



The Wig in the Window

Kristen Kittscher

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Best friends and seventh graders Sophie Young and Grace Yang have made a game out of spying on their neighbors. On one of their midnight stakeouts, they witness a terrifying, bloody scene at the home of their bizarre middle-school counselor, Dr. Charlotte Agford (aka Dr. Awkward).

At least, they think they do. The truth is that Dr. Agford was only making her famous pickled beets! But when Dr. Agford begins acting even weirder than usual, Sophie and Grace become convinced that she's hiding something—and they're determined to find out what it is.

Soon the girls are breaking secret codes, being followed by a strange blue car, and tailing strangers with unibrows and Texas accents. But as their investigation heats up, Sophie and Grace start to crack under the pressure. They might solve their case, but will their friendship survive?

Perfect for fans of *The Mysterious Benedict Society*, *The Wig in the Window* is a smart, funny middle-grade mystery with a REAR WINDOW twist.

The Wig in the Window Details

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Author : Kristen Kittscher

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From Reader Review The Wig in the Window for online ebook

Beth says

I cannot begin to fully articulate the amount of suspension of disbelief this book requires. Just as I decided to allow something, just as I began to sort of fit its ridiculousness into the worldbuilding, bam, the author piled on something even more ridiculous.

This is even worse than absent parents: this *has* the parents, and hasn't the slightest clue how to properly fit them in. But this book doesn't have the slightest clue about quite a lot of things, including the fact that twelve-year-olds are usually pretty smart, so it's in keeping with all that. (Particularly when you consider there's one character who's supposed to be both book- and street-smart, and even she is incredibly stupid about the major plot device.)

Seriously: this was so stupid I'm not even bothering with the sequel. And the sequel is sitting on my desk at this very moment. I just can't bring myself to read about more ludicrous inanity.

Kaylee says

the book was amazing. a good old mystery. if you like mystery's you should read this book if you want too

Eli says

Right from the very beginning, I loved how this book allowed for so much growth between Sophie and Grace. Spread throughout the course of this book are many different funny--and yet believable--situations. One thing that I'm starting to really appreciate in middle-grade fiction is quirkiness without ridiculousness, and it's something that I continually found time and time again in THE WIG IN THE WINDOW. Not only does it maintain consistency and humor, it's headed by two very different, strong female protagonists that I had a lot of fun with. While there are lots of fun "spy" bits that are a little less serious than fans of books like LAWLESS by Jeffrey Salane, there is also some realistic drama to this story that I didn't feel was necessary, but still enjoyed due to it bringing out more in Sophie and Grace.

Not going to lie, I prepared myself for ridiculousness when I got to the part with Dr. Agford. There's a few elements introduced there that I wasn't sure I liked in the beginning. I don't think that middle-grade readers will have a problem with it and eventually I drew to accept it, but there is some quirkiness there. Realistic (meaning it *could* happen), and it remained okay in my mind.

The only other problem I had with THE WIG IN THE WINDOW was the ending. I really wish there was a more solid punch there. So much of the book is funny while remaining realistic so I had high hopes for how Kristen Kittscher would end even though I could see it slowly going downhill as the pages thinned.

In the end, I would say that Kittscher is definitely an MG author to watch out for. I had a lot of fun reading her work and while the ending and a few key moments could have been pulled together a little more tightly, I think that this is one read that will be very fun and satisfying to it's target audience and those above. The mystery built up very smoothly and I loved how the two main characters (as well as a few others) grew in this story. Overall, a very nice debut. 4 stars.

Jana says

4 fudgy, frosted brownies.

Cover Love:

Yes! I love the colors and the font and the girls. I just adore this cover and know it will be eye catching to many readers in my library!

Why I Wanted to Read This:

I love tween girl mystery books so when I read the synopsis for this one I knew I had to read it.

My Thoughts:

This is not a tame little mystery story. There is a lot of danger and action and a very intriguing mystery. One thing I liked (that I think will resonate with most kids) was how easy it was for Charlotte Agford to talk her way into Sophie's life. Because she was in a position of power at Sophie's school she was able to convince Sophie's parents of what was best for Sophie. That annoyed me a little bit because as a parent I would have my own judgements about what they did or were going through and how to handle it. However, Sophie's parents are really busy so it's easy to see how they were willing to hand her punishment over to someone else. And they did hold Sophie accountable for her actions which was good.

There were a few good twists, but not ones that I were expecting, which kept me hooked in the story.

A few things I read talked about how much they loved the friendship between Sophie and Grace. And while I did like it, there were so many doubts and hurts throughout the book that I had to wonder if it would last. And Sophie was able to make a new, good friend who is worth a second look. They ended on a good note but there were times during the books that I wondered if their friendship would even survive!

