

BOOK CLUB KIT



Q

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A LETTER FROM CASEY MCQUISTON

Dear Reader,

A few years ago, before I moved to New York, I took a trip to the city and fell in love with the subway. I loved its ugly, wonderful magic on sight. The idea of vanishing into the belly of the world's busiest city and reappearing somewhere else, that liminal space in the dark? Intoxicating. And I wondered about the classic idea of strangers on a train. What if that feeling of slipping away from reality and falling in love with some beautiful person for a thirty-minute commute before they blinked back out of existence, forever frozen on that train . . . what if it was real?

This book began there. And then, after months of research and one very thoroughly memorized subway line, I wrote a story about a girl who moves to the city in search of a place as lonely and cynical as she is. But this is a rom-com, so instead she finds a ragtag band of queer roommates, a gruff but warm family of coworkers at her crappy waitressing job, and a girl who always seems to be on her subway commute. An impossible girl who breaks all the laws of time and space and reality. My subway love story grew into a story about being broke and lost in your twenties, finding family in more ways than one, and queer communities past and present.

I love this story because it takes the most mundane thing—an early-morning train ride to work or school—and turns it into a place where the most fantastical, universe-bending, life-changing romance can happen. An epic love story can find any of us anywhere we are, even if we're lost and broke and lonely. This is a book about learning to believe in that. It's about believing in the unlikely, even the impossible. It's about two girls falling in love no matter what the universe has to say about it. And, of course, it's about New York.

Happy reading,



Casey McQuiston

On Sale 06/01/2021 | Fiction
Trade Paperback: 978-1-250-24449-9 | 432 pages | 5 3/8" x 8 1/4" | \$16.99/\$22.99 Can.

Ebook: 978-1-250-76033-3 | \$9.99/\$xx.xx Can.

Digital Audio: 978-1-250-80318-4 | \$26.99/\$36.50 Can.

CD: 978-1-250-80317-7 | \$50.99/\$69.25 Can.



CONTENT WARNINGS

From Casey McQuiston's website:

On-page

Drinking

Light drug use (weed)

Semi-public sex

Exploration of depression and anxiety

Memory loss and cognitive issues

Familial estrangement

Familial death

Grief

Missing persons

Implied PTSD

Off-page, past, and alluded to

Homophobic violence and hate speech

Police violence

The AIDS crisis

Racism

Childhood neglect

Arson

Historic hate crime resulting in loss of life



AUTHOR INTERVIEW

What inspired the character of August, who struggles to both find a place that feels like home and let in people who can help her?

August was a hard character for me to pin down at first, and a lot of things went into her development. I wanted her to be stuck at a point that a lot of people find themselves in their early-to-mid twenties: unsure of who she is or where she's going in life, terrified of finishing college without having anything to show for it, just beginning to work through some of her growing up baggage. I think a lot of us had or are currently having a quarter-life crisis and/or a nomadic young adulthood, and I wanted to put all of that into August so we could find a way out together.

And I also really developed her in tandem with Jane, so I wanted them to both have this experience of drifting from place to place searching for a home but also being afraid of finding one. I wanted everything in their love story to come back to finding a home in each other, so that informed a lot of who August turned out to be.

Jane is tethered to the Q train. What were the challenges of writing a book where a main character can't leave a specific setting? And how did you go about plotting the limitations and loopholes of Jane's situation?

It was so hard! Honestly the hardest part was figuring out specifically how a romance novel could take place under those circumstances. August and Jane both struggle to talk about their own feelings, so for things to move forward between them, they had to get physical by a certain point in the book, and that point comes before there's any possibility of Jane leaving the Q—which meant I had to figure out a way to write convincingly steamy scenes set on public transit, in ways that were sexy and safe. Big time challenge, but I like to think I found my way there!

As far as Jane's situation, it all came together once I figured out the event that got her stuck on the train. From that point I was able to plan out how she could interact with that sort of loosely-scientific magical system pretty quickly. There's also a very important moment toward the end of the book where a kiss has an impact on Jane's—how do I put this?—existential circumstances, and that was one of the first big moments I envisioned for the book, so I knew I had to set all the rules up to get us to that point. Basically, it was a lot of trial and error, some engineering and physics research (please do not check my math), and a lot of crossing my fingers that it would all make sense in the end.

AUTHOR INTERVIEW

Queer history has been an important element of your books. Did you know when you started writing *One Last Stop* that it would be so significant?

