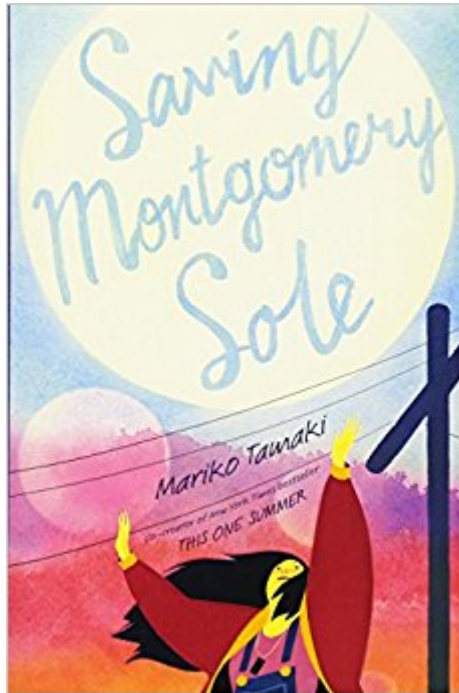




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# Saving Montgomery Sole



## Synopsis

Saving Montgomery Sole is a beautiful and offbeat novel from Mariko Tamaki, co-creator of the bestselling Printz Honor and Caldecott Honor Book *This One Summer*. Montgomery Sole is a square peg in a small town, forced to go to a school full of jocks and girls who don't even know what irony is. It would all be impossible if it weren't for her best friends, Thomas and Naoki. The three are also the only members of Jefferson High's Mystery Club, dedicated to exploring the weird and unexplained, from ESP and astrology to super powers and mysterious objects. Then there's the Eye of Know, the possibly powerful crystal amulet Monty bought online. Will it help her predict the future or fight back against the ignorant jerks who make fun of Thomas for being gay or Monty for having two moms? Maybe the Eye is here just in time, because the newest resident of their small town is scarier than mothmen, poltergeists, or, you know, gym. Thoughtful, funny, and painfully honest, Montgomery Sole is someone you'll want to laugh and cry with over a big cup of frozen yogurt with extra toppings.

Praise for *Saving Montgomery Sole*: "As with *Montgomery Sole*, my life is made bearable and glorious by a Mystery Club— a group of authors who tell the truth with wit and verve and style. Mariko Tamaki is in this club. . . . She—, is the coolest member."

— Daniel Handler, author of *Why We Broke Up* "Saving Montgomery Sole is a beautiful and eloquent book that perfectly captures the yearning for a mystery larger than ourselves."

— Holly Black, author of *The Darkest Part of the Forest* "A deeply satisfying, smart, and necessary kind of book. Tamaki takes a classic high school narrative and infuses it with magic, queerness, and compelling complexity."

— Kate Schatz, author of *Rad American Women A-Z* "Mysticism and emotion live side by side for Montgomery Sole, a teen girl who is trying to unravel both the mysteries of the universe and of other people. I gobbled this book up in one sitting."

— Kate Scelsa, author of *Fans of the Impossible Life* "Mariko Tamaki treasures and tears apart the quirky, confounding, and awkwardly beautiful parts of being a teenager, lending her unique talent and authentic voice to a cast of oddballs who also happen to be our neighbors, friends, and family."

— Corey Silverberg, author of *Sex Is a Funny Word* "Mariko Tamaki's writing is my comfort food! Try saving Montgomery Sole, end up saving yourself."

— Raziell Reid, author of *When Everything Feels Like the Movies* "A quietly assured story . . . Montgomery's slow confrontation with reality creates a realistic, satisfying arc, and Tamaki's economical storytelling results in dimensional characters whose struggles feel viscerally real."

