

The background features a complex network of white nodes connected by thin purple lines, set against a gradient background that transitions from dark purple at the top to a bright pink at the bottom. The nodes are scattered across the frame, with some forming distinct geometric shapes like triangles and polygons. The overall aesthetic is modern and digital.

Again, but Better

Written by Christine Riccio

Published by sanmarco-sf

Table of Contents

Again But Better	1
Again But Better Book	2
Again But Better Summary	3
Again But Better Book Tour	4
Again But Better Pdf	5
Again But Better Barnes And Noble	6
Again But Better Arc	7
Again But Better Epub	8
Again But Better Amazon	9
Again But Better Target	10

Again, but Better

By Christine Riccio

Again But Better

From one of the most followed booktubers today, comes *Again, but Better*, a story about second chances, discovering yourself, and being brave enough to try again.

Again But Better Book

Shane has been doing college all wrong. Pre-med, stellar grades, and happy parentsâ€¦ sounds idealâ€”but Shane's made zero friends, goes home every weekend, and romanceâ€¦ whatâ€™s that?

Again But Better Summary

Her life has been dorm, dining hall, class, repeat. Time's a ticking, and she needs a change—there's nothing like moving to a new country to really mix things up. Shane signs up for a semester abroad in London. She's going to right all her college mistakes: make friends, pursue boys, and find adventure!

Again But Better Book Tour

Easier said than done. She is soon faced with the complicated realities of living outside her bubble, and when self-doubt sneaks in, her new life starts to fall apart.

Again But Better Pdf

Shane comes to find that, with the right amount of courage and determination one can conquer anything. Throw in some fate and a touch of magic—the possibilities are endless.

Unfortunately this one just wasn't for me, which is fine.

Things I liked

The character's voice was distinctly different in the 2 respective timelines. While I originally found Shane far too naive, enthusiastic, and overdramatic for my liking as a twenty year old, the portions at age 26 made that choice more clear, as to establish maturity and character growth.

Great pacing! The trips to different countries and the balance of time spent at home, at work, at school, and out with friends kept things interesting and dynamic. Unfortunately this one just wasn't for me, which is fine.

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Great pacing! The trips to different countries and the balance of time spent at home, at work, at school, and out with friends kept things interesting and dynamic.

Things I disliked

I was stoked originally to hear there was a small magical element to this, but the execution turned out to not result in quite what I was hoping for. I know this is a romance, but by the time that magical element happened, I was banking on this "second chance" to really impact Shane's focus in life; from her relationship to more onto herself.

The incessant 2011 references. I've never read a book so insistent on reminding you what year it is, especially as it had no real importance, besides the fact that there are 2 different years this book takes place in. The constant book, technology, song, and movie references put in place to establish that it IS, still, indeed 2011; was exhaustive. From referencing "T-Swizzle" and "this new program called Spotify" to "I'm reading City of Glass! The fourth book in the series is coming out soon!" and "Death Hallows Part Two hasn't been released yet!" The pop culture references were abundant, and more distracting than adding anything of value.

Most of the romantic scenes were, for lack of a better word, cringey. Shane came off very strangely obsessive with this boy she'd just met; the internal monologue over him was practically manic. It gave off a very different tone than the romance I was expecting. I have some especially weird feelings about the latter half of this book, and Pilot's character evolution with Shane's attempt to control it...but I don't

Again, but Better

quite know how to express what I disliked about it fully- I'll have to think more on this.

There were some seriously weirdly structured sentences and jokes in this book. A lot of them made absolutely no sense to me. Note: This could definitely be a result of my copy being an early edition, and not the final version. But more than likely I just don't get the brand of humour. There were many, many "I chuckled" "I snorted" "I laughed" lines after nothing substantially humorous had just occurred? Example: In the middle of an otherwise normal conversation, a character says the normal phrase "I volunteered." to which Shane's internal monologue states "I chuckle, thinking of The Hunger Games." Quite perplexing.

I would have liked some more unpacking with certain topics I thought needed more context- such as that shocking dinner altercation, where verbal abuse is normalized, and the subject of cheating, which I feel was too glossed over.