Yes! Pretty much from the moment I decided to do a queer time travel romance, I knew we would be digging into queer history. Specifically with Jane, I knew she would have had a very complex life in the '70s as a butch lesbian and a Chinese American and a part of the punk scene, so I wanted to put as much of that in as I possibly could.

I don't even think that was just a representation choice for me—although I did make a lot of deliberate inclusions of things from queer history that more people should know about. It was also a craft choice, because it built out her character so beautifully and made her feel so real to me. It really helped me find the grounding of such a fantastical premise and keep things from feeling too out-in-space.

Found families are an important aspect of this book. What was your process like for creating Jane and August's past and present support systems?

There was a lot that went into it! For Jane, I always had this very specific image in my mind of who she was before the Q. I knew she was a bit of a love-'em-and-leave-'em type, but she was also a community caretaker who spent a lot of time looking after her friends. At the same time, though, her entire backstory had to be built around the fact that it's incredibly hard for a detective with August's skills to be able to find her, or else the mystery would be solved way too fast. So that's how I came up with the idea that she was a drifter—paired with the prevalence of hitchhiking in the '70s—and that a few things had happened in her life that prevented her from wanting to stay anywhere or with anyone for too long.

For August, I was much more focused on her present than her past, because the most important thing to know about August's past support system is that she didn't have much of one. It's pretty much just been her and her mom for her whole life, and a lot of her journey in this book is finding more for herself. I built out the people around her based heavily on people you might encounter in an average life as a young queer person living in Flatbush, and I wanted each of those people to be as fully realized and central to their own stories as possible, too. Finding a family isn't just about finding people who want you around; it's also about finding people you want to be around, so I wanted to create a bunch of interesting, idiosyncratic people who fit together in that unlikely way you find in real life.

AUTHOR INTERVIEW

August helps update Jane on the music, pop culture, and events she's missed over the years. If you could give Jane three books to read that have been published since she became stuck, which books would they be and why?

So many! But if I had to pick three, I'd probably give her *The City We Became* by N.K. Jemisin for the sci-fi New York vibes, one of Ursula K. Le Guin's more recent works because I imagine Jane already being a fan and having fun catching up on the ones she missed, and maybe the latest edition of *1001 Movies You Must See Before You Die* because she's probably going to try to watch all of the ones from 1977 to now.

What are you working on now?

It's unannounced so I can't spill too much yet, but my next project is mostly done and it's another queer rom-com. This one has ensemble vibes, and it's set at a conservative religious high school in the deep south (think *Saved*). I love it a lot, and I can't wait until I can share more!

What are three questions you recommend book clubs include in their discussion of *One Last Stop*?

Ooh, okay, here we go.

1. Did you learn anything you didn't already know about the 1970s from this book? If so, what?
2. What do you think makes August and Jane a good match for each other?
3. If you had to have a drag name like one of the ones in this book (Annie Depressant, Knob Dylan, Mary Poppers, etc.), what would it be?