— Publishers Weekly, starred review "Tamaki balances the story's lighter and more intense moments through Monty's smart, forthright first-person narration . . . Meanwhile, the well-developed and likable supporting cast raises the

novel—its emotional stakes . . . Offbeat and authentic—can uncommon treat. Kirkus Reviews—“The characters are refreshingly diverse for YA literature, in both sexuality and race, and the conversations around religion, homophobia, and society are written as if they are a norm of Montgomery’s life—never straying into preachy or didactic territory . . . A strong addition to most school or public library YA collections.” School Library Journal

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 6 Up—Montgomery Sole is the older daughter of two moms, a member of her high school’s Mystery Club, and a confused, sweet, sometimes moody, relatively innocent teenage girl in the small town of Aunty, CA. The teen starts using a black stone she wears called the Eye of Know to explore the unexamined intentions of the reverend, his son, and herself. The tone here is reminiscent of Stephanie Perkins’s *Anna and the French Kiss* (Dutton, 2010), but the topics and themes are closer to those found in Carol Rifka Brunt’s fantastic debut, *Tell the Wolves I’m Home* (Dial, 2013). The characters are refreshingly diverse for YA literature, in both sexuality and race, and the conversations around religion, homophobia, and society are written as if they are a norm of Montgomery’s life—never straying into preachy or didactic territory. The novel is ultimately an exploration of Montgomery’s struggles with religion and her parents’ sexuality—and the question of whether the two are at odds. VERDICT While the themes are mature, the writing and characters are accessible for younger middle school readers; this would make a strong addition to

most school or public library YA collections. —Shalini Miskelly, St. Benedict Catholic School, Seattle, WA --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"As with Montgomery Sole, my life is made bearable and glorious by a Mystery Club — a group of authors who tell the truth with wit and verve and style. Mariko Tamaki is in this club. . . . She —, is the coolest member." — Daniel Handler, author of *Why We Broke Up* "Saving Montgomery Sole is a beautiful and eloquent book that perfectly captures the yearning for a mystery larger than ourselves." — Holly Black, author of *The Darkest Part of the Forest* — "A deeply satisfying, smart, and necessary kind of book. Tamaki takes a classic high school narrative and infuses it with magic, queerness, and compelling complexity." — Kate Schatz, author of *Rad American Women A-Z* "Mysticism and emotion live side by side for Montgomery Sole, a teen girl who is trying to unravel both the mysteries of the universe and of other people. I gobbled this book up in one sitting." — Kate Scelsa, author of *Fans of the Impossible Life* "Mariko Tamaki treasures and tears apart the quirky, confounding, and awkwardly beautiful parts of being a teenager, lending her unique talent and authentic voice to a cast of oddballs who also happen to be our neighbors, friends, and family." — Corey Silverberg, author of *Sex Is a Funny Word* "Mariko Tamaki's writing is my comfort food! Try saving Montgomery Sole, end up saving yourself." — Raziell Reid, author of *When Everything Feels Like the Movies* — "A quietly assured story . . . Montgomery's slow confrontation with reality creates a realistic, satisfying arc, and Tamaki's economical storytelling results in dimensional characters whose struggles feel viscerally real." — Publishers Weekly, starred review — "Tamaki balances the story's lighter and more intense moments through Monty's smart, forthright first-person narration . . . Meanwhile, the well-developed and likable supporting cast raises the novel's emotional stakes . . . Offbeat and authentic — an uncommon treat." — Kirkus Reviews — "The characters are refreshingly diverse for YA literature, in both sexuality and race, and the conversations around religion, homophobia, and society are written as if they are a norm of Montgomery's life — never straying into preachy or didactic territory . . . A strong addition to most school or public library YA collections." — School Library Journal

Montgomery has two best friends who are the reason that she can make it through high school at all. They have a Mystery Club at school where they are the only members and they explore the mysteries of the universe. Thomas loves to talk about superheroes and Naoki focuses on crystals.

