

Check Me Out

Becca Wilhite

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Effortlessly consumable reading; this convivial romance is filled with humorous exchanges.

Becca Wilhite's *Check Me Out* is a clean contemporary romance, a modern librarian's update on the Cyrano de Bergerac story. It's quirky and fun, light and comfortable.

Greta loves her job as an assistant librarian. She also loves her best friend, Will. Greta is happy with every aspect of her life, except for being single. So when she meets the charming and handsome Mac in the poetry section of the library, she swoons over the opportunity for romance. But will she choose Will, the man with a heart? Or the seemingly charming and poetic Mac?

Check Me Out is a whimsical work, with a style of dialogue that feels believable and genuine. Casual banter between characters keeps the tone delightful, with pleasing turns into comical dialogue. Passages have a unique format that includes text messages between characters, grounding the narrative's charming ambiance.

There aren't any honorable or heroic characters in this story, but it's clear that this is intentional. There is an authenticity to Will, Mac, and Greta that makes them feel tangible and familiar, if not always uniquely fleshed out.

Stereotypes regarding body image hinder the romance. Clichéd formulas are used to make sense of others, rather than approaching characters in a way that honors their individuality. This is particularly true when it comes to descriptions of Will, who is seen as "huge in the way nobody really wants to be," resulting in some irksome, awkward moments.

A casual narrative style makes for effortlessly consumable reading in this convivial romance that holds closely to its underlying thesis: it's what is on the inside that matters the most.

HANNAH WILLIAMS (January/February 2018)

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