Casey McQuiston

ONE LAST STOP

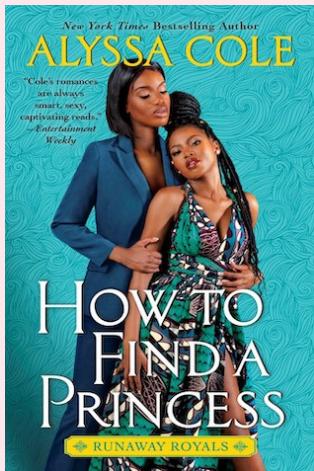


Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the theme of found family and its importance to August's growth arc. What moment to you was pivotal to her opening up and ultimately allowed her to fall wholeheartedly in love with Jane? Why?
2. In her search to find out who Jane is, August studies 1970s history, with an emphasis on LGBTQ+ history. How does this inform August's understanding of Jane? What will the past Jane lived in mean for their future together?
3. What are some differences and similarities between Jane and August, and how do these things ultimately bring them closer together?
4. Aside from August and Jane, there are several other romantic relationships in the novel. Myla and Niko. Wes and Isaiah. Lucie and Winfield. Which is your favorite, and how do you see their love story playing out after the events of *One Last Stop*?
5. August willfully creates distance, geographical and emotional, from her mother. How is this important to August's growth, and in what ways does it actually allow her to grow closer to her mother?
6. August's mother has stopped living her life because of her obsession with her brother's case, but August starts living her life because of her obsession with Jane's case. Why do you think that is?
7. Would Jane and August still have sparked a connection without Augie linking them together? Discuss.
8. Jane and August have to spend the bulk of their courtship on the New York City subway. In what ways does this restriction help them create emotional intimacy instead of hinder it?
9. August claims she doesn't believe in much, but she felt big emotions when she first watched *Say Anything* and saw John Cusack hold up a boom box playing Peter Gabriel's "In Your Eyes" during a grand gesture. What is a film or novel that made you want to believe in big, epic love, and why?
10. McQuiston's *Red, White & Royal Blue* and *One Last Stop* are both larger-than-life, high-stakes romances. In what ways did you connect to these stories, and did you learn anything about yourself through them?

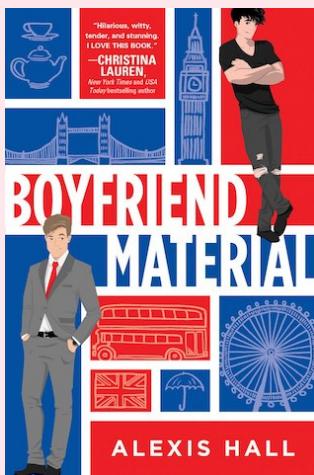


WHAT TO READ NEXT



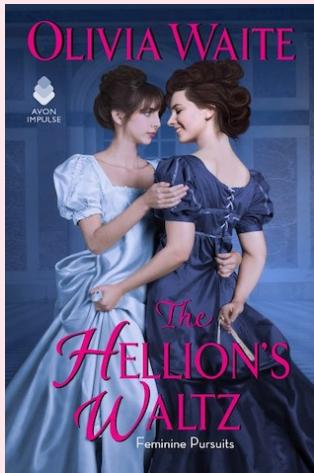
How to Find a Princess by Alyssa Cole

If *One Last Stop* has you wanting more romances featuring queer women (a #QueerGirlSummer TBR, if you will) don't miss out on Cole's latest. This Anastasia retelling features a reluctant heir on the run and an investigator determined to bring her back to face her royal duties.



Boyfriend Material by Alexis Hall

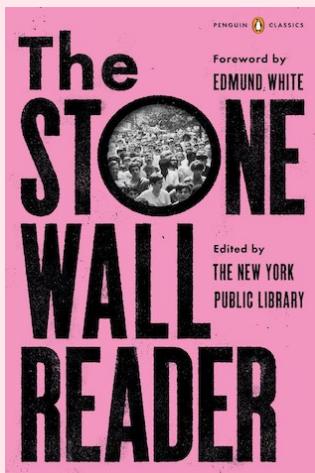
If you loved the humor and tight-knit group of queer friends in *One Last Stop*, get *Boyfriend Material* on your TBR immediately. Packed with heart and hilarity, this romance from Hall follows the fake relationship between buttoned-up Oliver and the messy and chaotic Luc.



The Hellion's Waltz by Olivia Waite

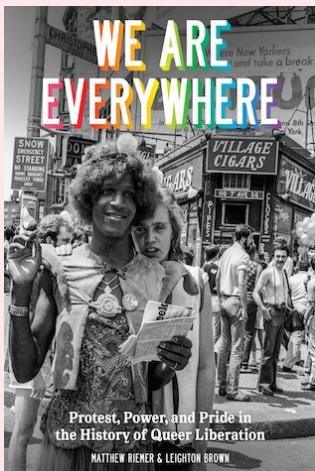
If you enjoyed *One Last Stop*'s blend of romance and queer history, and want more, pick up Waite's newest historical romance featuring two women falling in love during the late Regency period. Maddie is hoping to pull off one grand heist to fund her local union, and the only thing standing in her way is Sophie, the town's new piano teacher.

FURTHER READING



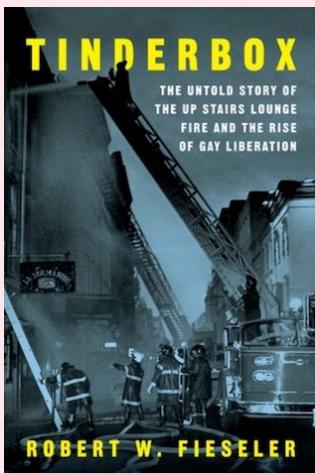
The Stonewall Reader edited by New York Public Library

This collection explores the five years before and after the Stonewall uprising through sources from the NYPL collection. Readers will find diaries, articles, first accounts, and more that will help to further their understanding of this pivotal moment in the LGBTQ+ rights movement.