The villain, Charlotte Agford, was truly awful. Just gross! I am glad the author did not make her sympathetic, it was good to have someone dislike so much.

I liked how Sophie and Grace were able to solve the mystery and follow their instincts to prove there even was a mystery. They are smart, resourceful girls. I did really like that the author did make the danger real. I think will make this mystery even more attractive to young readers. Nothing was watered down.

To Sum Up: A great middle grade book that I will be buying for my library. Many young readers will enjoy this one!

Shelby Bach says

You guys, I LOVED The Wig in the Window. I kind of guessed I would, but I was surprised at HOW MUCH I loved it. It's definitely one of my favorite middle grades of the year.

I've been waiting to read something like it for a long time. The mystery kept me guessing, right up until the end, but the REAL attraction for me was the three sleuths: Sophie, Grace, and Trista! Some books in this age group don't give kids enough credit, and it drives me crazy. But Sophie, Grace, and Trista bounce off the page in an incredibly real way.

These seventh graders are funny. They are clever. They have a great BS detector and call each other out, but they doubt themselves sometimes too. They have passions that drive them and get them into trouble, and their friendships are complicated, loving, and MESSY—those relationships grow in the book along with the characters, and reading about them gave me such a Happy Book Glow that I couldn't read anything else for days. I just kept rereading sections from *The Wig in the Window*.

So, I promptly gushed about the book to Kristen and begged her for an interview, which you can find [here](#).

McCormick Templeman says

A fantastic book with beautiful writing and incredibly fun plotting – the kind of book I love as an adult, but would have killed for as a kid. Sophie and Grace are the very spirit of adventure. They are fun and brave, and smart, though not without some very human foibles. Trista is a revelation. Just a fantastic character. The book is incredibly fun, but it's not fluff. There are some really interesting things going on at a deeper level in this book. Kittscher really taps into what it is to be a kid and to have adults dismiss your problems simply because of your age. In a sense the book is a meditation on that moment in life when a person decides to take herself seriously, to decide for herself that her problems are real, that her concerns are important, and that if no one else will give her agency, that she will take it for herself. But while it does have a certain and essential gravitas, it manages to maintain a terrific momentum, pulling the reader ever forward with great twists and delightful puzzles. It was really such a treat to read. Highly recommended!

Susan says

Story was interesting enough and the mystery was good, too, but my main problem was with some of the characters.

I absolutely dislike it when two characters, friends, go on an adventure but it is usually the idea of only one of them and it is usually the other that gets in trouble. Meanwhile, the idea gal keeps getting these stupid ideas for her gullible friend to do.

This was the case here. Grace had all the great ideas of spying, breaking and entering, stealing, etc because SHE was interested in working for the FBI when she grew up and decided the their shifty neighbor wasn't who she said she was. Unfortunately Sophie was the one performing all these illegal acts and getting caught, plus she was the one who had to face the shifty neighbor in school every day.

Then on another occasion, Grace persuades Sophie to go through the neighbor's house while neighbor was out, then goes to a birthday party to one of her friends house leaving, once again, Sophie to do all the dangerous stuff.

I liked the character of Trista and had hoped that Sophie and her would become best friends, replacing the selfish Grace, but alas, that was not to be.

Some might enjoy this story and I admit it kept me reading, but I think if there are future adventures for these two young girls, I will pass.

Stephanie says

There's so much to love in this book! Fabulous twelve-year-old girls squaring up to danger and solving mysteries! A heroine whose fantasy is to be a professor of Asian studies at Oxford! Her best friend, who plans to join the FBI! A wonderfully smart, ruthless and snarky new friend, met by the heroine when she becomes a social outcast! And it's all really funny, too.

I think if I were more of a mystery fan myself, I would have given this book 5 stars and loved every bit of it. Because I'm not really a huge mystery fan, the mystery plot actually had even more twists and turns than I needed, as a reader; the book could have been a tiny bit shorter, with fewer surprise twists to the mystery, and I would have found it even more satisfying. But that's a really personal, subjective point, and one that most mystery fans, I think, wouldn't agree with.

Regardless, I loved Kittscher's writing, I loved the humor and the characters, and I liked the whole book a lot.

Christina (A Reader of Fictions) says

Kristen Kittscher's debut caught my eye with that brilliantly adorable cover, one which perfectly captures the book itself, which makes it even better. Though mysteries aren't my genre of choice, I couldn't resist checking this one out, because of the Rear Window connection. Pop culture references are for the win always. *The Wig in the Window* is above all a story of friendship and courage, with plenty of humor and adventure to keep readers of all ages entertained.

