



# Every Hidden Thing

*Kenneth Oppel*

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Somewhere in the Badlands, embedded deep in centuries-buried rock and sand, lies the skeleton of a massive dinosaur, larger than anything the late nineteenth-century world has ever seen. Some legends call it the Black Beauty, with its bones as black as ebony, but to seventeen-year-old Samuel Bolt, it's the "rex," the king dinosaur that could put him and his struggling, temperamental archaeologist father in the history books (and conveniently make his father forget he's been kicked out of school), if they can just quarry it out.

But Samuel and his father aren't the only ones after the rex. For Rachel Cartland this find could be her ticket to a different life, one where her loves of science and adventure aren't just relegated to books and sitting rooms. And if she can't prove herself on this expedition with her professor father, the only adventures she may have to look forward to are marriage or spinsterhood.

As their paths cross and the rivalry between their fathers becomes more intense, Samuel and Rachel are pushed closer together. Their flourishing romance is one that will never be allowed. And with both eyeing the same prize, it's a romance that seems destined for failure. As their attraction deepens, danger looms on the other side of the hills, causing everyone's secrets to come to light and forcing Samuel and Rachel to make a decision. Can they join forces to find their quarry, and with it a new life together, or will old enmities and prejudices keep them from both the rex and each other?

## **Every Hidden Thing Details**

Date : Published September 20th 2016 by HarperCollins Canada

ISBN : 9781443410298

Author : Kenneth Oppel

Format : Hardcover 368 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Historical, Historical Fiction, Romance, Adventure, Fiction

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# From Reader Review Every Hidden Thing for online ebook

## Dannii Elle says

This was described as 'Indiana Jones meets Romeo and Juliet' and that is exactly what it delivered.

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## Amy says

When I was younger, I went through a brief phase where I really wanted to be an archaeologist. I was always more interested in the finding-things-in-the-ground aspect of archaeology than the actual artifacts, and this book made the kid in me really happy. It was basically everything I never knew I wanted to read about. The premise of this book hooked me from the moment I heard it, and I had to drop everything to read it immediately.

*Every Hidden Thing* is pitched as *Romeo and Juliet* meets Indiana Jones, and I think that is quite possibly the most accurate tag line I've ever heard. Rachel and Sam are the children of feuding paleontologists who bond over their shared love of science. They, along with their fathers, end up at the same sight searching for the same game-changing fossil, and drama ensues. I loved reading about the digs that they went on and the history of the feud between their fathers. The romance between Rachel and Sam felt a little forced at times, but I really enjoyed both of their characters. I think it might have been better had they remained friends, but the romance is by no means on the same level of drama and passion as *Romeo and Juliet*, so I didn't feel like it detracted too much from my enjoyment of the story.

The main issue I had with this book was that I didn't feel a strong connection to any of the characters. The narrative switches back and forth between Sam's point of view and Rachel's, and I enjoyed both of their voices, but I didn't feel any attachment to them. The characters were definitely likeable, but I didn't feel for them like I hoped to.

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## Empress Reece (Hooked on Books) says

[to married business partners, (hide spoiler)]

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## Melissa (The Reader & The Chef) says

*\*This review can also be found on YA Books Central and in Spanish at The Reader and the Chef. Thoughts are based on an eARC received from the publisher.\**

An Adventurous Tale of Fossils and Forbidden Romance!

If there's one historical YA book about romance, travel, and adventure to read in 2016, it's this one. Every Hidden Thing by Kenneth Oppel is surely a gem to be discovered by readers eager to board a train into the late nineteenth-century America and spend a summer unearthing dinosaur fossils à la Romeo and Juliet and Indiana Jones style.

When I first set me eyes upon this book, I knew it would be the perfect read for me. The book tingles started once I started reading the first page and they never stopped throughout the whole book. From page one to the last page, Kenneth Oppel had me glued with Rachel and Samuel's story, begging to know if they would ever find their most wanted treasure.