We Are Everywhere by Leighton Brown and Matthew L. Riemer

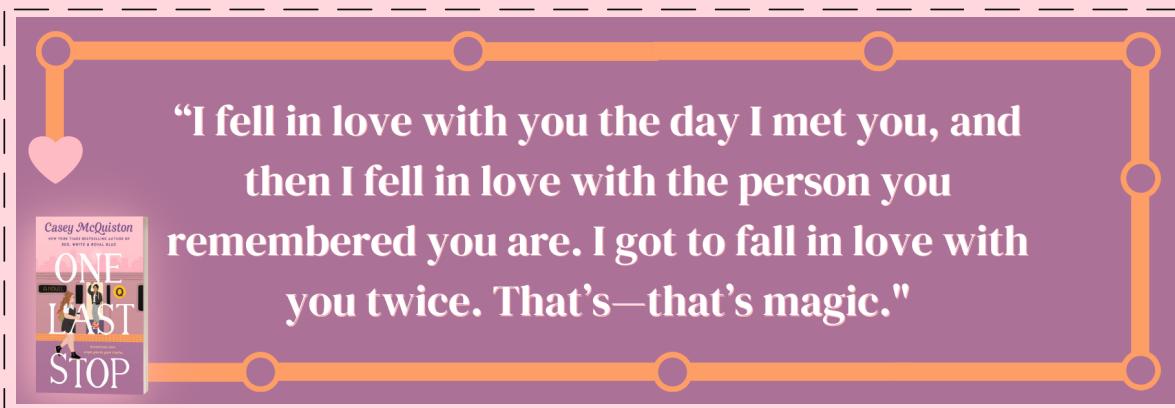
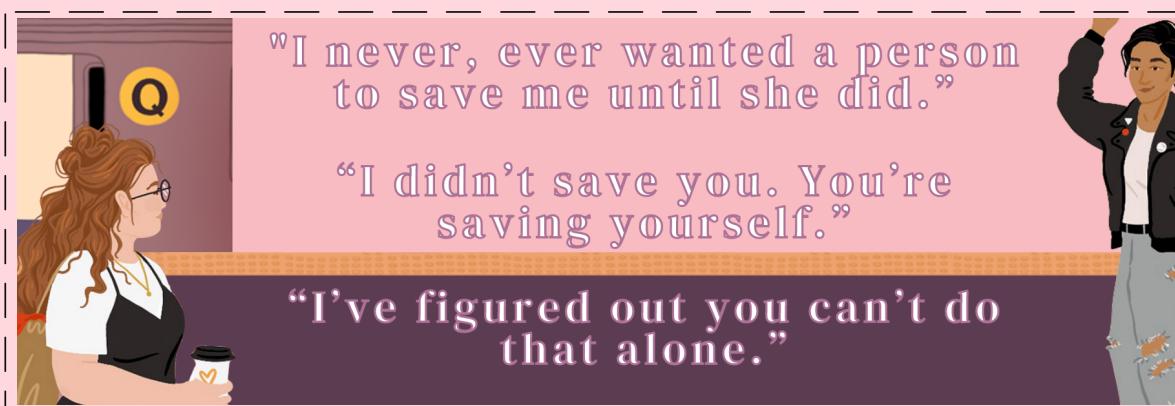
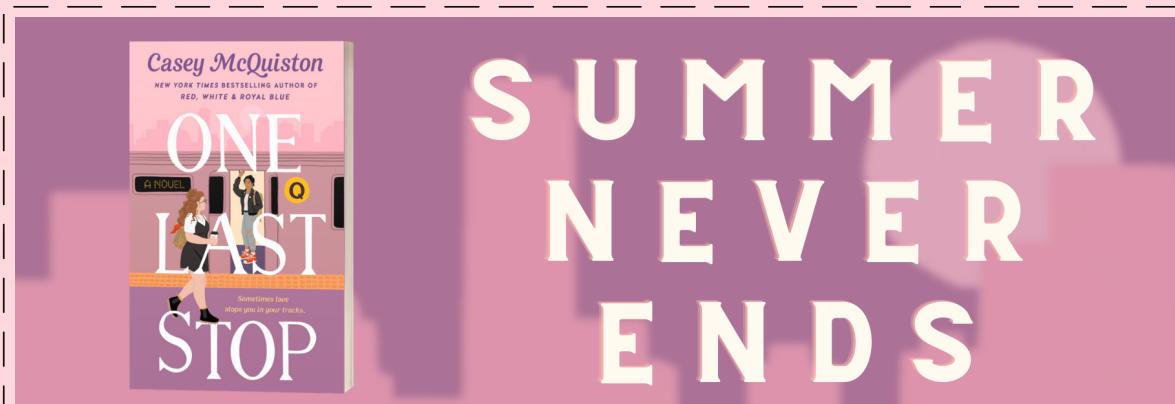
If Jane's activism had you wanting to know more, pick up this photographic history of the queer liberation movement. From the creators of the @lgbt_history Instagram account, this book tracks protests from 19th century Europe up to today and features images from queer photographers.



