



The Answer (Steven Universe)

Rebecca Sugar, Tiffany Ford (Illustrator), Elle Michalka (Illustrator)

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Why would a Gem turn against her Homeworld to protect the messy, pointless planet Earth?

What would make an aristocratic Gem risk everything for a common guard?

And how could a humble soldier alter the track of fate forever?

It's up to Sapphire and Ruby to find The Answer.

The Answer (Steven Universe) Details

Date : Published September 6th 2016 by Cartoon Network Books

ISBN :

Author : Rebecca Sugar , Tiffany Ford (Illustrator) , Elle Michalka (Illustrator)

Format : Kindle Edition 32 pages

Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Fantasy, Lgbt, Sequential Art, Comics

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From Reader Review The Answer (Steven Universe) for online ebook

Julia says

Simply gorgeous - the illustrations are perfect, the story is illuminating, and my heart is in pieces. Every parent should read this to their child, and everyone else should just read it! Trust me, you'll have no regrets...

Swankivy says

I'm one of those embarrassingly huge fans of this show so it was kind of a given that I was going to love this book. But let me tell y'all why it's good and why it's important.

This is Ruby and Sapphire's story of love and freedom. I think we all know that a children's storybook that's about a "she" falling in love with a "she" is bound to get some raised eyebrows in a world that thinks relationships like theirs can never be innocent, but I would prefer not to focus on that much at all. I just want to say that it's so vital that children see these relationships in the same context that they see cross-sex relationships--and it's not JUST so kids who have same-sex crushes and attractions can see themselves and know they can get fairy tale endings too. It's also for the rest of you--and if those of you who aren't queer can imagine growing up with no books about people like you, you might start to get the idea.

But you might not be able to really understand, because you probably CAN'T imagine how devastating it is--when there don't seem to be nice words that describe you, or when futures for people like you don't seem to exist, or when you want to know where you are in the literature people get upset, or when people talk to you like it either doesn't matter that you're invisible or that you're disgusting for wanting that. We want to be in stories because stories are how humanity talks to itself. If we aren't in them, we also learn very young that we don't truly get to participate in human life.

So I want to say thank you to everyone who made it possible for something like this to exist. I'm so happy, but also relieved--and a little exasperated that something this sweet and pure took this long to get here because some people look at it and don't see it for what it is.

So what is it?

Yes, this story features the beginning of the love between Ruby and Sapphire, though it still doesn't really delve into that. We see very little of their time together. We see them both being sort of in awe of each other--Ruby being amazed that Sapphire would want to be around someone like her when she's an aristocrat and has amazing powers to see beyond time, and Sapphire being amazed that Ruby's courage upended what she thought was inevitable--and we get a peek at the way they look at each other.

What we do see more of is their decision to become a Fusion together--the ability the Gem characters have to meld into each other and become another person who represents their relationship. (But also the new Gem

will have her own thoughts and feelings, her own new appearance, and her own attitude built from what her component Gems inspire in each other.) In Sapphire and Ruby's story, I think the Fusion relationship is a unique one--not just because she was the first of her kind in her society, but because the relationship between Ruby and Sapphire is now forever changed by how they feel about becoming another entity together. They will eventually fully love each other, but that love will always be influenced by what they've experienced as a Fusion.

And everything about their relationship is about possibility, opportunity, novelty, freshness, and power. Rubies in Gem society are supposed to be simple soldiers who do what they're told and fight with their comrades. Sapphires in Gem society are supposed to be wise seers who don't let their emotions affect what happens next. When Ruby made a choice that Rubies aren't supposed to make, Sapphire helplessly watched a future develop that wasn't in the plan. And both of them found what they'd rather be instead. I really appreciate that there was such a strong "supposed to" that the characters challenged without quite meaning to, and that leaving what they were accustomed to did cause them some distress. They had to find something new to be now that Ruby couldn't do what Rubies do and Sapphire couldn't do what Sapphires do. They realized there are multiple "supposed to's" for Gems like them, and fusing together into someone who had no "supposed to's" (because she wasn't supposed to exist) must have made it so much more joyous to explore what lay ahead.