There was nothing inherently wrong with this that would make me caution anyone not to give it a chance, the book just wasn't my cup of tea. Overall a fine first novel really; I think it's common for author's to especially draw on their own experiences in their first book- it's just unfortunate that we know this author so much more than the average author- because the self insertion was aggressively noticeable. Future books I'm assuming will lack this quality, and I'd be more than happy to give myself another opportunity to enjoy Christine's work. ...more

Again, but Better

Again But Better Barnes And Noble

“Shane has been doing college all wrong”

You fool....You absolute buffoon....That's the only way you do college.

THE MOST HEARTWARMING ROMANCE SET AGAINST WHIMSY COMEDY

What a debut! If you love to laugh out loud and feel a kinship to the main character, Christine does wonders with the funny awkward first love. She just gets it!!

I had such a wonderful time reading this heartwarming story about second chances. It encompasses the warmth of a 90s Meg Ryan movie with the setting of Sliding Doors with Gwyneth Paltrow. This is the kind of book that will keep you company on your summer vacation or be your best friend on a rainy day. THE MOST HEARTWARMING ROMANCE SET AGAINST WHIMSY COMEDY

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Again, but Better

Again But Better Arc

Plagiarism.

So, here we are again. A booktuber writes a book and I receive an ARC of it.

And, yeah, it was bad.

Not a total trainwreck like Zenith, but still... Bad.

I have seen A LOT of people saying that they will love this book regardless if it's good or not because they love Christine and that's fine, do what you want. But it also means that I will be as brutally honest as I could be to even it out!

I believe that you should always judge a book based on the book and not the author but since this Plagiarism.

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I believe that you should always judge a book based on the book and not the author but since this book is basically about the author (and I will admit I don't like her that much) there will be a lot of criticism towards her as well.

These are my opinions. I am allowed to have opinions about stuff and things.

If you love Christine so much that you will be offended by criticism aimed towards her then kindly fuck off right now. There is a lot of criticism to be found here.

OK? Don't bother leaving butthurt comments because I'll just delete them.

Please and thank you, etc.

OK, got that out of the way, let's go.

SPOILERS AHOY!

Again, but Better

The first thing I have to say is that reading this book made me realize how much I know about Christine Riccio. Which is a weird thing to say, let me explain:

I used to be a subscriber of hers. I watched her videos regularly as a teenager and eventually outgrew her (she is too loud and obnoxious for me, also she's become somewhat of a sellout and thus very untrustworthy, but that's besides the point).

However, unbeknownst to me, I learned a lot about her during these years. How do I know this and why am I bringing this up?

Because 'Shane Primavera' is Christine Riccio.

You see, it started slowly... Like when we first learn Shane's last name and its vaguely Italian I was like:

And then she tells the Love Interest Man (whom we will get to) the story about her online username and I was like:

FrenchWatermelon19

Yes.

That is the main characters online username.

Because... french toast is her favorite breakfast food and watermelon is her favorite fruit.

So if you didn't know, Christine's online username Polandbananas20 (which she still uses..... for some reason) is based on her favorite brand of spring water (???) and her favorite fruit.

At this point (it's like four chapters in) I was like OK... she's paying a little homage to her stupid username right? Right???

Yeah, no.

The longer I kept reading, the more Christine and Shane started to meld together until I ended up just picturing Christine as the main character.

1. Both of them are basic white girls with blondeish hair
2. They have the same type of 'social anxiety', the 'relatable' type (listen, I struggled with social anxiety for years, it was crippling at times, like you physically couldn't do stuff, it's not just 'LOL I'M AWKWARD XD' and while it can be overcome it's not just like flipping a switch or trying to 'make a change')
3. The way they talk is the exact same
4. They geek out excessively about the same stuff (harry potter, lost, taylor swift, the beatles, vampire academy, cassandra clare, john green etc.)
5. They're both writers and avid readers

Again, but Better

6. They both have a thing where they name inanimate objects and only refer to the objects by their names (her computers name is Sawyer, Christine names all her computers and her cars as far as I know)

(UPDATE)7. They both study abroad in London

AND MORE (will add when I remember but my brain has been trying to repress this book).

Listen, okay. Before I read this I didn't even realize I knew these things about Christine, but apparently I do, and I don't like it.

And I can't ignore that she basically just wrote a book about herself traveling around Europe and falling in love with a girlfriend-having basic white boy whose fucking name is Pilot Penn.

I also do not like self-inserting, like, at all. I find it unbearably cringy and it's something I would expect of a middle schooler.

But hey, that's just me.

Also, as her first published work, it shows a huge lack of imagination.