Tinderbox by Robert W. Fieseler

In *One Last Stop*, Jane tells August the real story of the UpStairs Lounge arson attack and the 32 lives lost that night. This book expands on the event, sharing details of the crime and the aftermath, as well as insight into the community that shaped the bar into what it was.

PRINTABLE BOOKMARKS



RECIPE: THE SU SPECIAL

While working at Pancake Billy's House of Pancakes, Jane asked Jerry to make her a specific sandwich so often that it became a popular off-menu item and was named in her honor. August describes it as the best sandwich that she's ever eaten.

Directions

Toast both slices of bread and set aside.

In a large skillet, cook bacon over medium heat until crispy. Set aside.

In the same skillet, crack one egg and fry. Jane recommends a runny yolk for the best sandwich experience.

Begin assembly by placing the egg on a slice of toast.

Top with bacon.

Sprinkle salt and pepper.

Add desired amount of hot sauce and maple syrup.

Top with second slice of Texas toast and serve.

Ingredients

2-3 pieces of Bacon

Maple syrup

Hot sauce

1 egg

2 slices Texas toast (or other thick-sliced bread of choice)

Salt and pepper to taste



PLAYLIST

Whether shared over headphones or through WTKF 90.9, music is foundational to Jane and August's romance. Here's a playlist of songs from important moments in their story.

"In Your Eyes" by Peter Gabriel

"It's Tricky" by Run-D.M.C.

"Love on Top" by Beyoncé

"Oh Girl" by The Chi-Lites

"Lovers" by The Runaways

"War" by Edwin Starr

"Soul Provider" by Michael Bolton

"I Wanna Be Your Boyfriend" by Ramones

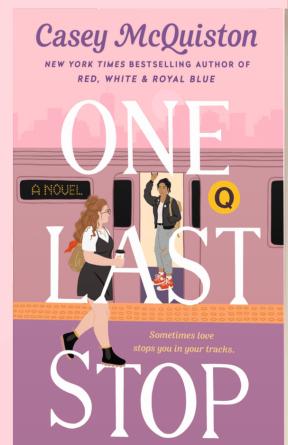
"The Obvious Child" by Paul Simon

"I'm On Fire" by Bruce Springsteen

"Gloria" by Laura Branigan

"I've Got Love On My Mind" by Natalie Cole

"Love Of My Life" by Queen



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Casey McQuiston is the New York Times bestselling author of *Red, White & Royal Blue*, as well as a pie enthusiast. She writes books about smart people with bad manners falling in love. Born and raised in southern Louisiana, she now lives in New York City with her poodle mix and personal assistant, Pepper.



