excellent

Level

Young Adult

Pages

306

Year

2019

ISBN

9781250196934

Publisher

First Second

Kisses number 1 through 7 were predictable, but kiss number 8 changed everything. Amanda, also called Mads, has a secret. Her best friend Cat wants her to date Adam. He's a little younger but starting to get attractive, and he has a big thing for Mads. The trouble is, Mads is starting to realize that the person she really wants to kiss is Cat. How could that be possible, though? She couldn't be gay--she's only kissed boys. There's also something mysterious happening in her family. It turns out that the person she has always thought of as her grandma is not actually her grandma. Her real grandma did something unforgivable years ago, causing Mads' dad to completely cut her out of his life. But Mads receives inheritance money from a mysterious source, and suddenly she needs to know the truth about her family history. It turns out that this grandmother she never knew may not be a villain. Even though they've never met, they have things in common that no one else could understand.

Kiss Number 8 is a coming-of-age story in graphic novel form, enjoyable for readers who liked *This One Summer*. Though Mads begins the book with doubts, she ends the book by starting to accept the full spectrum of her sexuality. The art in this book is soft and romantic, matching the tone of the text. The story explores the effects of sexuality and gender identity on family members. Mads' experience is not an easy one, and she meets resistance as she shares new parts of herself. Mads works through her family issues and sees how being yourself, though not always the easiest choice, is the choice that leads to the most freedom. It is valuable to read about Amanda's emotional journey as she questions everything she thought she knew, and those emotions are palpable in the text. Kiss Number 8 is written well, and the art is especially compatible with the text. Both artist and author do an excellent job of communicating the emotions of Mads' story.

*Contains moderate sexuality, severe language, mild substance abuse.