



Kiss Collector

Wendy Higgins

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When seventeen-year-old Zae Monroe gets cheated on by the only guy she's ever loved, then watches her parents' marriage crumble, she decides to forget about relationships and turn the tables on the boys of the world. It's time to take what she wants, and what she wants are kisses. Athletes, musicians, poets, and bad boys—their lips are all on her agenda, and it's time to collect.

Zae proposes a contest with her friends to see who can kiss the most boys during spring break. But what starts as a harmless competition leads to a downward spiral she can't seem to break free of. As family, academic, friend, and guy drama come to a head, Zae is forced to face the reasons behind her boy angst, and starts to wonder if she was wrong about the male race...or at least some of them.

Kiss Collector Details

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Author : Wendy Higgins

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From Reader Review Kiss Collector for online ebook

Tara says

A new book by Wendy Higgins?!!!!1!????!!!!!?

And I like the sound of that title ;))))

Edit 19/5/17: So it seems we have a blurb and this will be a contemporary romance. My body is ready.

Camila Roy •RoyIsReading• says

ARC provided by Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review

Seventeen-year-old Zae Monroe has had it with relationships. Between getting cheated on by the only guy she's ever loved and watching her parents' marriage crumble, she decides to turn the tables and take what she wants, and what she wants are kisses. Athletes, musicians, poets, bad boys—their lips are all on her agenda, and it's time to collect.

For the longest time, men have been categorized as cheaters and douchebags. There are Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Tumblr accounts fully dedicated to trashing males (I know because I follow some of them). But have you ever seen an account that exposes women? No, because that will be considered sexist. It's quite the double standard. Where did we get this idea that girls don't cheat? It's happened countless times in the history of humanity, especially in recent years. Not all girls are faithful and not all guys are unfaithful. That's the truth.

This book is mainly about girl empowerment and giving a twist to gender stereotypes. The main character, Zae, is done with relationships, so she opts for a more carefree, fun and easy lifestyle. It's all fun and games in the beginning. She assumed that none of the guys will get attached and it wouldn't turn complicated. But, it's not long before things get messy and Zae has to deal with the aftermath of what she did.

I was pleasantly surprised by the ending. The overall message is not so much that "Girls can do the same things as guys" as I expected, it's actually "Girls can make the same mistakes as guys". If you use and deceive others without having any regards for their feelings, you're a crappy person. Doesn't matter what gender you are.

I would definitely recommend it. It's a fun, cute story but with a great message!

Stacee says

DNF at 18%

I'm not entirely sure why I requested this one, because when I read the synopsis before starting it, it didn't sound like something I would read. However, it had a lot of high reviews, so I was hopeful.

Zae has a lot of potential. I love the idea that she's going to take something back for herself. Sadly, I couldn't settle into her inner monologue. She sounds much younger than her age.

Plot wise...I don't know. The small bit I did read was drama filled and the first chapter was absolutely cringeworthy to me. I didn't even make it to the kissing parts and skimmed a lot of what I did read.

Overall, it didn't work for me. I'm not rating it because perhaps something would have turned around, but I don't have the patience for it at this time.

Huge thanks to HarperTeen for providing the arc free of charge

Samantha (WLABB) says

After finding her boyfriend with another girl and finding out her dad left the family for another woman, Zae's faith in love was pretty weak. Her revenge on the institution was to kiss and walk away from as many boys as possible during spring break. To make it even more fun, she challenged her three best friends to do the same, and though it was amusing at first, things got complicated quick once emotions played a part.