What I Loved:

The realistic perspective on a love story between two young adults. I really enjoyed the way Rachel and Sam's relationship develops and their inner monologues about their feelings. It was refreshing how the author doesn't try to romanticize completely their interactions and instead shows how teens usually think when finding themselves with a new love interest. I found this to be extremely relatable and at times funny!

I love how all the characters, including Rachel and Sam, are extremely passionate about their love for archaeology and how they work non-stop to accomplish their dreams. I specially loved Rachel's tenacity to pursue a career in this field since back in the 1800s, young women were expected to just sit tight and hope to get married to a decent man with no hope for an education beyond sewing and cooking. However, Rachel proves this idea wrong by digging her way through her father's profession as an archaeologist and demonstrating how's she's cut out for this adventurous lifestyle. Samuel's life is a bit easier when it comes to choosing what he wants to be, yet funds and reputation are what's holding him back, thus his need to demonstrate to the world (and his father) his ability to work on fossils and how he can leave his own legacy behind.

I'm no expert with dinosaur fossils (or any other animal), yet I did not struggle to follow the story's trail when characters switched back and forth with archaeology terms. I even learned a thing or two, including how those who found animal fossils used to name them after themselves plus mixing in a few words in Latin that would usually describe in some way the animal. Quite creative and pretty neat!

The Romeo and Juliet touch in Every Hidden Thing is well drawn with the enmity between both of the main character's fathers. A totally different setting, but the richness and essence of Shakespeare's famous play can be sensed within this book's pages.

What Left Me Wanting More:

Nothing. Wait, maybe a few more amazing pages!

And, as a side note, I have to add that this book has a bit of mature content so it's one I'd recommend for the older YA audience. It's not explicit, but it's safe to say that it might raise a few eyebrows and giggles.

That's it.

Final Verdict:

Every Hidden Thing is the romantic historical adventure book readers will take pleasure of digging into its pages. I highly recommend!

## **\*Spanish Book Review/ Reseña en Español\***

Si hay un libro de historia juvenil por leer en el 2016 sobre romance, viajes y aventura, debe ser éste. *Every Hidden Thing* (Cada Cosa Oculta) por Kenneth Oppel es sin duda una joya por descubrir por aquellos lectores que desean subir a un tren en el Estados Unidos del siglo XIX y pasar un verano desenterrando fósiles de dinosaurios al estilo de Romeo y Julieta e Indiana Jones.

Cuando vi por primera vez este libro, supe que iba a ser la lectura perfecta para mí. Empecé a sentir esa sensación de que sería una excelente lectura al leer la primera página y que honestamente, nunca paró a lo largo del libro. Desde la primera hasta la última página, Kenneth Oppel me enganchó con la historia de Rachel y Samuel, esperando el momento en el que encontrarían el gran tesoro que tanto buscaban.

Lo que me gustó:

Me encantó la perspectiva realista sobre una historia de amor entre dos jóvenes adultos. Me gustó la forma en que se desarrolla la relación de Rachel y Sam y como cuestionan internamente sus sentimientos. Fue refrescante la manera en que el autor no trata de idealizar completamente las interacciones entre estos dos personajes, pero sí cómo los adolescentes piensan (generalmente) al encontrarse con un nuevo amor. Me resultó muy fácil identificarme con esto y bastante divertido.

También me gustó cómo todos los personajes, incluyendo Rachel y Sam, son muy apasionados por la arqueología. Se notó principalmente en la forma en que trabajan sin descanso para lograr sus sueños. Pero sobre todo, me gustó la tenacidad de Rachel para seguir una carrera en este campo a pesar de que, en los años de 1800, se espera que las mujeres jóvenes sean dóciles, esperando casarse con un hombre decente sin esperanza de una educación más allá de coser y cocinar. Sin embargo, Rachel demuestra esta idea equivocada cavando su camino a través de la profesión de su padre como un arqueólogo y demostrando cómo ella está hecha para seguir este estilo de vida de aventuras. La vida de Samuel es un poco más fácil cuando se trata de elegir lo que quiere ser, sin embargo, los fondos y la reputación son lo que lo están frenando, razón por la cual surge su necesidad de demostrar al mundo (y a su padre) su capacidad para trabajar en los fósiles y cómo él puede dejar su propio legado en el mundo.

