



Investigating Julius Drake

Daisy Harris

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In this touching and poignant coming-of-age story, fourteen-year-old Henry Walker enters the famed Clinton Academy on a scholarship. Brushing shoulders with the rich, the entitled, and the spoiled, Henry finds himself trying to hide his more humble background and his inner secret. At first more interested in fitting in than standing out, Henry squelches his desire to find authenticity in favor of courting the esteem of the students around him. But as time goes on, his fascination with the charming, attractive, and highly troubled Julius Drake grows, and Henry finds himself drawn into a world that will forever change him.

Investigating Julius Drake is a gentle and yet challenging piece of LGBTQ fiction that also investigates issues of class, bullying, and authenticity. As Henry grows closer to Julius, the two launch an investigation into “The Other Woman,” a mysterious classmate who is bullying other students on social media, and who even drove one classmate to attempt suicide. The background of the investigation—and the high stakes involved—provide an engaging backdrop to the exploration of Henry’s own true identity, and his slow realization that, to take a stand for others, first you must be authentic to yourself. Julius himself is also an interesting foil for Henry, who is more tentative, more hesitant, and at times more stable than Julius, but who learns to lean into his own brand of courage and character by Julius’s carefree example. An ideal read for those interested in both suspenseful mysteries and in literature that navigates difficult issues, from coming out to peer pressure.

STEPHANIE BUCKLIN (Fall 2016)

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