The art is pretty special--lots of unsettling images (though nothing too scary), lots of beautiful images, and a different style from the cartoon--it's simplified and stylized, but it still gets plenty of emotion onto those little faces. The backgrounds are lovely as they generally are in the show, and the characters commenting on the text in a meta fashion and talking to each other from little alcoves (Sapphire above, Ruby below) was really powerful. There's narration, but there's also Sapphire and Ruby saying how they felt about what was happening, and expressing opinions about each other's statements and caring about each other's distress. Eventually, they go into each other's chambers, comment on how they feel, and share their perspectives. It seems simple but it's quite a nuanced metaphor and I think a lot of children will understand it despite the complexity.

Speaking of complexity, there are some concepts here that I think render this book most appropriate for people who have context from watching the TV show. The fusion concept isn't presented all that accessibly to new fans, and if you haven't seen the show before you don't know that when Gems' physical form is destroyed, they reform later (if their Gem isn't smashed). You don't get introduced to Pearl even though she's there, and you have no context for the illustration of Blue Diamond (and her Pearl), and even though Garnet is mentioned in the online description of the book, she's not called by name in the story itself (just like in the episode). It's also a little unclear in the book (but not the cartoon) why the other Gems were furious at them for fusing, but I guess the story had to be kept simple. There's also some complex language in the book--vocabulary words children in the target group probably won't see in school for a few more years--but the presentation makes me think they will have context to pick it up. I remember doing that a lot as a kid with children's books that slipped in an advanced word here and there.

I was hoping for a couple things I didn't get, but I don't blame books for not fulfilling expectations they didn't promise to fulfill. I was really hoping to hear a little more about the moment of Sapphire and Ruby's first fusion, because in the show fusion is supposed to be about being on the same wavelength, and it seemed almost incongruous that they could have fused at that moment amidst all that confusion. If they did, they must have temporarily wanted the same thing. I know what Ruby wanted--to save Sapphire--but I would have loved to see a glimpse of Sapphire wanting to be saved rather than just being sort of blindsided by the rescue. I would have been really interested to see more of that moment of escape into their unheard-of spontaneous relationship--the action that changed who they were figuratively and literally (not to mention

saving the planet).

The overall package is really precious and looks the way it should--like an age-appropriate, fairy-tale-esque storybook that doesn't have anything strange or inappropriate at all. I can't even imagine reading this to a child and having them stop me to ask "wait, ARE THEY TWO GIRLS??" because it's just so smooth and well told, and the characters' casually presented embraces and nonchalant closeness uses the same cues we'd expect to see on a Disney princess dancing with her prince. It's just Not. An. Issue. Not in the book. Outside of the book, I imagine it will be. I hope the hubbub it creates is primarily positive.

And now, of course, it's made even more clear in this book that Garnet doesn't ask questions in the show because Rose told her not to and she took it quite literally. (She seems to get around asking questions with tricky wording, though, like instead of "What did you see?" she'll say "Tell me what you saw.") If you already ARE the answer, what questions could you need to ask?

And I've got to say Rebecca Sugar dedicating the book to Ian Jones-Quartey is really sweet.

Dov Zeller says

My neighbor recently got this book as a present (she just turned six, she's trans, she loves cute romantic stuff, she loves Steven Universe and the Crystal Gems). She brought it to my place several days in a row for me to read to her. It's one of her favorites at the moment (that and Mummy Cat, which I took out of the library.) If I had read it on my own, maybe I wouldn't give it quite so many stars, but then again, why not? It's a wonderful queer love story for kids -- about questioning dominant narratives, appreciating Nature, being okay with uncertainty, and taking risks for the sake of intimacy.

