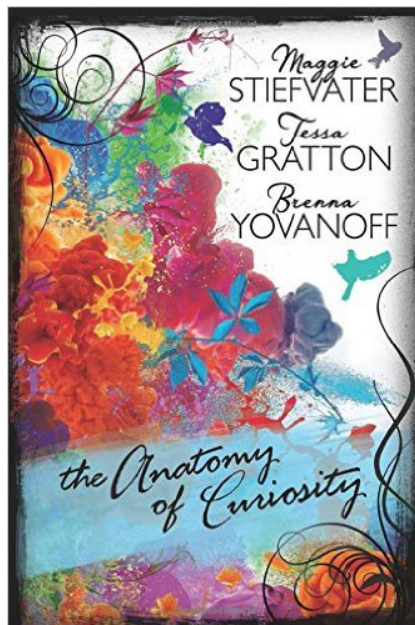


Children and Young Adult Book Review
Middle to High School
Anatomy of Curiosity

Educator Reviewer: Melissa Merritt
Student Reviewer: Kayla Banks



Stiefvater, M., Gratton, T., & Yovanoff, B. (2015). *Anatomy of curiosity*.
Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publishing Group.

ISBN: 978-1467723985

Pages: 296

Educator Review:

The book features three different stories, which are tied together with the writers' insights, comments, introductions, and observations about their writing choices. The first story, "Ladylike" by Maggie Stiefvater, is about Petra growing and learning as a result of spending time being a companion for an elderly lady, Geraldine. Geraldine becomes a mentor and tutor but is revealed to be an extremely unusual person. The second story is "Desert Canticle" by Tessa Gratton, where a young soldier has a connection with the desert and an impossible love while he is stationed there to disarm bombs. The last story, "Drowning Variations" by Brenna Yovanoff, tells about the strength of water even in a land of drought.

This book is a wonderful tool and resource for writers of all ages and levels. It focuses on characterization, world building, and writing different variations of one story. The commentaries throughout the stories give insight about the writers' choices and teach the reader how to read as a writer. It creates a conscious examination of the text and a conversation about the writing itself instead of focusing on the story and plot. It teaches a skill that is otherwise hard to explain, show, and practice. It gives the reader an inside perspective about the authors' intentions and ideas.

The second story does feature some minor sexual tension in a vague, general way. It is not detailed or explicit but should be taken into account. The last story also has the potential to lead to a discussion about sensitive topics including drug abuse, underage drinking, depression, and suicide.

Melissa Merritt
The University of Georgia, Athens, GA
Teacher Candidate

Student Review:

In this collaboration by Maggie Stiefvater, Tessa Gratton, and Brenna Yovanoff, the question of how an idea becomes a novel is trying to be answered. Throughout the stories each author writes commentary in the margins offering advice on how they got to this point and why they condensed and edited their stories. Though each writer tries to answer the same question, they all go about it in a different way. Stiefvater focuses on character and why it is important that the character be substantial. She writes about the young Petra, an uncoordinated youth who is hired to read to an elegant old woman. Gratton depicts how she builds the world where her stay will take place. This story is about a young soldier who defuses bombs in a place that has been destroyed by war. Yovanoff talks about her focus on ideas and how they can be refined and combined to form a story. She writes about the death of a drowning victim in a place that is struggling through a harsh drought.

Over the course of reading this book, I found that it became less about the fictional tales that I was reading and focused more on the path that was taken by each author to bring their novels to completion. This book is a good read for any writer because it serves as a guide in a world with infinite possibilities. Whether someone is writing for personal pleasure, a career, or academic achievement, they stand to learn many invaluable lessons from this glimpse inside the creative process of three exceptional writers.

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Kayla Banks
Travelers Rest High School, Travelers Rest, SC
12th Grade