

Leah on the Offbeat

Becky Albertelli

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Leah on the Offbeat follows confident, talented, and plucky young drummer Leah Burke as she struggles to be, well, a confident, talented, and plucky young drummer. Leah's nearing the end of high school, and she doesn't have it as figured out as she'd like. Add in a sexuality crisis and body issues and you'll have a perfect recipe for disaster. When Leah finds herself falling for her best friend Nick's girlfriend, Abby, she's thrown a little off her rhythm. As she grows closer to the girl she finds herself learning more about herself and her own worth.

Becky Albertelli's writing style is straightforward in the best possible way. The quips are snappy and the banter top notch. All of the characters feel completely their age with no excessive insightfulness or immaturity. The plot's a little lackluster, but the character's development takes center stage and is treated with due respect. The story's a sequel to Albertelli's previous hit, *Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda*, and though it doesn't really hold up to its predecessor, it is a wonderful read as a standalone. All of the characters are likeable and realistic, so seeing them become better people over the course of the novel is all the more satisfying. The way friendships break and heal feels genuine and raw.

This book is a great gift for younger middle schoolers and older high schoolers, especially those interested in music, like Leah! It's not a heavy read, so it is definitely something you can grab from your local library. It's a sweet and simple coming of age novel that'll appeal to a wide variety of readers.

Recommended Titles:

To All The Boys I've Loved Before by Jenny Han

Dumplin' by Julie Murphy

Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda by Becky Albertelli