So, disregarding the self-insert stuff, you may wonder; is the story good at least?

Not really.

'Tis bland. Also, unoriginal.

It's basically Anna and the French Kiss in London with stupid and unexplained magical time travel thrown in. And there's a spirit guide type character. So, yeah, there's actual magic in this.

And the writing?

Juvenile. Filled to the fucking brim with references, like holy fuck. Very herp-derp 'relatable', which is pretty much how Christine talks and acts lmao. Just... not good. It's nothing new, I feel like I've read this book a hundred times because it's so unoriginal and boring. Nothing stands out. And most of the story takes place in like 2011 so there's a lot of 'LOL NEW GAME ANGRY BIRDS WANNA TRY??' and it was soooooo cringy.

Was actually going to give this a two star rating (because, like I said, it's not a complete wreck, it's just boring and unoriginal) but the last chapter/epilogue bullshit made me cringe so hard I think I entered another dimension.

It's just Christine writing her own wish fulfillment fanfiction!

And if you like that, that's fine. You are allowed to like things, just as I am allowed to not like things. Like wish fulfillment fanfiction. It's fine to do as long as you don't charge people for it.

Even if by some miniscule chance that it's not meant to be a self-insert (which I highly fucking doubt) it

Again, but Better

still shows so much weakness in her ability as a writer that she can't separate her own voice from her character. Because reading this book is exactly like having Christine tell me a story about something that happened to her, when it really shouldn't.

Having a literary voice or a particular writing style is a thing, but that's not what I mean.

For example:

In Vampire Academy, Rose is the main character. When I read those books I don't feel like Richelle Mead is telling me this story, I feel like Rose does.

When I read Madeline Miller's books (my favorite author) I don't feel like she is telling me the stories, it's Patroclus or Circe.

My point is, if you're going to write in first person, you need to be able to separate yourself from your character, which Christine cannot do. Because she hasn't created a character here, it's just her.

So, yeah. I do believe she got this book deal handed to her on a silver fucking platter. I just don't believe that anything this bland that does not include smut could be published on its own.

I would go on a rant again about money-hungry publishers but I'm tired so you can head on to my Zenith review for that.

Just, please. Please stop giving booktubers book deals. It's been proven by now that reading a lot of books and gushing about them online does not mean you can write one yourself. There are so many talented writers who get disregarded in favor of these 'internet sensations'. Imagine all the great stories that never see the light of day because shit like this gets pushed to the front.

Bitch, bye.

...more

I knew I was going to love Again But Better well before I read it. The idea of a girl travelling to London to study abroad at her second chance at college to study what she wants, make new friends, and achieve her goals is all I could have wanted to read about as a teenager. I firmly believe that had I read this book at 17, it would be considered one of my favorite books of all time. For this reason, it gave me a unique sense of nostalgia, despite this being a totally new story to me, which had a big influence on why I loved this story so much.

CW: anxiety, cheating

I really liked Shane as a main character. There resemblance to a certain good friend of mine (who *may* have also authored this book) is uncanny, so it would be hard for me not to like her as a protagonist. Shane begins fairly naive, dramatic, and almost goofy, but as the stores spans a long period

Again, but Better

of time, the character growth is notable and really surprised me in the end. I do wish we had seen more from the side characters as the story strongly focuses on Shane and the love interest Pilot, but they were pleasant additions to the book. I struggled the most with Pilot. Sometimes he was a downright cutie and other times I was so frustrated with him, I thought he was bordering on irredeemable. In the end, I couldn't resist his charm. I had some strong issues with the course of Shane & Pilot's friendship, but it was not detrimental to my view of the story. I just feel a few situations could have been handled with more honesty and courtesy.

I felt the writing of the novel was fair for a debut. It was not spectacular but I feel the pacing and certain storytelling elements were used effectively. My main gripe is that the cadence of Shane's narration just wasn't my cup of tea. I don't consider myself to be the biggest stickler for writing style and can frequently gloss over some issues if the story is fulfilling enough elsewhere, and while that stands true for *Again, but Better*, my bias being Christine's friend does come into play here. While I may not have been the biggest fan of the sentence structure at times, I'm fully aware that it's Christine's sense of humor and because I think Christine is hilarious, I was able to appreciate it for that reason. There were multiple moments where I said to myself "Ehh I'm not going to chuckle at this" and a few pages later, I could not stop laughing when it was brought up again. I spent a lot of time giggling and smiling while reading, just because I knew it was EXACTLY how Christine would say it. I definitely believe that the writing of this book is not for everyone - it also includes many pop-culture references at the time which a lot of readers dislike, but it was fine to me and even had some shining moments.

