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The Fill-In Boyfriend



Synopsis

When Gia Montgomery's boyfriend, Bradley, dumps her in the parking lot of her high school prom, she decides to do the unthinkable – convince the cute guy waiting to pick up his sister to pretend to be her boyfriend for the night. The task is simple: two hours, zero commitment, a few white lies. The problem is that days after prom, she can't stop thinking about her fill-in boyfriend. But can Gia turn her fake boyfriend into a real one without exposing her lie and possibly destroying her friendships and her newfound relationship? Smartly observed and wonderfully romantic, Kasie West's talent shines in this tale of one girl's unexpected quest to find love – and possibly herself.

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Customer Reviews

Gr 7 Up • Gia Montgomery is the epitome of a popular high school girl; she's a pretty, self-centered student body president who constantly seeks approval via social media. New girl Jules has been adopted into the popular girl clique but is really more of a frenemy, always trying to bring Gia down a notch or two. So when Gia's oft-bragged-about-but-never-actually-seen college boyfriend breaks up with her in the parking lot outside the prom, she is understandably desperate to save face. Enter random boy sitting in his car in the parking lot. Gia bangs on his window and demands/begs the stranger to fill in as her boyfriend for the prom. The Fill-In Bradley ("FIB") guy fits the bill, and Gia pulls off the deception to Jules and her friends. But circumstances continue to bring Gia and "FIB" (actual name: Hayden) together: Hayden's younger sister Bec is in Gia's history class

and is quick to call in a favor. Now Gia is filling in as a pretend new girlfriend to make Hayden's ex jealous. Predictably, Gia and Hayden end up actually becoming friends, and a true attraction brews. The cotton candy-colored cover and title belie the fact that this is a genuinely clever and enjoyable book. Recommend this to fans of authors Sarah Dessen, Elizabeth Eulberg, and Stephanie Perkins as well as lovers of films like *Clueless*, *Ten Things I Hate About You*, and *Easy A*. VERDICT If sometimes too overt in the "shallow girl finds depth" theme, this sweet romantic tale is still hard not to like. —Tara Kehoe, New Jersey State Library Talking Book and Braille Center, Trenton

sweet romantic tale is...hard not to like. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

I have grown to be a HUGE Kasie West fan. I just loved the Pivot Point duology and have been head over heels for her contemporary books so far. As soon as I heard about *THE FILL-IN BOYFRIEND*, I immediately pre-ordered the book and was lucky enough to grab a copy when I was at ALA Midwinter in Chicago this year! Although *THE FILL-IN BOYFRIEND* isn't my favorite of hers so far, there's nothing bad to be said about this book and it's just as delightful and fun as I had hoped it would be! The book wastes no time introducing the situation at hand with Gia and how she ends up having a "fill-in boyfriend" and their interactions are just plain adorable. I didn't relate to Gia as much as I have with previous Kasie West heroines but I do admire that she's not really afraid to ask for what she wants, and when her boyfriend leaves her in the parking lot at prom (what a jerk, right?) all she wants is to save face in front of her friends because her frenemy is pushing the idea that he doesn't exist. Fortunately, she finds a Fill-In Bradley and he is too adorable and willing to play along to help out a total stranger. The relationship that begins to form between the two just totally worked and I just really loved the dynamic between Gia and Fill-In Bradley. (Yes, he does have a real name but it's not revealed until later in the book so while other reviews may mention him by name, I'm going to leave you guessing because it was fun for me not to know until Gia did!) They really played off each other quite well, with Gia being a bit more head strong and unafraid to say what was on her mind and FIB being a bit more reserved. They balanced each other out and FIB helped Gia see a different side of herself that she wasn't able to see around her friends. The friendships in this book were really interesting and I loved seeing so many different types of friendships! Of course we see Gia and FIB start to become friends out of nowhere and because the way that they met was so wacky and unconventional, they don't really

need to hold back in any way. Gia also ends up talking to a girl in one of her classes who is very much on the opposite side of the social realm. Bec is a bit anti-establishment, definitely not one of the “popular” kids like Gia is, and unlike most people in the school, doesn’t really care what Gia thinks or what anyone thinks, really.