With Monty's two moms and Thomas being bullied for being gay, Monty knows there is hate in the world, something made even clearer when a preacher arrives in town putting up signs against people who are gay. When Monty buys The Eye of Know online, she doesn't expect it to work any better than their other experiments, but soon the Eye seems to be channeling Monty's personal anger and exacting revenge. Tamaki captures the anger of a teenager with precision here. It all feels deeply organic, often not being logical at all, lashing out at those she loves, and withdrawing into her room. The issues that Monty is furious about are so tangible both in her life and in her friendships, yet she goes much farther than those who love her would want her to. There is a sense of her reaching a cliff of anger and having to make a choice of how she is going to be in the world. It's a powerful place to set a YA novel and works well. The magical realism in the book is done well too. It strikes a balance between being entirely believable but also allowing readers to see it as something that could be unrelated too. Readers will get to see what their own opinions of mysteries of the universe are in this well-written novel. A novel about anger and its positive and negative sides, this book will speak to young teens navigating their own issues. Appropriate for ages 12-14.

This started off as a really fun, quirky read about some high schoolers and their paranormal mystery club. Then it shifted into something, hm, strange? But not unenjoyable. I liked it. I liked reading about a girl willing to lose herself in order to defend her family which happens to have two moms. TWs: homophobia, r-word slur, some weird eating disorder comments that didn't gel well with me, brief sexual assault

Actual Rating: 3.5\* This was a quick and easy read and I really enjoyed it. I thought Monty was a really great character and super relatable. I really liked that she had a diverse friend group and that we got to see from her perspective all the things that were affecting them - slurs, people in general, religion, etc. etc. - because I feel like a lot of allies don't realize that instead of getting weighed down and burdened by these things, most LGBTQ+ people try to roll with the punches (sometimes quite literally). I did, however, think that this was way too short. I wanted there to be a bit more development of the Eye and the Reverend -- or to delete one of those plot points. I felt like neither was given the right amount of attention and space to come to fruition and because of this they both fell flat. But, the characters were FANTASTIC. I loved reading about them and their emotions became my emotions. I was laughing and crying with this one and could really get a feel for what the characters were thinking and why they were acting a certain way. I thought it was great to have

Monty be the lead for this reason tbh. I would have liked much more of Naoki though as well! I think she is a really interesting character and we just scraped the surface of her character (spin-off?) I really liked the character growth in this one and how that evolved but I think more time (and therefore more pages) in this one would have really helped. I really enjoyed Tamaki's writing style and definitely will be picking up more by her (I have read (YOU) SET ME ON FIRE and enjoyed that one). Plus, Canadians!

SAVING MONTGOMERY SOLE by Mariko Tamaki is a unique and vibrant read that is easily devoured in one sitting. Monty is considered weird in her small town of Aunty, California. For one thing, she has two moms. For another, she spends most of her time with a club of her own making --- The Mystery Club --- dedicated to seeking out and discovering the validity of the universe's questions. She's got her sights set on what promises to be her most interesting mystery yet, a stone called the Eye of Know that claims to allow the wielder control over any situation. The Eye, however, seems to have more damaging plans. When things start to go wrong and a preacher bent on "saving the American family" comes to Aunty, Monty discovers that the mysteries in her life are more pressing than those she seeks out. The one word I would use to describe this book is "quirky." Monty is an entirely unique voice that I wasn't expecting when I started the book. Her wording is a little awkward at times, but I thought it added to her individuality. As the book progresses, we see Monty in some very dark places, and I thought that the reasoning and thought process behind her feelings was interesting and well-developed. I fell in love with Monty as a character, much more than I did with any other element of the book. Reading this book, all I could think was that I wanted more. At 240 pages, this book took too long building up to importance and not long enough dwelling on what I felt was the crux of the novel. It was meant to be a moving coming-of-age story, and I didn't really get as involved in that aspect as I would have liked. Warning: This is not a fantasy novel. Do not go into it expecting fantasy. The summary makes it seem similar to THE RAVEN BOYS or WINK, POPPY, MIDNIGHT, when in actuality, I would recommend it more to fans of ELEANOR AND PARK and ILL GIVE YOU THE SUN. It's still a fun, different read, but the outside comments are very misleading. If you're a fan of Mariko Tamaki's other books or poignant coming-of-age stories, SAVING MONTGOMERY SOLE is a perfect read for you. Reviewed by Maggie D., Teen Board Member

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