- Pro: This book surprised me in a good way. I will admit I struggled a little with the beginning, but once it got into the thick of the plot - the kissing, it was fun, like a teen movie, and then it turned into a much more meaningful story, which I really enjoyed.
- Pro: Zae and her friends were a robust and vivacious group of young women. They shared a fantastic friendship, which was tested over the course of this book, but they were also about supporting other women. The focus on the highs and lows of friendship was done well, and a good female friendship will always capture my attention.
- Pro: If you look at the cover of the book, you can tell it included a lot of ethnic diversity, but there was also diversity with respect to family structure, which is something I connect with. One character was adopted and lived in a two parent home, another lived with multiple generations of women in her home, and the other two were from single parent homes.
- Pro: Zae was not only struggling with the changes in her home life, she was also grappling with worries about her future and her feelings of being left behind by her friends. I really liked where Higgins went with this subplot, because it gave the story a good dose of substance, and I loved the way it played out.
- Pro: Even though she was down with love, Zae did find some romance, and I loved the paring and the way their relationship evolved. He was more complex, than he first appeared, and this was a slooooooow burn, but so satisfying.
- Pro: What a great epilogue! Not only did Higgins wrap up Zae's story for us, she caught us up with everyone, who played a significant part in the story. And, let me tell you, there was some super-sweet-awesome stuff that transpired in that epilogue.

Overall: A revenge turned romance turned self-realization story, which made me giggle, smile, swoon, and shed happy tears.

*ARC provided in exchange for an honest review.

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Mlpmom (Book Reviewer) says

So freaking unbelievably good. Review to come closer to release date.

**EDITED TO ADD REVIEW*

4.5 Stars!

The Kiss Collector is so much more than your average YA contemporary. So much more.

It is emotional and honest and a bit raw. It has diversity and real life problems but most importantly, it's empowering. It's all about family and friends and being supportive of one another, in short, girl power in almost every sense of the phrase.

It truly is an amazing read that I just can't praise enough. I loved every single heartfelt, emotionally charged and sometimes even funny page. It was a breath of fresh air in a sea of overrated contemporaries that pale in comparison.

ARC provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Wendy Higgins says

BAM.

My very first full length contemporary romance novel! It made me cry much more than I anticipated. Lots of the issues were close to my heart--things I dealt with as a teen.

I hope you love Zae and enjoy her journey from young adult to adult as much as I did. Smooches!!

Update If you're reading an ARC of KC, we are aware of the "extra-s" copy editing glitch before every ellipses. So sorry!! It will be fixed before the final book publishes.

Bitchin' Reads says

Oh my darn silly heart warming at all the happiness at the end of this book. This is exactly what I needed to get out of my reading slump.

Grace P. (gracefulreads) says

3.5/5

I love Wendy's books, and I literally just read this straight through!

While this novel is filled to the brim with drama, most of the drama did not emerge between Zae's friends but more from interacting with different guys. But, relationship drama is not the only important part of the story. Zae had to deal with many real-life issues with her family, friends, and financial situation. My favorite part of the story was Zae's relationship with her brother because it was endearing and adorable. I'm so glad Wendy decided to highlight the sibling dynamic. Her entire family was also central to the story. Her parents were facing divorce and a lot of other issues but were ultimately remarkably supportive of Zae.

While the competition was interesting, it was probably my least favorite aspect of the book. All it managed to do was create tension between Zae and her friends. I think the competition could have been the first half of the book and then the last half of the book could have expanded the romance. While Zae kissed several guys, there were a few that I liked much more than the others, and I wish we got to see more of them in the story. I found myself rooting for many of the guys who liked Zae, but I was thrilled with the ending of the story.

Wendy Higgins is one of the first authors I ever met, and I have read all of her books since then. I had high hopes for KISS COLLECTOR, and I am so happy Wendy decided to venture into a full-length contemporary romance. The story is relatively predictable but also a joy to read. I read it on one sitting, and I think that is the best way to do it because it takes place over a relatively short period and the book itself is short. Readers who aren't a fan of drama probably shouldn't read KISS COLLECTOR. If looking for a fun, addicting, and quick read, this is the book. I highly recommend this brief but enthralling read.

Candace Robinson says

I'm super picky when it comes to contemporary, but I loved this one! Zae was relatable in her struggles. It took me back to high school...loving your friends, sometimes being jealous of them. But no matter what, you had each others' backs. Also the book had boys, a lot of boys! Especially one particular cute one! The poem moments were sweet, and I seriously adored the ending!

