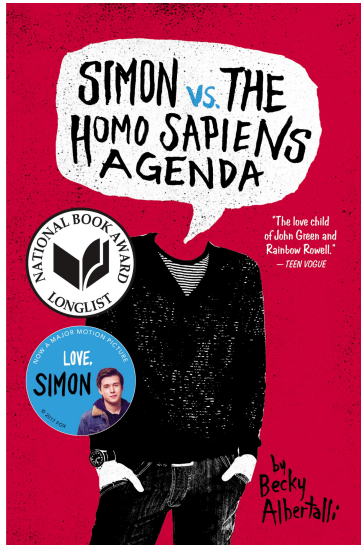


Simon vs The Homo Sapiens Agenda-Becky Albertalli



We learn Simon's biggest secret in the first few pages of this book. So does one of his classmates, Martin, who uses it to blackmail Simon into playing matchmaker for him with another student. With the threat of his exposure hanging over him, Simon feels he has no choice but to acquiesce to the demand.

A handful of lies and half-formed ideas coalesce into one epic disaster and Simon discovers that Martin was not kidding about outing him. Having the choice about coming out taken out of his hands, Simon has to decide how to handle the situation. Family, friendships, and first loves are the major themes of these books, but they are undeniably overshadowed by the very real fear that queer people endure when deciding when and how to come out.

The author gives a humorous twist to the question of why 'straight' is the default assumption, and realistically laces the story with teenage angst and conflict about self-identity. The fallout of Simon's outing is frustratingly typical of close-minded bullies, including derogatory slurs and name-calling.

Although Albertalli uses humour effectively throughout the book, it does not detract from the very real issues at the core of the story. This is a must read for young people, especially those that may be questioning their identities. For those who like to wait for the movie, you're in luck! The author was part of a team that created a screenplay of the novel, and it was released in 2018 as *Love, Simon*.