No soy una experta en fósiles de dinosaurios (o cualquier otro animal), sin embargo, no me resultó difícil seguir el rastro de la historia cuando los personajes utilizaban muchos términos arqueológicos. Incluso aprendí un par de cosas, como el dato de que los arqueólogos al encontrar fósiles de animales utilizaban sus nombres más la mezcla en unas pocas palabras en latín (que solía describir de alguna manera el animal) para nombrarlos. Bastante creativo, ¿no lo creen?

El toque de Romeo y Julieta en *Every Hidden Thing* también fue bien incorporado con la enemistad entre los dos padres de los personajes principales. Tiene un entorno totalmente diferente, pero la riqueza y la esencia de la famosa obra de Shakespeare puede ser detectada dentro de las páginas de este libro.

Lo que me dejó con ganas de más:

Nada. Bueno, tal vez más páginas. ¡Me hubiera encantado pasar más tiempo en este libro!

Y, como nota al margen, tengo que añadir que este libro tiene un poco de contenido para adultos por lo que si lo recomendaría para los audiencia juvenil más madura. No es tan explícito, pero sí algo sugestivo.

Eso es todo.

Veredicto final:

Every Hidden Thing es una lectura perfecta para los amantes del romance, aventuras e historia. ¡Lo recomiendo mucho!

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## **Rashika (is tired) says**

**\*\*\**This review has also been posted on Xpresso Reads***

The Airborn series was one of my favs ever growing up so I was immediately like YAAS to *Every Hidden Thing* but then I saw it was pitched as Indiana Jones meets Romeo & Juliet and was like double YAAS. WHO CAN RESIST THE COMBO of a childhood fav author and INDIANA JONES MEETS ROMEO & JULIET? Not me obviously. Anyway, I loved this book and that is all you're ever going to need to know in your life. BYE NOW. See you again someday.

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\*comes back reluctantly to finish reviewing this book\*

*Every Hidden Thing* is fucking amazing brain candy but just because it was brain candy does NOT mean it was easy to read. This book is set sometime in the 19th century (probably late 19th century) so there is a LOT of racism in this book. There are so many secondary characters who just suck because they aren't empathetic and are so so ignorant. I had to put the book down a lot to take breathers because it was really intense but I am glad that Oppel doesn't brush over these horrifying realities. Through our main characters though, he reminds us how important it is to be an empathetic human being who tries to see the other side of the story. There is also some things some of the adult characters do that made me feel more hopeful as I was reading.

The MCs were pretty great but I adored Rachel. Rachel is smart and isn't ashamed of it. She has a father who doesn't appreciate her smartness but over the course of the book, she learns to say fuck you to him so she can be the smartest smarty pants ever. I would say more coherent things about her but you can just READ THE BOOK.

One thing that I wasn't completely on board with was the romance. I love love-to-hate romances but they are HARD to write in a way that completely works. I think Rachel and Samuel have chemistry and I love that their attraction starts off as being intellectual and then develops from there but it's still instalove and I don't like instalove. To be fair, it's mostly Samuel who has a case of instalove and Rachel is all like nah boy, I just met you and this is crazy so take a chill pill.

You might not think of it right away but this book, on top of being an adventure has lots of western vibes because they go on a dig somewhere in the west coast. I LOVE IT. I loved how the dig was mapped out and the struggles the various parties experienced. There was also a lot of rivalry and two adults being a-holes to each other because toxic masculinity. BUT there was something that happened towards the end of the book

that I wish we could have spent more time on so I could have had even more fun living vicariously through these characters.

Read this book if you're into: Archaeological digs, brainy flirting, smart girls and adventures.