Sarah says

I received an eARC of this through Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review.

Dudes can be the absolute worst. Zae's boyfriend cheats on her and her parents are getting divorced because of her own father's cheating ways. She is done being used by the male population, so she has decided to take what she wants, no strings attached. Zae and her three besties compete against each other to get the most kiss over spring break, the only rules are no falling in love and no kissing anyone's ex. While Zae is struggling with the changes in her life, like moving to a small apartment and working on her tumbling for cheerleading, she finds that she is developing romantic feelings for two guys in her junior class. Too bad one of those guys has his sights set on one of her friends. Will Zae and her friends be able to come out of this kissing completion with their friendship still intact?

This story was rough because the characters were one-dimensional. I wasn't pulling for any of the guys, because truthfully I didn't care about what happened to any of the characters. I have no clue what the main character looks like. All she talks about is her curly hair...but what colors are her eyes, hair, skin? Does she spray tan? While there is a great amount of work done to classify/diversify the other characters, I don't have a clear picture of the main character. I loved the Sweet Reckoning series, but this novel didn't work for me. However, I loved the fact that the main character was good at and loved languages. I have never seen a character with those qualities before and I think it does give a refreshing outlook. This novel did explore the less popular, but just as awesome options for adulthood...not everyone wants to go to college, and that is okay. I totally appreciated that.

Jennifer says

Two things:

1. Just an FYI to anyone who received an arc. The author posted this note: *Update* If you're reading an ARC of KC, we are aware of the "extra-s" copy editing glitch before every ellipses. So sorry!! It will be fixed before the final book publishes.

I wish that I had known this before reading this book as it honestly never even remotely occurred to me that this was a typo. Some of the characters are a bit "ghetto" and I thought that the author was using slang. And it drove me crazy! I'm so glad that this was just a copy editing glitch.

2. Also do not look at the table of contents of the e-book closely before reading the book. The chapter name for chapter 41 is a huge spoiler. I always look through the table of contents before reading a book to see how many chapters there are and at what percent the book ends.

This book is a YA contemporary romance. The narrator is high school junior Xanderia Monroe. But she goes by Zae. The story is told in 1st person POV.

The book blurb says that she is 17, although I do not remember that being mentioned in the book. Although since she and her friends are juniors in high school I assumed that they were all 16-17.

Zae lives in the least wealthy and most multicultural part of northern Virginia county. She has a group of girlfriends who she does everything with. They are: Lin, Monica, and Kenzie.

Most of the story takes place during Spring Break. Zae and her friends decide to see who can kiss the most boys during that time.

This book seemed very real to me. I liked that things were not perfect. Zae was disillusioned with love. She did not know what she wanted to do in the future. She had major issues with her parents. And her family had money issues. This book seemed to deal with so many issues that many kids have to deal with in real life.

I enjoyed the realistic parts of the story. Also, I really liked Zae's relationship with her little brother. And the friendship between the four girls.

My biggest issue with this book was the underage drinking and partying. Is it normal for 16/17 year old kids

to be allowed to go out partying every night, getting drunk? It was weird to me because these seemed like good girls. I know some high school students drink. And I know that kids go to parties. Maybe if they had been in college, or at least 18, or at least high school seniors. But I didn't really enjoy this aspect of the story.

The romance was the most interesting part of this book. The craziest thing for me was that for most of the book I really had no idea who would end up as her true romantic interest. There were so many possibilities: Dean/athletic guy, Joel/car guy, Elliot/waiter, Taro/skateboard guy. I really thought that the romance was going in a certain direction, but then I was surprised.

Overall, this was a really enjoyable quick read. It read like part realistic fiction, part Young Adult romance. The book was light and charming. But it was also serious and compelling. Also I really liked how the epilogue was done.

Thanks to HarperTeen and edelweiss for allowing me to read this book.

Katie Olley says

What a fantastic new book, with hot guys galore
I recommend Kiss Collector - it's worth an explore!

I'll try my best to give a review that's not biased
But I love Wendy Higgins, I hold her the highest.

