



[THE 57 BUS: A True Story of Two Teenagers and the Crime That Changed Their Lives](#) by Dashka Slater

Farrar, Straus and Giroux (BYR), an imprint of Macmillan Children's Publishing Group, 2017

ISBN: 9780374303235 (Hardcover)

*Age Range: 12-18

Grade Range: 6 and up (Recommended by *School Library Journal*)

BOOK SYNOPSIS

Dashka Slater's *The 57 Bus*, a riveting nonfiction book for teens about race, class, gender, crime, and punishment, tells the true story of an agender teen who was set on fire by another teen while riding a bus in Oakland, California.

One teenager in a skirt.

One teenager with a lighter.

One moment that changes both of their lives forever.

If it weren't for the 57 bus, Sasha and Richard never would have met. Both were high school students from Oakland, California, one of the most diverse cities in the country, but they inhabited different worlds. Sasha, a white teen, lived in the middle-class foothills and attended a small private school. Richard, a black teen, lived in the crime-plagued flatlands and attended a large public one.

Each day, their paths overlapped for a mere eight minutes. But one afternoon on the bus ride home from school, a single reckless act left Sasha severely burned, and Richard charged with two hate crimes and facing life imprisonment. The case garnered international attention, thrusting both teenagers into the spotlight.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

★ "The text shifts from straightforward reporting to lyrical meditations, never veering into oversentimentality or simple platitudes. Readers are bound to come away with deep empathy for both Sasha and Richard. VERDICT Slater artfully unfolds a complex and layered tale about two teens whose lives intersect with painful consequences." —*School Library Journal*, **starred review**

★ "With a journalist's eye for overlooked details, Slater does a masterful job debunking the myths of the hate-crime monster and the African-American thug, probing the line between adolescent stupidity and irredeemable depravity. Few readers will traverse this exploration of gender identity, adolescent crime, and penal

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racism without having a few assumptions challenged. An outstanding book that links the diversity of creed and the impact of impulsive actions to themes of tolerance and forgiveness." —*Kirkus Reviews*, **starred review**

★ "Using details gleaned from interviews, social media, surveillance video, public records, and other sources, Slater skillfully conveys the complexities of both young people's lives and the courage and compassion of their families, friends, and advocates, while exploring the challenges and moral ambiguities of the criminal justice system. This painful story illuminates, cautions, and inspires." —*Publishers Weekly*, **starred review**

★ "[A] multi-layered lesson on the healing power of humanity." —*Shelf Awareness*, **starred review**

"...a powerful story of class and race (Sasha is white), gender and identity, justice and mercy, love and hate. Slater has crafted a compelling true-crime story with ramifications for our most vulnerable youth." —*The Horn Book*

"It is likely that this account will spark conversations, debates, and contemplation, perhaps leading readers to define for themselves what justice means." —*VOYA*

"A sensitive study of an incident wrapped up in so many modern conundrums." —*The Financial Times*

"This book challenged my views and it started a conversation in my house that I thought I'd never have. We all changed, at least in my house, because of this book." —Kate TerBush, *The LA Times*

"Slater approaches both students' perspectives with nuance and complexity, and while there are no easy answers in this narrative, her passionate writing shows that there's often more to the story than we see." —Cady Lang, *TIME Magazine*, selected as one of The Best YA Books of All Time

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- A *New York Times* Bestseller
- Stonewall Book Award Winner—Mike Morgan & Larry Romans Children's & Young Adult Literature Award
- YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults Finalist
- A Boston Globe-Horn Book Nonfiction Honor Book Winner
- One of *TIME Magazine's* Best YA Books of All Time
- A TAYSHAS Top Ten Book
- #1 *School Library Journal*: Teen Librarian Tool Box Best LGBTQIA+ Book
- A 2019 Texas Topaz Nonfiction Reading List Book
- Illinois Teen Readers' Choice Award
- A James Cook Honor Book
- A *School Library Journal* Best Book of 2017!
- A *Washington Post* Best Book of 2017!
- One of The New York City Public Library Notable 50 Best Books for Teens!
- The California Book Awards Young Adult Winner!
- An ILA Notable Book for a Global Society!
- Oklahoma Sequoyah Book Award Winner!
- Maryland Association of School Librarians YA Nominee!
- The Florida Teens Read Hope Speak List Book Choice!

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- The Green Mountain Book Award Winner!
- A 2020 Grand Canyon Nominee!

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [Discussion Guide](#)
- [Read the article that inspired the book](#)
- [Watch The 57 Bus Book Talk](#)
- [KQED "A Tale of Two Oakland Colliding on 'The 57 Bus'"](#)
- [San Francisco Chronicle](#)
- [Kirkus Reviews interview with Dashka Slater](#)
- [Mother Jones "This Book Will Challenge Everything You Thought You Knew About Hate Crimes"](#)

AUTHOR STATEMENT

"The right to read, reflect, learn, and discuss is the backbone of our democracy and those who interfere with that right are fundamentally unAmerican. Every reader deserves books that reflect and expand their experience of the world." – Dashka Slater

***A NOTE ON AGE RANGES**

A publisher-suggested age range covers the gamut of readers that publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate age range for the diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book's intended use.

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