*Note that I received a finished copy of this book in exchange for an honest review*

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## **Adriyanna Zimmermann says**

This was a 4-4.5 for me.

EVERY HIDDEN THING by Kenneth Oppel is an entertaining, dinosaur-digging, adventure novel with a hint of Romeo and Juliet. I absolutely loved this and I suspect that after its publication, there'll be a big increase in kids wanting to be palaeontologists. Set during the 19th century and inspired in part by "The Bone Wars", this book follows two teenagers who are determined to find this infamous dinosaur with the power to change lives.

Fairly early on the reader is able to figure out what dinosaur Samuel and Rachel are on the hunt for, but this doesn't deter from the novel. I was still completely enthralled, I think even knowing the dinosaur made it more entertaining. It's all about the journey, the thrill of the chase. This dinosaur can change someone's career, so there's also that element of "what if they don't find it".

This book is in first person point of view (POV) and alternates between Rachel Cartland and Samuel Bolt. These two teenagers are quite similar; both of their mothers are dead and their fathers loathe each other, always trying to beat the other when it comes to their field of science: palaeontology. Rachel's father believes one should have a university degree and the fact that Samuel's father has published more papers than him and doesn't have a degree really grinds his gears. This is where the "Romeo and Juliet" theme comes in. Sometimes the POV would switch within chapters so the author uses a different font style to make the difference clear to the reader. I found the transition wasn't always smooth and even with the difference in font style, I would still miss the switch.

I loved the romance between Rachel and Samuel and felt it was so realistic! Neither of the two really hate each other but their parents' rivalry does find ways in. The two have an instant attraction to each other, but there's also anger, doubt, jealousy, etc. Oppel is fantastic with this.

This book is set during the 19th century and the author never names a specific time (if he did I missed it), which I felt was both a positive and negative. I like being able to imagine everything, down to the exact time. This being fiction, I think not naming it helps with that. There are some things in this novel that have to be changed to fit the story.

### **SLIGHT SPOILERS IN THIS PARAGRAPH:**

This being the 19th century, the field of palaeontology is largely made up of white men. Rachel herself has a hard time being taken seriously, as a white woman. The majority of characters are white; the only POC are secondary/minor characters. The rep didn't seem terrible, but I'm not the sort of reviewer who can confirm this. I do think it could have been better. The dinosaur Rachel and Samuel are searching for, was found about a decade or two before by a Sioux man. I think the two characters should have said if they found this

dinosaur that man should be credited. I have no idea if anything like that happened in real life, but I feel it would have been the right choice. Someone might say maybe it happens after the novel ended. If I didn't see it happen on the page, I as the reader cannot assume anything.

END OF SPOILER PARAGRAPH

\*Review may still be edited/added to.

I received an advance readers copy in exchange for an honest review.

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**Patty says**

HAHAHA!!!

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**Nastassja says**

When I first heard about this book I thought, hmm, **Wild West, dinosaurs, Romeo and Juliet - what an intriguing mix!** I definitely need to read this book, plus the cover is gorgeous. And so the waiting began: it was one of my most anticipated releases of the month. Imagine my surprise when everything derailed so fast, I couldn't even say "Bummer".

I will split the structure of this book in two: on one side we have the plot, on the other side we have characters.

The story follows two rival families of archeologist; they both want to find the king of the dinosaurs - tyrannosaur "Rex" and become famous. Feuding fathers ask both their children to spy on each other for valuable information, and, as you can guess, the children fall in love. But their romantic relationship wasn't what kept me reading, it was **the description of 19th century archeology and what it took to risk your life for the sake of ancient bones and dust.** It is not as romantic as one can imagine: the job is dirty and takes a lot of effort and no guarantee of success; plus there's quite a difficult situation with Native American tribes, and to be on your own without army for protection is pretty dangerous. The book will introduce readers to the hardship of the "romantic" profession. I really liked that side of the book and it kept me interested till the end.