The first thing I need to give Kittscher props for is how the mystery plays out. Reading mysteries intended for younger readers can be imminently frustrating for an adult, because the children often fail to note the most obvious of clues and the guilty party is clear from the first pages. This was not the case in *The Wig in the Window*. Kittscher adds evidence steadily, and keeps pulling the rug out from under Sophie's feet. Sophie does have a bit of a tendency to jump to conclusions, but she's never blindly oblivious to the facts in front of her.

In fact, Sophie and her friends don't do a lot of the inadvisable things kids in novels often do. When they think they've witnessed a murder by their next door neighbor, they contact the authorities. They try to rely on and trust adults with information, but receive contradictory information and end up having to do the best they can alone. In addition to snooping around, since they like to pretend they're in the FBI, they also do Google searches. Sophie and Grace approach the situation as logically as they can.

For me, the most meaningful aspect of *The Wig in the Window* is the friendship between amateur investigators Grace and Sophie. They've been friends since Sophie's family moved to the neighborhood, and go by Young (Sophie) and Yang (Grace). However, all is not perfect in their friendship, and the real mystery to solve brings all their issues to the surface. Sophie has always felt like the sidekick, following Grace's lead, which was fine until Sophie got in trouble for falsely reporting a murder and Grace didn't. Now Sophie feels abandoned, and has a chance to really come into her own, however painful that may be. They really have to learn to appreciate one another and not take their friendship for granted, which can happen in long term relationships of any sort.

At school, Sophie's other friends ditch her in the wake of the reporting-the-school-counselor-for-murder scandal. In this awkward time, she's befriended by Trista, overweight and picked on (called Boom-Boom-Bottoms by the school's resident bully, who calls Sophie Ay-nus, a play off her French class name Agnes).

Trista's totally my favorite character. She's sassy, can out-insult the bullies, loves herself for who she is, and has her friends' backs. Plus, she's a really healthy eater, so Kittscher's conveying that it's not necessarily lifestyle alone that leads to weight gain.

The one thing that left me really uncomfortable was the portrayal of Charlotte Agford, the school counselor that Grace and Sophie think they see commit murder. Whether or not she's the villain, some of the descriptions for her made me really uncomfortable. She has this giant hair, which turns out to be a wig, and huge fake breasts, both of which are repeatedly used as evidence essentially that she's evil, and I'm just not really cool with that. There were a couple of other characters described in unsettling ways, but Agford is the best example. Whether someone's a good or bad person shouldn't be bound up in their appearance.

The Wig in the Window is a fun mystery, sure to delight middle grade readers. There's humor, action, friendship, and even a little bit of romance. I'm glad to have read it, but am left a bit unsure about the overall message.

Cheryl says

Overdue for Clan... one at Washoe....

Group read Children's: fiction club....

But given the 'ridiculous suspension of disbelief' and disrespect for children's intelligence and awkwardness of parental characters, according to a reviewer I trust, I'm not sure I want to hunt it down....

Kate says

In THE WIG IN THE WINDOW, best friends and spy partners Sophie Young and Grace Yang face all the struggles of middle school's changing friendships AND the dangers of a real life-or-death mystery. This book is funny, realistic, and suspenseful -- a pitch-perfect mystery for the tween set.

Rachele Alpine says

Oh goodness....I loved this book! The girls' dialogue had me cracking up the entire time I was reading it and the situations they got themselves into as they tried to solve the mystery were fun and creative. It reminded myself of all the trouble and mischief I got into when I was in grade school! I can see this getting passed around and around the hands of mystery lovers!

Kellee says

*Review at: <http://www.unleashingreaders.com/?p=8269>

In the tradition of Nancy Drew, and, in this case, Sun Tzu, Young and Yang are on the case! This book immediately draws you in and the action never stops. You are predicting and trying to solve the mystery right alongside Sophie and Grace throughout the whole book! Twist and turns keep you guessing and the

ending is quite an adventure!

One of the things I liked the most about this book were the characters. There are 3 main girl characters (Trista is a friend of Sophie's from school) and they all three have different personalities yet are still strong. Grace is the girly girl (but isn't an airhead) who aspires to be FBI but is also completely opposite than a Chinese stereotype. Sophie embraces Grace's culture, is obsessed with feng shui, has a war story telling grandpa, and is always along for the ride. Trista never lets the bullies get her down, is BRILLIANT, and ends up being a true friend. What a great example of Girl Power! And what makes all of this even better is that these three very different girls are friends.

Underneath the mystery and amazing characters is a theme that you find often in middle grade books- identity and change. Although it isn't always evident, this book is also about determining who your true friends are, how to deal with bullies, how to deal with boys, how to deal with gossip, and many other things that middle schoolers deal with on a regular basis. Love that Kristen Kittscher was able to put all of this within a nail biting mystery.

