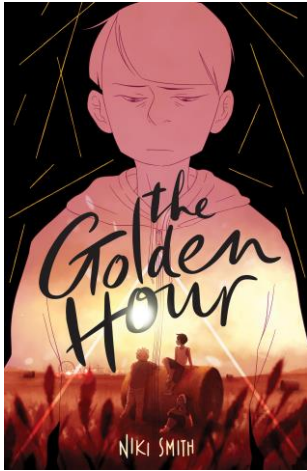


## Book Resume: The Golden Hour



***The Golden Hour* by Niki Smith**

Little, Brown Ink, 2021

ISBN: 9780316540339 (paperback), 9780316540377 (hardcover)

\*Age Range: 8-12 (Suggested by Publisher)

Grade Range: Gr 4-7 (Recommended by *School Library Journal*)

### BOOK SYNOPSIS

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**From the author of *The Deep & Dark Blue* comes a tender graphic novel, perfect for our time, that gently explores themes of self-discovery, friendship, healing from tragedy, and hope for a better tomorrow.**

Struggling with anxiety after witnessing a harrowing instance of gun violence, Manuel Soto copes through photography, using his cell-phone camera to find anchors that keep him grounded. His days are a lonely, latched monotony until he's teamed with his classmates, Sebastian and Caysha, for a group project.

Sebastian lives on a grass-fed cattle farm outside of town, and Manuel finds solace in the open fields and in the antics of the newborn calf Sebastian is hand-raising. As Manuel aides his new friends in their preparations for the local county fair, he learns to open up, confronts his deepest fears, and even finds first love.

### REVIEWS AND PRAISE

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★ “With a soft start and a gentle build, Smith’s graphic novel details the realities of Manuel’s trauma response while reveling in subdued, generous scenes that showcase the three friends’ everyday joys.” —Publishers Weekly, starred review

★ “Strong, good-natured characters and an endearing representation of young queer love round out a mighty sweet tale.... Exceptionally graceful and delightful.” —Kirkus, starred review

★ “Smith weaves a beautiful story of resilience and the sweet onset of first love... A stunning work of self-discovery, vulnerability, and finding beauty beyond tragedy.” —School Library Journal, starred review

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Little, Brown Books for Young Readers

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★ “What makes Smith’s work so meaningful and impactful is the role of friends in helping to ground and encourage Manuel’s healing after he experienced such a terrifying situation. Young people need to know the lessons this book seeks to impart.” —School Library Connection, starred review

“Manuel’s resilient determination to reclaim a new but satisfying normal out of his mind-spinning ordeal makes a compelling arc that is sure to keep readers engaged.” —BCCB

## AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

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- 2023 Montreal Comic Arts Festival Bédély Youth Award
- 2022 Kirkus Prize Finalist
- Kirkus’s Best Books of 2021
- SLJ Best Books of 2021
- Chicago Public Library’s Best of the Best
- New York Public Library’s Best Book of 2021
- 2023 Oklahoma Sequoyah Book Award
- 2022 Texas Maverick Graphic Novels Reading List
- 2022 Texas Little Maverick Graphic Novel Reading List
- 2023 Black-Eyed Susan Book Award
- 2023 Great Lakes Great Books (winner)
- 2023 Louisiana Readers’ Choice Award
- 2024 Rhode Island Middle School Book Award
- 2023 Massachusetts Teen Choice Book Award
- 2023 Garden State Teen Book Award
- 2025 Rebecca Caudill Young Readers’ Book Award

## MEDIA AND RESOURCES

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- [Niki Smith Presents THE GOLDEN HOUR \(video\)](#)
- [We Need Diverse Books - Q&A With Niki Smith, The Golden Hour](#)
- [Teen Librarian Toolbox - Book Review: The Golden Hour by Niki Smith](#)

## AUTHOR STATEMENT

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It has unfortunately grown more and more common for books to be banned "quietly"-- surreptitiously pulled from shelves without the chance for authors, publishers or local communities to defend access to the titles being challenged.

Treating LGBTQ+ experiences as something 'obscene' that need to be censored is incredibly harmful to young readers who are just desperate to know they're not alone. I am a part of Authors Against Book Bans

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( <https://www.authorsagainstbookbans.com/> ), working to protect the first amendment and the rights of young readers against these unconstitutional bans. When diverse voices are silenced and oppressed, we all suffer.

### **\*A NOTE ON AGE RANGES**

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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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