**The characters, though, were a complete disappointment.** Unfortunately, it's a rare case when I must admit the author did a poor job creating a female character. **The heroine turned out cold, cardboard, mannish and absolutely unlikable.** I had way more sympathy toward the hero who was more feminine and feeling than his beloved could ever dream.

What good can you expect when MC spends five minutes in heroines company and already has a boner? Moreover, he irrecoverably fell in love with the said girl. After. Five. Minutes.

She looked at me, and I couldn't look away. <...>It took me completely by surprise: With



absolute certainty, I knew I'd fall in love with her.

But it's even worse, because the heroine supposedly likes him too, but she doesn't like his kissing.

"His kissing was hurried and too hard. So his actual kisses did not please me much, but him wanting to give them to me did very much.

She wants independence from her father, and when the hero promises her he'll let her go to the university, and she doesn't have to have kids right now, she grabs the opportunity and agrees to marry him. I understand that it shows how difficult life for girls was back then, but this chick was supposed to like the poor boy. All I wanted to call her was bitch.

But what I disliked even more between these two is how their intimate life together was shown.

Hurriedly I stripped off my sweaty trousers and shirt and vest and underpants. In dismay I looked down to see myself—that part which had always been so lively and troublesome in the past—suddenly and completely withered.

"It's . . .," I mumbled, tensing my thigh muscles and urging it to lift, "suddenly defective. I don't know what to do with the fellow."

Please no, I don't need to know that you can't get it up.

The deep curve of her waist where I'd gripped tight, the damp hair of her underarms.

I get that we all have hairs in different places, but it's not romantic when you put it like that: it's actually disgusting.

And my favorite:

Later he snored; once he passed wind quite musically. I hadn't imagined what it would be like to share a bed with a man—especially one so active and greedy in his sleep.

**I don't want to hear about your farting or smelling or having hair in places and such.** I suppose the author wanted to make the book as realistic as possible, but I don't know anyone among my friends who'd want to read about such reality.

Also, characters' relationship felt far-fetched; the hero is a handsome boy and the heroine is plain (she is not even pretty), but hero falls for her from the first sight anyway. I get when a girl is a beauty and a boy falls for her, but that doesn't guarantee it's true love: it's easier to like a pretty face. Here I had no idea why he fell for the girl. Plus, the more they secretly dated, the more the heroine seemed unfeeling. I am not even sure she realized whether she loves him in the end. It was a total mess. Plus their peculiar relationship spoiled the plot completely. As I mentioned, **I absolutely liked the historical part, but the romance made it impossible to like the whole book.** Even the ending, when you suppose to root for characters and wish they finally found the dinosaur, I felt nothing.

I still have a sour taste in my mouth after I finished this book. I debated for a whole day whether to give it

two or three stars and decided farting is not my thing, after all.

Generally, if you are interested in archeology and how it occurred in the 19th century, you can try this book, but be ready for the characters, whose voices will be your guide in a sea of bones. You need to ask yourself: are you ready for that or not?

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## **Kourtnei R. says**

This review was originally posted on my blog.

I don't know where to start with this review. The first half of this book was horrible. I didn't enjoy it at all and honestly thought about DNFing – which I never do. Part of me feels like the second half of the book made up for it, but I still feel that it wasn't enough to truly redeem the book.

The first thing that put me off this book was the sexism. Although one of the overarching themes of the book is Rachel's dedication to science and her determination to prove that women could be just as successful intellectually and scientifically as men, there were subtle forms of sexism that appeared and made it difficult for me to enjoy the book. Throughout the book, it is continuously emphasized how "plain" Rachel was and how extraordinary it was that Samuel was interested in such a plain girl. And this was shown in both Rachel and Samuel's narration. Samuel was pretty self-congratulatory that he, a very handsome boy, would be interested in Rachel, a girl who isn't pretty and doesn't seem interested in socializing with him or anyone else. And Rachel kept emphasizing how, as much as she liked the attention from this handsome boy, she couldn't understand why anyone would ever be interested in her, continuously questioning his motives and talking down about herself. This was introduced literally in the first scene of the book – and never truly went away either. I really did not enjoy it and I found it incredibly exhausting to keep reading about.

