

## This One Summer

Mariko Tamaki

McMillan, 2014

### Reviews

- [Kirkus](#) (1 May 2014. Starred review): “A summer of family drama, secrets and change in a small beach town. Rose’s family has always vacationed in Awago Beach. It’s “a place where beer grows on trees and everyone can sleep in until eleven,” but this year’s getaway is proving less idyllic than those of the past. Rose’s parents argue constantly, and she is painfully aware of her mother’s unhappiness. Though her friendship with Windy, a younger girl, remains strong, Rose is increasingly curious about the town’s older teens, especially Dunc, a clerk at the general store. Jillian and Mariko Tamaki (*Skim*, 2008) skillfully portray the emotional ups and downs of a girl on the cusp of adolescence in this eloquent graphic novel. Rose waxes nostalgic for past summers even as she rejects some old pursuits as too childlike and mimics the older teens. The realistic dialogue and sensitive first-person narration convey Rose’s naïveté and confusion, and Windy’s comfort in her own skin contrasts with Rose’s uncertainty. Both the text and art highlight small but meaningful incidents as readers gradually learn the truth behind the tension in Rose’s family. Printed in dark blue ink, Jillian Tamaki’s illustrations feature strong, fluid lines, and the detailed backgrounds and stunning two-page spreads throughout the work establish the mood and a compelling sense of place. Keenly observed and gorgeously illustrated—a triumph.”
- [Booklist](#) (15 April 2014. Starred review): “Mariko and Jillian Tamaki earned critical acclaim for *Skim* (2008), and they return here with another coming-of-age tale about the awkward transition from carefree childhood to jaded, self-conscious young adulthood. Rose and her parents spend every summer at their lakeside cabin in Awago, right down the path from Rose’s best friend, Windy, and her family. They spend lazy days collecting rocks on the beach, riding bikes, swimming, and having barbecues. But this summer, Rose’s parents are constantly fighting, and her mother seems resentful and sad. In that unspoken way kids pick up on their parents’ hardships, Rose starts lashing out at Windy and grasping at what she thinks of as adulthood—turning up her nose at silliness (at which Windy excels), watching gory horror movies, reading fashion magazines, and joining in the bullying of a local teenage girl who finds herself in a tough spot. Jillian Tamaki’s tender illustrations, all rendered in a deep purpley blue, depict roiling water, midnight skies, Windy’s frenetic sugar highs, and Rose’s mostly aloof but often poignantly distressed facial expressions with equal aplomb. With a light touch, the Tamakis capture the struggle of growing up in a patchwork of summer moments that lead to a conclusion notably absent of lessons. Wistful, touching, and perfectly bittersweet.”
- [School Library Journal](#) (May 2014, Starred Review): “Every summer, Rose and her parents vacation at a lakeside cottage. The rest of the world fades away as Rose reunites with her friend Windy and delves into leisurely games of MASH, swimming, and the joy of digging giant holes in the sand—but this summer is different. Rose is on the cusp of adolescence; she’s not ready to leave childhood behind but is fascinated by the drama of the local teens who are only a few years older, yet a universe apart in terms of experience. They drink, they smoke, they swear. As Rose and Windy dip their toes into the mysterious waters of teen life by experimenting with new vocabulary (“sluts!”) and renting horror movies, her parents struggle with their own tensions that

seem incomprehensible to Rose. Layers of story unfurl gradually as the narrative falls into the dreamlike rhythm of summer. Slice-of-life scenes are gracefully juxtaposed with a complex exploration of the fragile family dynamic after loss and Rose's ambivalence toward growing up. The mood throughout is thoughtful, quiet, almost meditative. The muted tones of the monochromatic blue-on-white illustrations are perfectly suited to the contemplative timbre, and the writing and images deserve multiple reads to absorb their subtleties. This captivating graphic novel presents a fully realized picture of a particular time in a young girl's life, an in-between summer filled with yearning and a sense of ephemerality. The story resolves with imperfect hope and will linger in readers' mind through changing seasons."

- [Publishers Weekly](#) (17 March 2014. Starred Review): "Rose and Windy, friends for two weeks every summer in nearby Ontario lake cottages, have hit early adolescence. Rose, a bit older, has knowledge and polish that tubby, still-childish Windy lacks, and Windy sometimes bores her. Yet Windy's instincts are often sound, while Rose is led astray by an infatuation with a local convenience store clerk. As Rose's parents' marriage founders and the taunts of local teens wake her to issues of social class, Rose veers between secret grief and fleeting pleasure in the rituals of summer. Jillian Tamaki's exceptionally graceful line is one of the strengths of this work from the cousin duo behind *Skim*. Printed entirely in somber blue ink, the illustrations powerfully evoke the densely wooded beach town setting and the emotional freight carried by characters at critical moments, including several confronting their womanhood in different and painful ways. Fine characterization and sensitive prose distinguish the story, too—as when Rose remembers the wisdom a swimming teacher shared about holding his breath for minutes at a time: "He told me the secret was he would tell himself that he was actually breathing."
- [New York Times](#) (13 June 2014): "This One Summer" is a graphic novel for readers who appreciate the form, as well as for fans of traditionally told coming-of-age stories. If I worked at a bookstore, I'd be hand-selling it to customers who adored Raina Telgemeier's graphic memoir "Smile" but are now ready for more complex themes. Eagerly hand-selling it: This is a lovely book. While "This One Summer" is not a memoir, Mariko Tamaki based the setting on the Canadian cottage community she went to growing up. And though the story takes place in the present day, a quality of remembrance infuses it. Tamaki understands the nostalgic power a summer tradition holds, even for a child. Rose feels the tug whether she is recalling a long-ago day at the beach or simply performing a task for the first time in the season, like undoing the lock on the shed that holds the bikes. She is a watchful heroine — so much so that when, at the end of the story, she plays a role in a heroic act, it is precisely because she has been looking so closely. She proves herself to be as quietly powerful as this moving, evocative book.

## Awards

- [Eisner Award Winner](#), 2015
- [Caldecott Honor Book](#), 2015
- [Michael L. Printz Honor Book](#), 2015
- [Harvey Awards Nominee for Best Graphic Album Original, Best Artist \(for Jillian Tamaki\), 2015](#)

- [Governor General's Literary Awards / Prix littéraires du Gouverneur général for Children's Literature – Illustration, 2014](#)

**Lists**

- New York Times Bestseller
- [Goodreads Choice Award Nominee for Graphic Novels & Comics, 2014](#) Updated 20 June

### **Response to challenges**

- [Indian River County Schools, Florida](#) (March 2022)- Title was under investigation but according to most current information, title is available at middle school as the lowest approved level. See full list of titles [reviewed here](#).
- [Forsyth County Schools, Georgia](#) (Jan 2022)- Title was challenged; at this time the title has been moved to only high schools.
- [Goddard County Schools, Kansas](#) (Jan 2022)- Title was originally removed but after a review meeting the book was placed back on the shelf.
- [Birdville, Fredericksburg ISD, and North East, Texas](#) (October 2021)- Title was placed on list that circulated throughout many Texas school districts. At this time the book appears to be banned pending investigation. The list of books made [national news](#) and there is very little

information available through local news sources about what is happening with the books.

- [Brevard County Florida](#) (March 2022)- Title was placed under review and although not removed at this time, the school board is trying to change policy that if a title is inappropriate at one school, it must be removed from all schools.

Updated 20 June 2022