She's a wonderful author and with her talent she writes
Books I get hooked to, books full of delights

Kiss Collector is written amazingly so,
from the view of the beautiful Zae Monroe

Zae's having some trouble at high school you see
So to help her recover, here's her latest theory

She's seen relationships shatter - ones close to her heart
so she needs a new plan and here's how she'll start

She'll kiss a few boys and not want for more
Boys are just drama of that she's now sure

She's kissing to heal her poor battered soul
To forget her heart's pain, is her primary goal

She'll kiss athletes and poets and musicians for sure,
She'll kiss bad boys and skaters, their lips are her cure

She'll challenge her friends to join in the fun
Of collecting some kisses and when they are done

They'll smile and say thank you then hold their heads high
As they find their next target, some other cute guy

So there you have it, Zae's Spring break goal
To have fun with her friends, whilst mending her soul

Can a kiss, be a kiss and nothing more?
A simple challenge with friends and a final score?

Or will hearts be broken? Will Zae need a protector?
To find out the answers...READ KISS COLLECTOR!!

Lola says

‘Enough! No more relationships. Men are incapable of being faithful and I shall not let my heart be destroyed by them once more!’

Is what Zae is thinking as she is planning a kiss competition with her best girlfriends to see who can collect the most kisses. Except, not in those exact words, because my creative mind has missed a few days of work due to laziness and now it's working overtime.

You see, her boyfriend, with whom she was madly in love (or so she thought), cheated on her. And her father, who was supposed to be a male role model in her life, gave up on his long marriage with her mother. ‘What a loser!’

Oops, there goes my overtime and underpaid employee again.

Is Zae right to forsake romantic relationships and label her dad and every other guy out there a hormone-saturated creature without the chromosomes necessary for starting a stable and long-lasting relationship?

No, of course not! But for a couple of hours—let's say 5—you have to be in the mind of someone who thinks she is right in her thinking that. Which I personally did not mind doing. Watching Zae take control of her own body and claiming those kisses like a boss was a lot of fun. I predicted drama would ensue, rightly so, and with drama sometimes comes a llama.

So this was entertaining, but as mentioned above, predictable. Also, there is a love-triangle you'll want to murder. Decent and enjoyable on a summer day (unfortunately it comes out in December so you may not find one right away). I just wouldn't auto-buy if I were you.

PS. This was a hell of a weird review. But I am pleased to announce my now disgruntled employee has clocked out.

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Thamy says

I was looking forward to this fun story, but I felt disappointed.

But for the many important themes carefully approached, I think it was still worth it.

Zae has been facing problems in all aspects of her life, her parents constantly fighting, her boyfriend cheating, even the cheerleaders tryouts may become a flunk this year. She has no idea what to do with herself when she decides to take control of things, starting with boys. That's when she and her friends start a competition to see whom will kiss the most boys before they're back to school.

I was ready for something more like *Firsts*, which had a similar premise although it wasn't a competition there. But what really lacked here was fun. Zae was at a mental state I could only feel pity for her. Things were too serious in this book for me to have fun and all I could do was wait for her breakdown. As you can see, I have myself to blame for wanting a different kind of book and thus feeling frustrated.

Despite dragging, the book managed to approach many important and some not so common themes, such as not wanting to go to a university. To be honest, I don't remember reading any YA's on this, and it's always important to show kids they have so many more options than what conventions impose.

Of course there was much more that would render good discussions for a group reading, so this is surely a recommended book for book clubs and the such. On this, I wish they had approached the idea of girls kissing for fun in a positive way, though. As I said, Zae wasn't in the best place to make decisions, which didn't help this argument. It's a pity, since the author seemed to give serious thought to everything she was proposing, so it'd have been an important situation.

In all, this was just a book that dragged. The plethora of characters, especially boys, coming and going didn't help my getting involved since I couldn't even keep count of the important characters. But I'd still read more from this writer, you can see she has a lot of talent and great ideas.

Katie McGarry says

I really enjoyed this book!