A certain fantastical element does come into play halfway through the book, which I thought was cute and fun, though I would be interested to know more of the foundations of it. I did prefer the first half of this book because it was more in line with what I personally wanted from the novel, but there was so much I appreciated in the second half. The character development plus the themes and messages were incredibly uplifting and solidified much of why I liked this book. I do wish the ending was more fleshed out, but again, it's not the biggest deal to me as a reader.

Overall, I had such a great time reading *Again, but Better*. It fulfilled pretty much all of my expectations and even surprised me in some aspects. This is definitely a book that is made for certain people and not others, but it made my England-obsessed, book-nerd heart fill with joy and I'm not the least bit shocked I enjoyed it so much.

I received a copy of this book from Wednesday Books in exchange for an honest review. All opinions are my own. ...more

Again But Better Epub

OKAY UPDATE; THIS COVER IS FUCKING AMAZING

Christine isn't my favourite Booktuber, but she basically single handedly started Booktube and that's pretty fucking awesome. And she's been working on this for years - even though we all KNOW because of her following she could of got it published ages ago. I totally respect the work & dedication that has obviously gone into this.

Plus I think the title is so catchy and fun

ARC received via #arcsfortrade on Twitter!

• If you could go back and do London all over again, knowing everything you know now, would you do it? •

Friends, I wanted to love this so badly. So damn badly. Christine is not only the actual Queen of BookTube, she was one of the first channels I ever watched. She just seems so kind, and genuine, and I always feel like she radiates positive energy, and she was such a massive part of why I wanted to read Shadowhunters in the first place. But this review

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• If you could go back and do London all over again, knowing everything you know now, would you do it? •

Friends, I wanted to love this so badly. So damn badly. Christine is not only the actual Queen of BookTube, she was one of the first channels I ever watched. She just seems so kind, and genuine, and I always feel like she radiates positive energy, and she was such a massive part of why I wanted to read Shadowhunters in the first place. But this review isn't going to be about that, nor is it going to be a drag or me spilling the tea; this review is just going to be about why this debut was only okay for me. Even though I very much hope it works for you come May 2019! Also, please keep in mind that I have a very early ARC copy of this book. Many things could be changed upon publication!

This story centers around a girl named Shane, who has had her life completely predicted by her parents'™ wants and aspirations for her. Her parents want her to study medicine and to one day become a doctor, while all Shane wants to do is read and write. Yet, she somehow manages to be able to study abroad to the UK, where she will also be able to intern as a writer for a travel magazine and, most importantly, escape her parents'™ expectations.

The book is also told in two parts; the first part being set in 2011 where Shane is 20, and the next part set in 2017 where Shane is 26. But the book starts out in 2011 and we soon follow Shane during her oversea travels, and we soon meet all of her flat mates, most of which who have ridiculous names;

Again, but Better

Babe, Atticus, Sahra, and Pilot Penn. Yeah, you read that last one right. But Shane is making sure that she is going to make the most of these three months of freedom, while trying to make friendships and connections that will last her entire life.

This book just reads so personal. Like, I would even go as far as to say that I would feel comfortable as classifying this as semiautobiographical. But instead of me being interested in the story, it really took me out of it because it felt so much like Christine and, in turn, felt so damn invasive.

Like, you will not be able to read this book and not picture the main character, Shane, as Christine. From studying abroad, to being open about not making many friends in college, to *gasp* Shane's blog name being French Watermelon, to the constant Lost references, to the endless Cassandra Clare and Shadowhunter references, to Harry Potter galore, while the character of Shane also just has a personality and the same mannerisms as Christine. This just feels so semiautobiographical. I promise, you won't be able to not see it. And maybe that will completely make the reading experience for you, and I truly hope it does, but it really pulled me out of the story constantly.

Also, Christine constantly is trying to make you remember that the story is set in 2011 for a majority of the time. Which is fine at first, but it becomes so heavy handed and forced that it really made for an unenjoyable reading experience. Angry Birds, to Jamie Foxx's *Blame It*, to every popular book of that time period! It was just too much, and it really did a disservice to the story, in my opinion.