She’s able to tell Gia like it is and dish out some of her own medicine and their sort of mutual dislike starts to transform into a solid friendship (especially since Gia is the type of person who doesn’t like to have people dislike her). Then there’s the frenemy story line, which isn’t something I’m usually interested in but Kasie West totally makes this one work. Gia’s best friend is also best friends with a girl named Jules who for some reason seems to have it in for Gia but at the same time, remains in their friend group. Gia struggles with questioning why Jules seems to want to turn her friends against her or if she just feels threatened and is making the situation out to be much worse than it really is. I just really loved all of the different ways these characters come together (or are pushed apart) and am once again so impressed with how well Kasie strings these all together! The romance, of course, was positively adorable. I love some good banter in books and Gia and FIB just really played off of each other so well. Then of course, Gia starts to develop the FEELS and who can blame her? This guy is seriously cute and I love that he’s a sort of nerdy type and totally not what Gia thought she would be into. I sort of love unexpected romances like that so I was all for the two of them eventually falling in love! Each character has their own past and skeletons in their closet when it comes to relationships (although clearly FIB knows Gia’s) so naturally, things become complicated, especially when trying to maintain a fake relationship meanwhile wondering if it really is real. All-in-all, THE FILL-IN BOYFRIEND was exactly what I had hoped it would be and I just loved it! I think I connected more with other plots and characters from previous Kasie West books so this one didn’t take over as my favorite of hers but that doesn’t mean I didn’t love it all the same! I’m always so impressed with her storytelling and how she brings characters and plot to life.

When your popularity is threatened every time you turn around and you can’t really talk to your parents, what do you do? This is the situation facing Gia Montgomery. When new girl Jules, moved to town, she started systematically hijacking Gia’s two best friends and now she doesn’t know how to act around them. Then her boyfriend, who she met at the college where her brother goes, breaks up with her in the parking lot on prom night. She’s more worried that Jules will trash her because

she's hinted all along that Gia has been lying about said boyfriend than heartbroken, so now it's panic time. When she notices a guy sitting in a truck, reading a book, her desperation becomes stronger than her embarrassment and she asks him to be her fake prom date. He agrees and after the semi-disastrous night is over, something magical, but extremely unsettling hits Gia. By the time the dust settles, Gia has been through a giant emotional rollercoaster ride, had to look in the mirror and not particularly like what she sees, as well as discovering some new truths about the nature of friendship and her family's problems in communicating with each other. Best of all, she's discovered that fake boyfriends can be pretty awesome once you get past the your part of the fake. I'm a big Kasie West fan and read this within hours of receiving it. It's a good book for teens of both sexes who struggle with popularity, self-esteem and honesty issues. Definitely a good book for any library caring about providing good books to their YA readers.

I am totally not a girl who runs to see romantic comedies - I avoid them at all costs - let alone someone who reads romance-based novels. I felt as though I was being haunted by Kasie West and her books. Seemingly everywhere I looked in the bookish blogging world were rave reviews of West's writing. The Fill-In Boyfriend beckoned me to crack open its cover for a long time before I gave in to my intense urge to read it, despite my prejudices regarding romance. Now, I'm also not that into reading about romance of any sort in any book of any genre, which helps illustrate my reluctance to read West's work, which I've seen referred to as 'fluffy'. The Fill-In Boyfriend is full of fluff and I loved every minute of it! The book's synopsis and title make it obvious enough that a girl basically uses a guy to pose as her boyfriend. What I didn't expect was the roller coaster ride of emotions that I experienced while reading this book. Gia, the protagonist, meets a stranger after being unceremoniously dumped right before her senior prom and, you guessed it, the stranger becomes her prom date and is introduced to her clique of gal pals as her questionable boyfriend. Gia weaves a tight web of lies to cover up the facade of having a real boyfriend, even keeping the truth from her dearest friend, Claire. Perhaps my favorite aspect of the book is Gia's newfound friendship with someone whom she normally would have overlooked, being the perfect popular student council president that she is. The reader is taken on a journey of evolution for not only Gia, but for supporting characters as well. Cracks in Gia's home life become evident; Gia's friends slowly grow suspicious of her shenanigans; Gia's ultimate frenemy is out to ruin her, but no one believes her, which clouds Gia's judgment and intuition. A caterpillar at the beginning of the book, Gia transforms into an illustrious, independent butterfly toward the end, gaining serious introspection along the way. I loved reading about Gia's personal growth and the changes she inspires in both herself and those

closest to her. As I was taken on Gia's road trip of lies, I was constantly swerving and weaving through emotions ranging from anger, to joy, to sadness, to empathy, to anger again, and finally to a terrific resolution. The Fill-In Boyfriend has definitely changed my viewpoint regarding romantic, fun novels and I very much look forward to reading the rest of West's work. Kasie West has made me an auto-buyer of her books with this single story.

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