Lena's dad pointed out that it could have used another round of editing, and that's probably true. And it's a lot like an episode of the show (which it is based on), and I always feel a little, I don't know, distracted? reading things in picture books that are also similarly represented on shows. I find myself comparing them and not able to fully separate them out. In any case, Lena loves it, she loves the way the main story is happening and the characters are meanwhile also having a separate narrative sort of (on the top and bottom of the page. If you read it, you'll see.) And I think it's great that it exists.

Here is an article by Rebecca Sugar, the writer, on writing LGBT love stories for kids. Haven't read it yet, but I will check it out soon.

<http://www.newnownext.com/rebecca-sug...>

Sari Taurez says

I'm going to preface this by saying, though you will get more out of this if you've watched the show, you can definitely appreciate this without having watched it.

This book presents beautiful artwork portraying the love story between these two otherworldly characters. There's action, suspense, self-discovery, and love, all in a relatively short children's book.

My wife and I love watching Steven Universe with our daughter, and love reading this book to her even more. It's difficult to find children's books about homosexual couples, let alone children's TV shows, so we bought this book full price as soon as it came out (a rare thing for us bargain hunter-types!). My daughter soaks in the amazing artwork as we tell her the story, and she smiles at the couple that looks like a fantasy version of her mama and mommy.

There is also a twist on how the story is told... but that's something you'll have to see for yourself. Let's just say they really "thought outside the box" on this one.

Vicky Reads MG says

This cute little picture book ties in to the **Steven Universe** episode "The Answer" which reveals the backstory behind Garnets fusion of Sapphire and Ruby. The illustrations have a whimsical bright colour to them and a texture that looks like pastels. Very visually appealing.

One of the only drawbacks to this is the story is really really really simplistic. I hate to give any criticism to Steven Universe because it's truly such an inclusive, diverse and heartwarming series but the story here was SO SHORT and nothing new. If you've already seen the episode (pure MAGIC! Watch it! Now!) you already know everything Rebecca Sugar has written here. It would've been spifftastic if Rebecca expanded the story a bit here and gave us some novel material.

Regardless of that, it's a sweet read! And I'm sure fans of Garnet, and the Ruby x Sapphire fusion story will like this. It'd also be a lovely read for young children to get them into the fandom and expose them to a more diverse meaning of what love is --and how it can be between two women-- in a way that isn't too syrupy. :)

Andrea says

What if no one can actually say for sure
that anything is meant to be anything,
and we're all supposed to figure it out in real time?
... or NOT!
<3

laia says

Qué cosa más bonita ❤ una de mis historias de amor favoritas con un arte maravilloso. Muy agradecida por existir en el mundo a la vez que Steven Universe.

Carmen says

SPOILERS FOR STEVEN UNIVERSE

SPOILERS FOR STEVEN UNIVERSE

I'M NOT JOKING

....

....

She was never meant to see Sapphire look at her like this - fascinated, bewildered, impressed - as if Ruby were the most important Gem in the universe!

What on Earth?!

LESBIAN FICTION FOR CHILDREN.

LESBIAN FICTION FOR CHILDREN.

This is the future and this is a triumph not only for the LGBTIA community but for humankind.

Not to hype this up or anything. :D *sips coffee*

So, because your child(ren) is inundated with approximately ten million billion heterosexual messages from the media every week, it's super-important to introduce the concept of queer love to them. Whatever form this takes, it would take forever to list the non-heterosexual ideas that exist in the world, I'm using 'queer' as a catchall here.

It shouldn't be a sudden surprise to the child to find out about queer love at an older age, nor is it a good idea to allow your child to be introduced to the idea of non-heterosexual love by having them hear slurs and hate-talk on the bus home from school.

So. Buy it, get it from your library... if your library doesn't own a copy, ask them to buy one. Read it with your child. Along with Red: A Crayon's Story, and any other children's literature you want to read to your child(ren). I'm not saying stop reading Corduroy and The Tale of Peter Rabbit and The Monster at the End of this Book or Cinderella: A Little Golden Book or whatever. I'm only telling you that a.) it's important to introduce your child to the concept of non-heterosexual love because TRUST ME they are being indoctrinated in the heterosexual cisgender agenda almost every single second of their waking lives and b.) getting in and getting in early with loving and sweet messages is important before they learn that queer people are hated, feared, spit on, and murdered for merely existing.