But my biggest problem with this book was the grey-area cheating and even eventual cheating (a kiss). This was truly the reason that I could never love this book or ever feel anything for the characters. Plus, the character that is getting cheated on is always villainized to look like a bad girl, when she has every right to feel threatened.

Also, just because this is something that is personal to me, I really didn't like how Shane's parents were never said to be abusive when they most certainly were. Like, the verbal abuse alone her father showed in the text, on top of the constant emotional abuse throughout the entire story, it just made me so upset and I really was disappointed when the parents were never viewed as being shitty parents. Especially at the end when they are being portrayed as good parents, just because their child was able to succeed without them. It feels and reads so very bad. Seriously, if your parents only want to love and support you when you are successful then they aren't that great of parents.

I really loved how this entire story and book shines a light on the constant theme of social anxiety. I'm not saying that Shane makes the wisest of choices throughout these six years but seeing her live with social anxiety was something that really meant a lot to me and something that I really appreciated.

My favorite thing about this book is how it truly is a love letter about how you have to live your life for yourself. I know that Shane learns this the hard way, but I think that this is a concept that more kids need to not only hear but to let the message absorb into their hearts. I know that I learned it way later in life, and I wish so desperately that I could go back and learn that my life is only ever mine and that I

Again, but Better

deserve happiness so much sooner. And I really hope that because Christine has such a huge audience, that so many teens and young adults will be back to learn this earlier and truly live and lead the lives that they want for themselves.

And this book is a really fast paced read, that will really leave you turning the pages because youâ€™ll be super curious where everything is going. Even though I really didnâ€™t like the romance in this book, I was really invested with all the different paths and connections that Shane was making constantly. And I truly believe that I could have sat down, with a big cup of tea, and read this book from cover to cover in one sitting.

Another thing I liked, that I donâ€™t want to talk too much about because of spoilers, but there is for sure a magical element of this book that I was not expecting at all. And even though I think things could have been handled better (grey area cheating), I really enjoyed how this fantastical element was implemented into the story, and it was a surprise that made me happy.

There is also a very diverse cast. Even though the main characters, Shane and Pilot are white, I feel like most of Shaneâ€™s coworkers at the magazine were people of color, and Babe is black and plus sized, Sahra is said to be tan, and Atticus is Asian, gay, and a Gryffindor (which feels like a personal attack in the best way, becauseâ€¦ itâ€™s me)! There is also another queer minor character who comes out because Shane takes a second to talk to them, which is meant to be heartwarming but I was side eyeing a bit.

Overall, letâ€™s be real, people are going to one star and five star this just based on who Christine is upon release, which is never okay, but these are truly my feelings, even though I think Christine is a six star human! Even though I didnâ€™t love a lot of elements of this debut novel, I still really appreciated some of the themes and thought it was a fun and quick read!

[Blog](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Tumblr](#) | [Youtube](#) | [Twitch](#)

The quote above was taken from an ARC and is subject to change upon publication.

Content and trigger warnings for constant grey area cheating, cheating (a kiss), assault (an unwanted kiss), and the use of ableist language like cr*zy.

Buddy read with Madalyn from Novel Ink! â€• ðŸ•• ...more

Again But Better Amazon

â€œCan we start over?â€•

Writers are often told to write what you know. Even now, when I think of Shane Primaveri; I see Christine Riccio, I hear Christine Riccio, I feel like I fucking know Christine Riccio. So yes, she did write what she knew, because she wrote herself.

cries in YA

I was really hesitant to read this book, but I made an effort to read it independent of its booktube writer. I tried focusing on the story and stayed away from any reviews. It really did not let me

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Firstly, I want to say that I have no problem with Booktubers getting book deals. I think that it's brilliant that readers, reviewers and writers of Wattpad, Booktube, Goodreads and even Fanfiction are getting some seriously needed exposure. A writer can be successful regardless of how they started. We really are in a time where publishers want to take and make "smart deals," so giving a person that has a high following a book deal is more monetarily productive than giving an indie author a shot. Which

Again, but Better

understandably, can go really swell or fucking-jump-ship awful.

This was the latter for me.

