



[\*Laura Dean Keeps Breaking Up with Me\*](#) by Mariko Tamaki; illustrated by Rosemary

Valero-O'Connell

First Second, an imprint of Roaring Brook Press, 2019

ISBN: 9781626722590 (Trade Paperback)

\*Age Range: 14–18 (Suggested by Publisher)

Grade Range: (Recommended by *School Library Journal*)

## BOOK SYNOPSIS

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Author Mariko Tamaki and illustrator Rosemary Valero-O'Connell bring to life a sweet and spirited tale of young love in *Laura Dean Keeps Breaking Up with Me*, a graphic novel that asks us to consider what happens when we ditch the toxic relationships we crave to embrace the healthy ones we need.

Laura Dean, the most popular girl in high school, was Frederica Riley's dream girl: charming, confident, and SO cute. There's just one problem: Laura Dean is maybe not the greatest girlfriend.

Reeling from her latest break up, Freddy's best friend, Doodle, introduces her to the Seek-Her, a mysterious medium, who leaves Freddy some cryptic parting words: break up with her. But Laura Dean keeps coming back, and as their relationship spirals further out of her control, Freddy has to wonder if it's really Laura Dean that's the problem. Maybe it's Freddy, who is rapidly losing her friends, including Doodle, who needs her now more than ever.

Fortunately for Freddy, there are new friends, and the insight of advice columnists like Anna Vice to help her through being a teenager in love.

## REVIEWS AND PRAISE

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★ “Pithy dialogue is neatly trimmed to speech-bubble size, and the manga-esque styling suits characters to a T, from doe-eyed, love-smitten Freddy to lean, angular Laura . . . as a cautionary tale or as an invitation to a pity party, this packs catharsis into every frame.” —*Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, **starred review**

★ “Touching gently but powerfully on topics of bullying, homophobia, and toxic relationships, this superb graphic novel has its finger on the pulse of teenage concerns.” —[Booklist](#), **starred review**

★ “This exploration of toxic relationships and social dynamics at the cusp of adulthood is, like its cast, sharp and dazzling.” —[Publisher's Weekly](#), **starred review**

★ “Tamaki explores the nuances of both romantic and platonic relationships with raw tenderness and honesty. Valero-O'Connell's art is realistic and expressive, bringing the characters to life through dynamic grayscale

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illustrations featuring highlights of millennial pink . . . a triumphant queer coming-of-age story that will make your heart ache and soar.” — [Kirkus](#), **starred review**

★ “Relatable, heart-wrenching, and often funny . . . Black-and-white panel illustrations with pink accents provide additional characterization and feature a cast diverse in race, gender identity, and body type.” — [Horn Book](#), **starred review**

“Tamaki and Valero-O’Connell’s tender-hearted narrative sings with real, honest emotion that will resonate with anyone trying to figure out love.” — [The New York Times](#)

“The visual storytelling is precise and thoughtful, and it’s evident that the artist has spent a lot of time designing spaces that feel lived in and characters who immediately exhibit specific personalities . . . Tamaki excels when she’s writing stories about young women discovering their strength in times of crisis, and *Laura Dean Keeps Breaking Up With Me* falls right in her creative sweet spot.” — [the A.V. Club](#)

“*Laura Dean Keeps Breaking Up With Me* is the perfect next read for fans of *Love, Simon* and *To All The Boys I’ve Loved Before*, books about young love and struggling to figure out what it means . . . It’s exactly the sort of book that a lot of teens need to read to feel a little less alone, and a good gateway graphic novel for fans of Netflix’s new glut of romances or a stepping-stone for readers ready to graduate from graphic novels like *The Baby-Sitters Club* adaptations to more complicated, nuanced stories.” — [Paste](#)

“Tamaki and Valero-O’Connell do bring to life an artful narrative of relationships—old, new, harmful, and healing—and what happens when you learn to navigate them.” — [School Library Journal](#)

“A stunning visual of spirited young love and relatable characters . . . *Laura Dean Keeps Breaking Up with Me* will appeal to a variety of readers with its air of real-life romance blended with the search for identity and friendship.” — VOYA

## AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

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- Eisner Award Winner
- Michael L. Printz Award For Excellence in Young Adult Literature
- *L.A. Times* Book Prize - Finalist
- Lambda Literary Award - Nominee
- Harvey Award Winner
- *Kirkus Reviews* Best Books of the Year
- Ignatz Award Winner
- Walter Award Winner
- One of *Forbes*’s Best Graphic Novels of 2019
- On *Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books* 2019 Blue Ribbons List
- One of NPR’s Best Books of 2019
- *Booklist* 2019 Editors’ Choice
- One of the *AV Club*’s 20 Best Comics of 2019
- One of the *Advocate*’s Best LGBTQ Graphic Novels of 2019
- On *The Washington Post*’s list for The Best Graphic Novels, Memoirs and Story Collections of 2019

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## MEDIA AND RESOURCES

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[Horn Book Interview](#)

[Room Interview](#)

[CBC Interview](#)

[AV Club Article](#)

[CBR Article](#)

[NPR Author Interview](#)

[Publishers Weekly Author Interview](#)

[TeachingBooks Resources](#)

## RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES

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[Comic Book Legal Defense Fund Statement of Support](#): *Laura Dean Keeps Breaking Up With Me* was published in 2019 by First Second Books. The graphic novel was written by Mariko Tamaki (the writer of *This One Summer*, a frequently challenged and banned book) and illustrated by Rosemary Valero-O'Connell. The book, which is multi-award winning and has received widespread critical acclaim, focuses on the story of Freddy Riley and her relationship with her on-again, off-again girlfriend, Laura Dean. As the relationship plays out, we see its effects on Freddy and her relationship with her friends.

*Laura Dean Keeps Breaking Up With Me* has appeared in several challenges across the country. In 2021, *Laura Dean* was one of 15 books removed from Leander Independent School District in Texas after a small group complained about its inclusion on a list for student book clubs. This graphic novel that examines toxic relationships and has its “finger on the pulse of teenage concerns” is likely targeted as “inappropriate literature” for its portrayal of LGBTQ+ relationships.

*Laura Dean* became a target for challenges and bans after being featured on Texas Representative Matt Krause’s list of books to be removed. This list has been used nationwide to make blanket challenges on books in public schools and libraries.

### \*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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