

Meet-cute love stories

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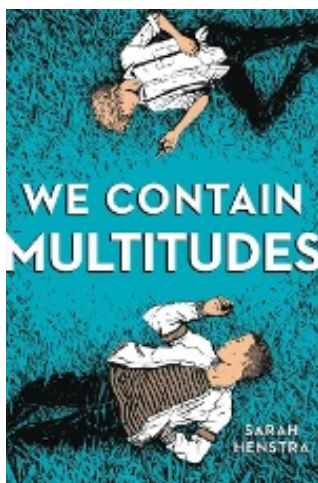
Read our Five Questions interview with Rainbow Rowell, about pumpkin patch employees strolling toward love in the delicious graphic novel *Pumpkinheads* (Roaring Brook/First Second, 14 years and up). Then enjoy the following YA love stories in which the protagonists similarly meet-cute — and realize their feelings for each other — in rewardingly unexpected ways.



In Maurene Goo's *Somewhere Only We Know*, a modern-day take on the classic film *Roman Holiday*, K-pop superstar Lucky meets a boy named Jack in Hong Kong. Though Lucky uses a fake name, Jack (secretly a part-time paparazzo) figures out who she is — and knows he can land a full-time job if he sends the scoop to his boss. The problem: he's falling for Lucky, and she for him. Lucky and Jack are both charming, funny narrators with serious chemistry. (Farrar, 14 years and up)



Zayneb, a Muslim American high school senior, leaves early for spring break in Doha, Qatar, after writing a note (deemed "threatening") about her Islamophobic teacher. Adam, a Muslim Canadian college freshman, is returning to Doha to see his father and sister, with some unfortunate news about his health. What they have in common: each has been keeping a "Marvels and Oddities" journal, based on an ancient book they'd both discovered. Told through alternating perspectives, S. K. Ali's *Love from A to Z* is a welcome halal YA love story. (Simon/Salaam, 14 years and up)



Sarah Henstra uses the epistolary format with great success in her novel *We Contain Multitudes*, about the burgeoning romance between sophomore Jonathan Hopkirk ("Jo"), an openly gay poetry and music lover, and senior football star Adam Kurlansky ("Kurl"). Perhaps there's melodrama in this couple's beautiful love, and in how spectacularly it's challenged by devastating conflicts, but this is what makes the book such an epic, sweeping romance — and gay teen readers deserve more of those. (Little, Brown, 14 years and up)



With her overprotective mother away, seventeen-year-old African American ballerina Chloe, star of *I Wanna Be Where You Are* by Kristina Forest, plans to drive from her home in New Jersey to an audition in DC. She runs into a roadblock when her neighbor and frenemy, Eli, talks her into taking him (and his

dog, Geezer), along for the ride. This is an engaging, romantic story that explores dealing with relationships, loss, and having the courage to follow your heart, romantically and otherwise. (Roaring Brook, 12–16 years)

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