Student Reviews:

*Wig In The Window is full of suspense, mystery, and doubt. Doubting Sophie and Grace is very common. However, as you move your feelings about their reasons and relationship, changes. This is a wonderful book for those who love to read about mystery and friendships. The deeper you get into the book, the more you get to know about the characters and your feelings toward them change. –Clara A., 7th grade 16-17

*The Wig In The Window is a mystery type of book with some humor, and for anybody who likes those two types genres, they would love the book. On a scale of 1 to 5 I would rate this book a 5. –Lucas B., 7th grade 16-17

*I loved Wig in the Window and you should read it. It is amazing. You would love this book if you like friendship. This book talks about how a mystery can bring friends close and enemies closer. 2 friends going out spying on their neighbors when something goes wrong and turns Luna Vista upside down. –Ashley F., 7th grade 16-17

*Others would like The Wig In The Window because it has suspense, action, and it makes you want to keep reading after every chapter. When Agford apologizes or does anything it makes the story suspenseful. When Grace and Sophie were being followed, and when they were fighting Bain that made the story filled with action. This to points make the book hard to put down and why others would enjoy this book. –Sarah H., 7th grade 16-17

*My review of The Wig in the Window is that the book was amazing. There were many twist and turns. This book describes many parts of middle school friendships, which is very true. [Spoiler] My favorite part of the book was when Grace and Sophie walked away from Bain, triumphant. On page 330, it states, "I turned back to Officer Grady. I folded my arms. "You're welcome." I said." This is the part where Young and Yang are successful in their mission. They go home, and everybody is thanking them and apologizing for doubting them. –Emily P., 7th grade 16-17

Student-made playlist:

Could've Been Us- Tori Kelly (fighting in the basement)

Getting Dumb- Will.I.am (Sophie walking through the school)

Sad Song- Parson James (the end when they are fighting Bain and watching her get arrested)

Sorry- Justin Bieber (when Grace apologizes and they are friends again)

Sign of The Times- Harry Styles (when Agford is crying and talking about Sophie)

You've got a friend in me-Randy Newman (Ending when Grace and Sophie walk off into the sunset)

Runnin'- Beyonce (when Sophie is going to the school)

Read with: Nancy Drew, Platypus Police Squad, Chasing Vermeer, Samantha Sutton and the Labyrinth of Lies, Capture the Flag, Shakespeare's Secret (Also, because of their part in the story: Art of War, To Kill a Mockingbird, The Call of the Wild)

Mentor text for: Prediction, Characterization, Mystery

Topics: Friendship, Bullying, Back Stabbing, Art of War, Assumptions (p. 256)

Reread 8-17-15

Review posted at: <http://www.teachmentortexts.com/2013/...>

Claire says

I might have given it four stars, except that the addition of the BEST fat character I've encountered in a middle grade novel leveled it way the hell up! nicely done! funny, fast paced, fun, with great characters and a legitimately creepy villain...fabulous job, esp for a debut author. but most of all, it wins everything for Testa, who is fat, badass, a science and engineering genius, eats healthily, and doesn't take any shit. even though the story is obvs completely different, the friendship between Sophie and Testa is almost a perfect reversal of the girls in Judy Blume's Blubber. high fives from this reader!

Jenn says

This books is fantastic. I was expecting something light-hearted and funny, a whimsical adventure about two young female sleuths who get in over their heads... what I got was all of that, plus so much more.

There is *depth* to this book. Not hit-you-on-the-head-with-Big-Issues kind of depth (although I like those books, too), but subtle depth in every character and situation. Stereotypes are routinely addressed and smashed, and readers will be introduced to the idea of cultural appropriation, perhaps for the first time. Perception is a big theme, and we're constantly re-assessing what we know about the characters and story based on changing information -- something most of us in the real world don't do nearly enough. This theme is so perfectly suited for a mystery plot, where new information is routinely uncovered, making the plot a natural vehicle for self-reflection and growth.

But there are great fight scenes, too, and a ton of unexpected plot twists and reversals. The stakes escalate quickly and ramp up to a thrilling end sequence. Sophie, our main hero, begins the book as a bit of a follower, always taking the lead from her best friend Grace. But their friendship becomes more complicated when Sophie meets a new friend, the amazing Trista, and begins to eventually develop a strength all her own.

This is an empowering, enlightening book in so many ways -- but it's also just plain FUN and laugh-out-loud funny, too. I can't recommend it highly enough. I'll be putting this on my shelf next to Ellen Raskin's THE WESTING GAME.