I have incredibly mixed feelings about the anti-Native racism that was in this book. On the one hand, this is a historical novel and it'd be pretty inaccurate to show Natives as being treated and thought of as equals (especially since even today this isn't the case). On the other, I'm not convinced that this needed to be included in order to write a compelling story about paleontology and I felt since it was included, it should have been thoroughly challenged in the text and I'm not sure that it was. First of all, the first time the Sioux are called "savages" – which is an offensive term that has historically been used to justify the oppression and genocide of Native Americans – it goes completely unchallenged. No one in the book says "hey, it's wrong to call people savages" which is a problem for a book that is written for modern teens. As the story goes on, these instances of racism generally are challenged by Rachel, who points out that she can empathize with Natives being treated horribly, since she has also struggled with making people see her as an equal. I appreciated this (although I'm not convinced white women have ever been treated as horribly as Native Americans), but still didn't feel that it was enough, especially considering that Rachel herself disrespects the Sioux by stealing an artifact from the dead body of a Sioux man. And even though she feels guilty, it's ultimately forgiven because "what paleontologist wouldn't have taken it?" There were some lines thrown in about how white Americans violated treaties and things like that and, again, I appreciated that Oppel attempted to educate his readers about the harm and reality of anti-Native racism but I'm still not convinced he did it properly. Natives were also often depicted as violent except for the "good Natives" who were helping the white people. I just don't feel the author did a good job balancing historical accuracy with non-offensive portrayals of Native Americans. And the whole thing caught me off guard since there's absolutely no mention of Native Americans in the synopsis and I didn't realize they would play such a big role in the

book. Of course, I'm white so I'm not the best person to turn to for opinions on this, but I didn't feel right writing a review for the book and not mentioning this.

The characters fell flat for me throughout most of the book. I finally started to feel a little invested once Rachel and Samuel were making plans for their future and not just meeting in secret (trying to be kind of vague here to avoid spoilers), but I never really felt strongly about them. Both of their fathers were horribly annoying too, acting more like 10-year-olds than grown adults (although apparently their feud was based on a real-life feud which is kind of cool).

Pretty much the only things I really liked about this book were the paleontology elements and the ending. The last 50 pages or so had a lot that happened and I actually found myself enjoying that part of the book, compared to the rest of the book where I was just not into it. The paleontology elements are what make this book a two-star read for me, since I loved seeing what it might have been like to be someone discovering all these dinosaur species for the first time and to be searching for and digging up fossils before we had a lot of the modern technology that makes it much easier to extract fossils without breaking them, missing pieces, etc.

Unfortunately, this book was a pretty big disappointment for me. As much as I enjoyed the paleontology aspects of it (which is why I picked up the book in the first place), the subtle sexism and not-so-subtle racism (which Oppel tried – in my opinion, unsuccessfully – to challenge), combined with flat characters made this pretty unenjoyable for me. If you're a die-hard paleontology or historical fiction fan, you might enjoy this, but otherwise, you could probably skip this one.

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## **Nina-Tala (JustAddAWord) Shannak says**

*I received an Advanced Reader's Copy from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. This has not influenced my opinion in any way.*

2.5 stars.

This book is basically dinosaurs+Romeo and Juliet+WildWest.

And if that doesn't sound interesting enough, I don't know what does.

Because, let's look at the big picture, shall we? This should've worked. This should've at least gotten higher than..a meager 3 stars? And let's not forget that even that rating is *rounded up*. Actual rating is 2.5 stars, fyi.

Alright, this calls for a THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE UGLY review format, so here goes:

### **T H E G O O D**

**This is one of those cases that I loved everything but the characters.**

The archaeological aspect was fantastic.