Photo © Sylvie Rosokoff



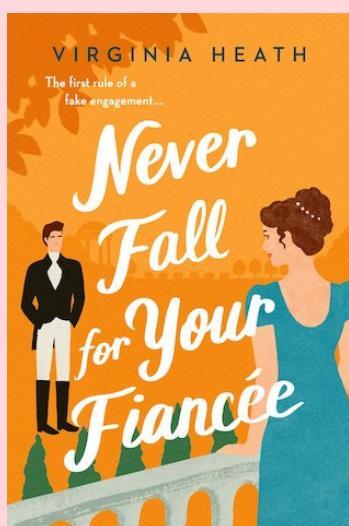
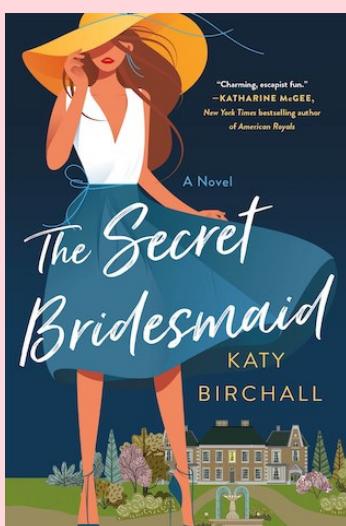
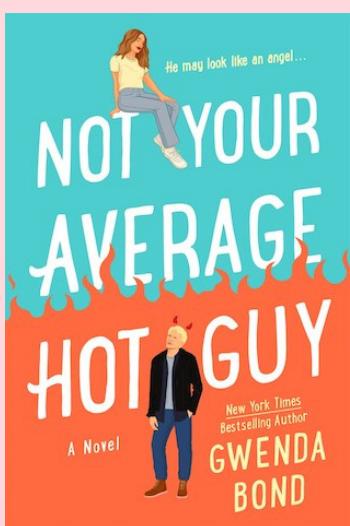
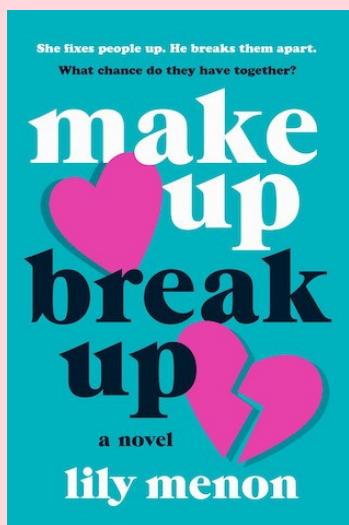
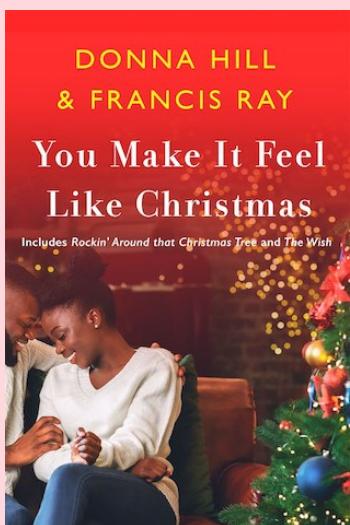
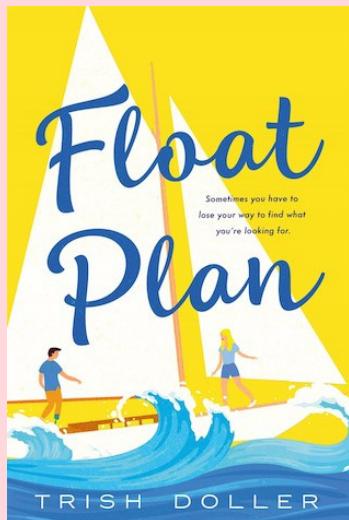
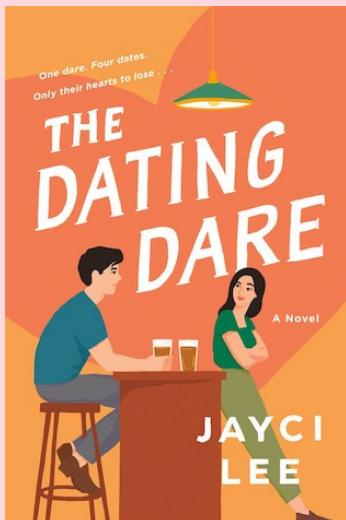
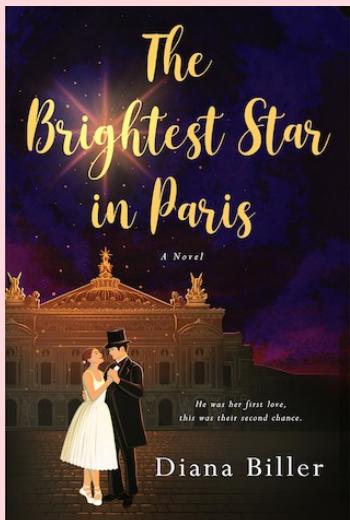
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