I felt like this book had a check list that needed to be fulfilled but each point was taken to the extreme and failed miserably. The check list, was the "ultimate" guide to creating a "popular" YA novel. *ahem* Hello, my name is Alex and welcome to my TED talk;

Step 1) Unique Writing

From page 1, I shit you not, page one - this book had an odd writing style. It was like it was trying to reach for poetic prose but instead fell into something riddling. For example, we are being told she is in a plane here:

"Now, Iâ€™m thousands of miles over the Atlantic in a giant hollowed-out pen with wings"

Then there were times where I think humor was added, but again maybe I'm just a soulless sock that doesn't understand comedy. So all in all, this started pretty rough for me.

Step 2) Remember to like, be like, relatable

Of course, EVERYONE loves knowing that their issues aren't only their own and somewhere somehow, someone else is also fighting the same issues. Enter Shane...

"Not literally. But, you know that feeling like light being circulated through your veins when you see someone cute, and all the sudden you explode all over with the thrill of said cute person noticing and acknowledging your existence as a human with whom they could potentially fall into a relationship with?"

"I smile back at him and then look away so as not to appear to be a weird statue that stares at him."

"Weâ€™re walking down the sidewalk in London together. Pilot and I. Me and Pilot. A cute boy whoâ€™s being nice to me. Who I held a conversation with. My heart is having a dance party. Itâ€™s also wondering, is this like, a date? No, itâ€™s not a date, but itâ€™s like â€¦ a something."

The romance was very two dimensional, and maybe because the characters felt under-developed to me. A lot of the time, they came off as cartoonish and unrealistic. I mean come on, if you are going to name the love interest Pilot Penn, he's got to have something going for him? Poor guy got a name from a stationary set.

The romance was all over the shop and insta-love, and as a romance reader, I've read my fair share of

Again, but Better

messy love stories. Pilot was a character I really didn't enjoy and being 50% of the romance in this story, it was really hard for me to cheer on Shane and him. The underlying cheating throughout the book added angst but it also makes me wonder why a romance is going on between them in the first place?

Step 3) Let's add an unrealistic depiction of a mental disorder

In all seriousness, this was the asset of the book that I really didn't gel with. Shane has social anxiety and at first, I was happy that this was represented in the book. But then, I saw her "social anxiety" and I wanted to literally curl into a ball. Whoever has anxiety or any mental disorder for that fact, knows that it is not just an excuse for awkward and odd social behavior. It is your mind coming up with 10,000 paranoid alterations of reality and it leaves you feeling completely helpless.

I hated the portrayal of anxiety through Shane and if there is one thing I cannot handle is the way people use actual mental diagnoses to sensationalize and romanticize "regular" behavior.

Like when I hear people say shit like "i like having my pens in order, i'm soooo OCD" or "wow, i hate this traffic, I'm actually gonna commit" or "shit, it's monday tomorrow... i'm depressed"

uhmmm NO.

Also the fact that Shane is magically going to cure her anxiety and social nervousness by going to another country and falling in love and making friends and etc etc etc. is false advertising. You cannot measure mental health progress on a linear scale and say this is the start and this is the end. It's such a distorted representation of how truly unforgiving mental health can be.

Step 4) Diversity! YAY!

Any progressive reader knows that diversity in any book is a fucking gift from heaven. I would love to have a shelf solely for diverse reads, our own voices and minority representation. Even better, I would love for those characters to be the main characters *cough cough* but moving on.

But I hate when authors force diversity, like they are doing something just to check it off. That's not the point of what you are trying to achieve. So yes, I will give a point to Christine for trying to add diversity to her storyline but then just because I wish the execution was better, I'm going to take back half that point.

Which brings me to the character dialogue. Everyone shared the same voice. Everything ended with a '!

Step 5) Writing what you know

Shane is the main character.

Shane is Christine.

Again, but Better

I'm not even going to get into this one too much because I'm pretty sure I've said enough already. Everything about Shane Primavera was Christine Riccio. Their habits, their dialogue, their hobbies... If you want to know Christine on a really personal level, then this might be for you. Unfortunately, it wasn't for me. ...more

I loved the writing style, but I really just could not get past all the cheating and girl on girl hate. I'm bummed as heck :c

I won an ARC of this book through a giveaway hosted by the publisher.

Again But Better Target

Well, I'm officially impressed. not gonna lie, this was pretty good. I read it in two sittings and was unapologetically grinning like an idiot the entire time.

Rating: 3.75/5

Anyway, fangirling aside, let's get to this review! There were things about this that I absolutely loved with all my heart, and things I didn't quite love all that much and things I just plainly didn't like.