The whole "rival family" issue (because this is, more or less, a R&J retelling. Less, I guess. But it echoes the storyline, so there's that) was on point.

It was interesting. It was engaging.

The race to find the Rex? Yes, please.

And a Wild West setting on top of all that? This should've been the recipe for *awesomeness*.

See? This should've been amazing. This should've gotten a full five, because I actually *wanted* to give it five. I was ready for that. Oh, how disappointing.

## T H E B A D

The characters. Oh, **the characters. Flat. Cardboard cutouts.** Samuel is only slightly better. And when I say slightly, I mean that I couldn't care less about him, but I still read on. So, you could say I'm perhaps..neutral about him.

Now, Rachel is a completely different story. She is paper-thin. Monotone. Irritating. Don't get me started on Rachel.

Really, it's amazing how fast this went from starting out strongly to just..falling flat.

## T H E U G L Y

Oh boy. Let me start off with my personal favorite: insta-love, just add water. Oh no. No, no, no.

It's love at first sight, guys. **Love at first sight.** I'm dead serious when I say this: give me a love triangle instead. Anything. Anything *but* insta-love.

But see, there are now those arguing: but R&J is insta-love and *Every Hidden Thing* is based partly on it!

To which I respond: you're absolutely right. But that is precisely what I hate in R&J. And this is supposed to be true love, no? Well, then. No insta-love, please.

Moving on.

Be warned: The writing could get a bit weird. The descriptions, at times, felt almost..nonsensical. That's never a good sign.

But still, some people overlook this. You could enjoy the writing just fine, so this may be a case of me being over-critical. But that's what makes me a thorough reviewer, no?

- - -

Alright then. For those wondering why I gave it a 2.5?

Easy: 0.5 star for potential. 1 for setting. 1 for originality. (Rounded up for originality)

2 stars lost for characters and writing.

But, this isn't completely new to me. I'd liken this to my experience with *The Wrath and the Dawn*, in terms of my dislike for the characters and their romance but my love for the world-building.

But TWatD still has many readers who like it, no?

So will this, I'm sure. **I have a feeling this will be popular, but it's simply not for me.**

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**Arielle Walker says**

[ with characters finding all the dinosaurs left right and centre (hide spoiler)]

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**Jessica ❀ ➡ Silverbow ➡ ❀ Rabid Reads-no-more says**

***Romeo and Juliet* meets *Indiana Jones* in this this new YA epic from Printz-winning author Kenneth Oppel that combines the hunt for a dinosaur skeleton buried for millions of years, a mysterious legend, bitter rivalries and a forbidden romance.**

Umm . . . YES, please.

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**Cait • A Page with a View says**

Romeo & Juliet meets Indiana Jones is a pretty accurate description!

The story itself is pretty unique - Samuel and Rachel's fathers are both trying to discover the same dinosaur in the Wild West. Their feuding fathers ask them to spy on each other at first, but the kids fall in love. It took me a bit to place exactly *when* this story was taking place, but I figured it out once they hopped on a Union Pacific train and had soldiers protect them from Indians...

As far as the characters go, Rachel was super hard to relate to and almost didn't feel human. I liked that she was plain and into science, but I'm just tired of seeing every smart girl turn into some emotionless robot without a romantic bone in their bodies. "*She was like a fortress. Nothing could hurt her.*" Sometimes she came across as a believable autistic character, but other times she was just... completely unrealistic. So that was hard to get past. But Samuel was a pretty average clueless teen guy and his character worked.

I was loving the setting and the adventure of the story, but the last 30% got pretty weird. **This story has the tone of a fun middle grade book, but then managed to stick in the absolute most awkward sex scene I've ever cringed at.** So that was a weird choice.

I really don't know what to make of this book. The first half was fun, but I really didn't like it by the end.

Thank you to the publisher for sending me an ARC.

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**Christina (A Reader of Fictions) says**

Pages read: 11 (less than one chapter)

The writing reads really contemporary to me, and there's so little that grounds the story in 1874. Both narrative voices are immensely awkward. Because it doesn't feel historical, the boy comes off like a kindly, flirty grandpa, and the girl's narration is dry and awkwardly scientific.

