



The Age of Amy: Channel '63

Bruce Edwards

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A vibrant teen protagonist with a sharp sense of humor makes for an entertaining guide to the weird world of this surreal, touching novel.

Bruce Edwards's *The Age of Amy: Channel '63* plops a fresh protagonist into a quirky setting to deliver a riotous young-adult adventure. Hilarity and magical realism bolster sixteen-year-old Amy's cynical worldview, and while the absurdities of the plot pile up—but only in fun ways—the result is ultimately heartwarming.

The Age of Amy: Channel '63 begins with a rebellious Amy in court, attempting to emancipate herself from her parents. After her father became a bestselling novelist and moved the family to a big house in the country, Amy has been feeling neglected and wants to make her own decisions about where she lives and what she can do. Awaiting the ruling, Amy and her friend Hubert visit Theme Farm, a theme park near their town, run by friendly half-human, half-animal mutants who recently received civil rights. These creatures bring a dose of surrealism to the plot and exacerbate both the comedy and the gentle message of tolerance in the story.

At Theme Farm, Amy encounters a new attraction called Used-to-Be TV, which allows visitors to interact over a camera with people living in previous eras. Amy falls head over heels for Clifford, a sweet teenage boy from the year 1963. The political turmoil and changing culture of that year fascinate Amy, and she is thrown into scary territory when she's able to speak openly to Clifford instead of having her words bleeped when she's about to say something that may impact the past.

While the plot certainly calls for the reader to suspend disbelief, doing so opens up Edwards's imaginative world that offers laughs, lovable characters, and some touching moments. Amy is a vibrant protagonist with sharp wit whose yearning for an escape rounds out her full personality. Anyone venturing into the weird universe of this novel will find Amy an entertaining and empathetic guide.

Though *Channel '63* is the third book in a series, it can be read as a stand-alone; however, after delving into this novel, readers won't want to miss the other volumes documenting Amy's quirky world. It offers strange fun, a sympathetic teen narrator, and valuable life lessons, making it all around deserving of a wide audience.

AIMEE JODOIN (Winter 2015)

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