Mind talking about the actual plot, Carmen?

Sure. *sips coffee*

Sapphire is psychic and three Ruby guards are assigned to protect her on Earth. Sapphire knows she's going to killed. It's inevitable. She knows the future. She accepts her fate.

But one Ruby doesn't accept this as Gospel. Instead, she breaks everything everyone knows as truth as she runs towards Sapphire and merges with her, creating a new being, Garnet, a conglomerate of the two women. As Garnet, Ruby and Sapphire are *Half-Vampire, Half-Lycan, but stronger than both!!!!*

Oh, wait. That's Underworld. Never mind.

But anyway, yeah. Strong and powerful and kickass.

People are shocked.

"How did this happen?"

"This is outrageous!"

"How dare they!"

The gems, shocked that two gems of a different type could fuse together, vow *"You will be BROKEN for this!"*

So Sapphire grabs Ruby's hand to help her escape from the bloodthirsty mob bent on murdering queer people.

They get to know each other and fall in love exploring the messy, complicated planet of Earth together.

Tons of cute things happen. I mean, besides the adorableness I've already listed. Ruby carries Sapphire to a cave for shelter. They hold hands. They watch the stars sprawled out on the grass together. They dance in the moonlight.

And why not, when no one was watching?

OMG, I'm dying here. This book is so amazing.

Sugar isn't putting mouth kissing in here, but she isn't fucking around either. SHE'S NOT FUCKING AROUND.

ANYWAY. That's my two cents. I have an overwhelming urge to start randomly buying this and handing it out. LOL

Tl;dr - LESBIAN FICTION FOR CHILDREN. So important. The future is now. Triumph not only for queer people, but for all of humanity.

Also recommended: Sailor Moon, Japanese version. Teach your child to love and appreciate subtitles, LOL. Older audience for the Bishoujo Senshi, obvio.

Rebekah Gordon says

So. Cute. I'll never get over the fact that this exists as a picture book and kids are reading it. God bless Rebecca Sugar.

Ana González says

It is one of the best stories of the entire Cartoon! That's saying a lot! Because Steven Universe is a great show, full of wonderful stories!

So yes, I almost cried with this scene and the two characters are so cute and awesome. Making this a storybook was an excellent Idea.

The illustrations are exquisite and yes, I'm so happy I have it with me and I will read it to all the kids that I can.

Alex Sarll says

Just as I'd always suspected, it turns out that Steven Universe is amazing as soon as you excise that irritating prick of a title character. A picture book about love across the barricades while prehistoric Earth is being invaded by sentient gems, this is gorgeous, formally clever without being alienating, and as queer as the day is long.

RJ says

The art is beautiful and the format is very clever and cute, but I do think it might be a confusing layout if you haven't seen the episode of the show it's recreating.

Ngaire says

My girlfriend and I love Steven Universe so much that we accidentally bought each other this book for Christmas, so now we have two copies and I'm not even mad about it. This is an amazing, heartfelt, beautiful story about love that anyone from any age group will enjoy. I already plan on getting a copy for my 9 year old brother who we introduced to the Steven Universe show last year (his favourite character is Pearl btw), and I want every single one of my LGBTQ friends to read this book. Representation is important, showing kids and adults what a different kind of love can look like is important, and this book is so important to me. Thank you Rebecca Sugar for writing this amazing story.

Scott Robins says

Cute allegorical story for a same-sex relationship between two female "gems" from the Steven Universe universe. I'm not hugely familiar with the property but the story was enjoyable and resembled a fable or a modern fairy tale. It has a clever meta element to it as well that I'm sure kids will find amusing.

Ashley says

I'm biased because this is one of my favorite shows ever and Ruby and Sapphire are the absolute CUTEST but this is one of the best children's books out there. That's all I have to say. I'm glad I bought it. I'm going to keep it and read it to my own child someday :)