After I decided to DNF, and I decided to flip ahead to the sex scenes which are perhaps the most awful, awkward things I've ever read. \*coughs\* This is what happens when men write romance.\*coughs\* Quotes ahead.

Hurriedly I stripped off my sweaty trousers and shirt and vest and underpants. In dismay I looked down to see myself—that part which had always been so lively and troublesome in the past—suddenly and completely withered.

“It’s . . .,” I mumbled, tensing my thigh muscles and urging it to lift, “suddenly defective. I don’t know what to do with the fellow.” “Let him alone for now,” she said.

“Lie down beside me.”

The awkward, it burns.

“I think it’s seen many,” she laughed, bouncing on the saggy mattress.

We each bounced a bit, seeing who could make the longest and most tortured squeak. The sheets, though clean enough, couldn’t quite conceal the mildew of the mattress. And a faint whiff of urine that came and went when one moved around. But our door was bolted, and the window curtained, and this little room was ours alone.

EW. I WANT TO SHOWER AND I AM NOT EVEN THERE.

When I moved myself on top of her, it took a bit of fumbling to find the right place. But after that it felt like her body and mine, all our parts, were designed to fit perfectly together. She winced. Her eyes were wide, and we watched each other, mesmerized. I felt a huge heat and urgency flooding me, but her face flinched with my movements. Then her eyes closed tight and her eyelids crinkled and water beaded from their edges.

I mean, points for authenticity, I guess, but god this is miserable.

I stroked her hair and inhaled her scent and stared at the ceiling. I couldn’t quite believe anything right now. I felt exultant and terrified. I felt like a conquering hero, and like a soldier shot and waiting for death. I felt that I’d never sleep again, but I did. We both did.

Apparently this is how he feels after having sex for the first time, during which all she felt was immense pain.

And then I didn't want to be alone any longer, so I kissed your mole, traced its shape with the tip of my tongue.

I did not need this level of detail tbh. Shortly after this, their dads burst in and find them in bed.

Because now the pain was fading, and I was beginning to recognize the pleasurable tightening, the spreading heat I sometimes gave myself, only this time it was more urgent, and much, much better.

The second time they have sex (and yes, the description is still awkward). It culminates in her supposedly orgasming but raise your hand if you buy that. \*puts hand on floor\*

We kissed each other for a long time, and as the train shuddered and pulled and rocked through the darkness, our hands moved over each other, exploratory, gentle at first. We were patient with each other, and then neither of us could be patient anymore. Your right hand still hurt, but we figured it out—we were very clever, both of us, with our hands—and the only difficult part for me was not crying out.

Suddenly it's in like weird hybrid third/second on the LAST PAGE OF THE BOOK. Understand that these next quotes are how this book ends.

I nestled with my back against your chest and stomach, your legs folded with mine, your arm across my breast, enclosed on all sides by you, and your unique marinade of desert and sweat and rarely laundered clothes, and yet you still managed to smell good.

YOUR UNIQUE MARINADE OF DESERT AND SWEAT AND RARELY LAUNDERED CLOTHES. Look, Oppel, I get that people in the past smelled bad most of the time, but romance readers do not want to be reminded of that during sexy times.

As the train moved us east across the prairie, across that ancient inland sea, I thought how little of us got left behind after death. How none of the most important parts survived. It all decomposed: kisses, caresses, tongues, mouths. Passion spent itself in our animal heat, dissipated as vapor, left no permanent record. No echoes of spoken words, moans, gasps, endearments would be stored in the earth's layers.

I just.

I hoped that when they found us, me and you, we'd be entwined together just like this, among the dinosaurs, in the ruins of the world.

\*is ded, like the dinos\*

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## **Maggie Stiefvater says**

It was pitched as Indiana Jones meets Romeo & Juliet. The pitch was not wrong.

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