This book is a combination of Fangirl (a book I hated), Anna and the French Kiss (a book I really liked), About Time (Well, I'm officially impressed. not gonna lie, this was pretty good. I read it in two sittings and was unapologetically grinning like an idiot the entire time.

Rating: 3.75/5

Anyway, fangirling aside, let's get to this review! There were things about this that I absolutely loved with all my heart, and things I didn't quite love all that much and things I just plainly didn't like.

This book is a combination of Fangirl (a book I hated), Anna and the French Kiss (a book I really liked), About Time (a movie that is super cute and funny and y'all should watch), and Christine Riccio's life story. Funny enough, it's that last part that gave me some problems while reading.

If you don't know Christine, she does book-related videos on YouTube. In fact, she's the biggest 'booktuber' there is. Her videos are fun and creative and I love her book reviews. I've been watching her videos for years now, to the point that I've observed some of her quirks and habits and know the references she constantly uses. Any avid watcher of her videos would certainly notice her love of Lost, and Harry Potter, and Dan Brown books. They would know the weird story as to why her channel name is PolandBananas20 (Shane's channel is FrenchWatermelon19). They would feel, at least for the first part of the book, that the main character Shane, is no character at all, instead, she's a fictionalized version of the author.

While reading the book I was constantly taken out of the story by just how 'Christine' Shane was. They share the same mannerisms and passions and habits. It was strange. That said, the more we get into the story, the more that Shane separates from Christine and becomes her own person and I really enjoyed seeing that character come into herself.

The book is told in two parts, the firsts taking place in 2011, the second taking place in 2017. The 2011 part was trying way too hard to prove it was 2011. From referencing all the popular books of 2011, to Angry Birds, to it was a lot! Still, I can't even deny I kinda liked it though.

Again, but Better

The 2017 part, which is also technically the 2011 part, was probably my favorite. The character growth between the two time periods was wonderful!

Another issue I had was with the light cheating that was going on in the novel. Shane's love interest, Pilot, is dating someone else when they meet and yet, a romance begins between them anyway. I wasn't really ok with that because Amy, Pilot's girlfriend, really didn't deserve that. Also, the names! The love interest's name is actually Pilot.

•Pilot?

•Like the first episode of a TV show.

The others in the book have names like Babe and Atticus. I couldn't help but roll my eyes a little when they first introduced themselves. But, what's a good contemporary romance without some ridiculous names, I guess.

Since I already talked about the negative, let me end on a good note and tell you the things I loved!

The writing in this book is surprisingly good. Everything had an easy, almost effortless flow to it that I really enjoyed. I genuinely enjoyed myself while reading and even found myself laughing out loud at the banter between Pilot and Shane. They were funny and cute and their banter was absolutely golden!

Shane herself was also a fun character. I really liked her quirkiness and positivity and general goodness! Pilot was also super cute and I know I should probably feel guilty but I totally shipped them! Seriously though, the romance was pretty gosh darn adorable. Their conversations and random references to books and songs had me grinning like an idiot.

Still, what I most liked about the book is that while it reads like a romance, it's more about Shane as an individual than it is about her relationship with Pilot. It's about Shane becoming her own person and living her own life. It's about finding the courage to be yourself and experience life the way you want and I loved that.

Aside from all that, I also enjoyed the descriptions of London and all the random little things like the fact that unlike American pasta which is boxed, British pasta comes in bags! I also really enjoyed all the way Christine described the setting and the general atmosphere of the book.

In the end, do I recommend this book?

Heck yeah!

My hopes for this book were both really high because I love Christine, and really low because the last time a 'booktuber' wrote a book everyone hated it (Zenith by Sasha Alsberg & Lindsey Cummings).

Again, but Better

Thankfully, this book was much more on the good side of things. I think that it was a great debut and I look forward to Christine's future works.

Also, as a side note, please try not to go into this book with any bias, either negative or positive, due to who the author is. If you're gonna hate it, hate it because you don't like the story. If you're gonna love it, love it because the story was good. Let your rating reflect your opinion on the book and the book only! Don't give 1 or 5 stars solely because of how you feel about the author!

****I received an advance copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review. All opinions are my own.****

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Short review: "Again, but Better" should be written again...but better.

You can see the full (memes included!) review on my blog here:
<https://thedeborahembury.wordpress.co...>