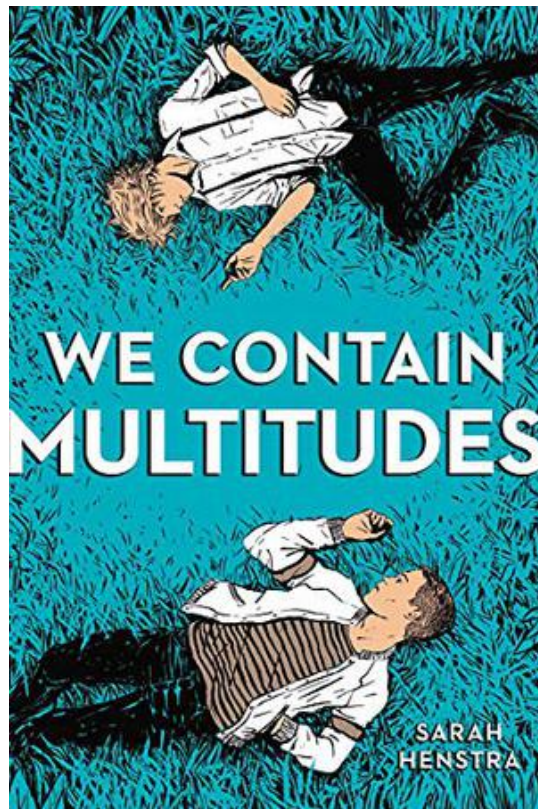


# WE CONTAIN MULTITUDES

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by Sarah Henstra · RELEASE DATE: May 14, 2019

Your reason to root for love—and the power of the pen.

An archaic form of communication, a contemporary setting, and the timeless lure of love.

Jo and Kurl attend the same Minnesota school and are pen pals by class assignment. A bow-tied gay dandy and brawny football star respectively, polar opposition on the high school spectrum makes their pairing and correspondence even more poignant. Jo's letters underscore his affinity for Walt Whitman and the reality of incessant bullying. Brooding, beefy Kurl scolds Jo for making himself a target (yet still fends off the bullies like a devoted, disgruntled bodyguard), evolves as a thoughtful writer, and reveals the root of his volatile temper. Over the course of a year, an affection between the two develops, as does a romance with all the trappings of secrecy, revelation, separation, sobs, sex, and longing. The dual narrative differs from other storytelling duets in that these points of view aren't separate; the written perceptions of one character are scrutinized and shared through the lens of the other. A love story, a therapy session, a reason to read Whitman—the sweetness of unexpected amour is here, as is the saline of sadness. The main characters are white; diversity in secondary characters is implied through names. Graphic toxic masculinity, familial abuse, drug use, and sexual betrayal are balanced (not obliterated) by the beauty of love between two boys who never expected the best from each other.

Your reason to root for love—and the power of the pen. (*Fiction. 14-adult*)

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