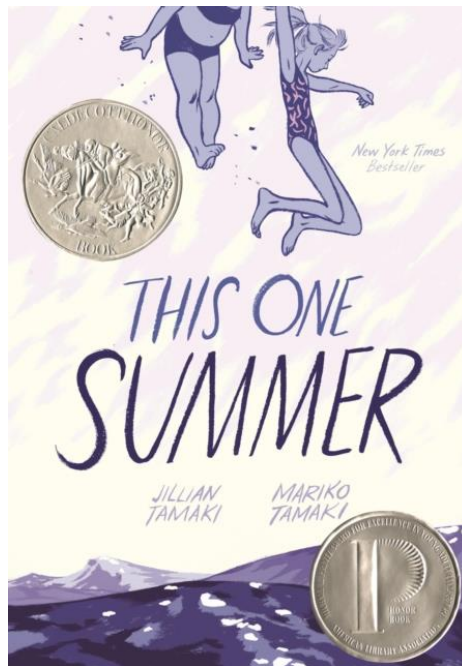




## This One Summer by Mariko Tamaki & Jillian Tamaki

[Young Adult]



Bathed in bilberry blues so beautiful that you could swim in them all summer, this is exquisitely drawn!

Rose is lithe, standing up straight, at the crossroads between girl and young adult. Her younger friend Windy is still enjoying a little puppy fat but has more energy and less inhibition, dancing out beats across the living room floor. Subconsciously Rose's arm joins in! Rose's mum shares her shape but you can tell that she's worn down: she's wan, removing her glasses and rubbing her eyes.

As you'll see, this YA graphic novel of young friendship, brought predominantly *by adults for adults*, boasts some of the most telling body language in the business.



Awago is a coastal village so tiny it has only one store. Rose's dad drives them there every year, waving embarrassingly to its youth as they arrive, while Windy's stooped grandma hires a cottage just down the road. It's glorious to have a playmate for summer! The store is manned by a local lad around 18 years old. He's quite kindly (he called our Rose "blondie" and she liked it!) but distracted by his friends who hang out there. One of them is crude, calling his girlfriend a slut as a joke.

"Oh my god those girls are sooo loud. I bet you they were drunk. They're, like, drunks. They're all like, WHOAAA!" shouts Windy, acting out a big doolally wobble in front of Rose, as the pair grow louder.  
"And like, EEEEEEE! Noo!"  
"They love screaming."  
"They're sluts!"

"ROSE!" Their mums have arrived back at the cottage and Rose is visibly mortified to have been overheard regurgitating that word. But that's what you do when you're young and impressionable, and an age group that you don't yet understand acts up like that. It's a perfect piece of writing. It's a perfect piece of art for Windy – defensively, guiltily – has backed up, head down, against a wall.



"Who's a slut?"

"No one!"

"Bit strange calling someone you don't even know a slut," says Windy's mum, eyebrows raised.

"Oh, well, these guys who knew these girls were calling them sluts," says Windy, tentatively reaching out to hug her mum in a bid for reconciliation and forgiveness

"Well, how is that okay?"

Rose mimics Windy on their way home, clinging on to her Mum's elbow but she's rebuffed: "Rose! Don't hang!" Yes, there's definitely something raw about Rose's mum. Her dad can't seem to shift it.

That sequence is indicative of the quality of creativity shared by the Tamaki cousins who function fully as one, and of the areas being explored: comprehension, communication, bodies and behaviour. More than once it feels a little dangerous. Also, our friends aren't immune to falling out. Windy teases her Rose then attempts to negate it: "Just kidding!" Rose, a little older, embarrasses Windy for krunking without inhibitions by laughing. Their friendship is resilient, though. They're quick to move on.

I'd like to see this taught in schools. So many mistakes in childhood are made through lack of empathy and information and in the void of a deafening silence. Communication is all, and I can think of a dozen subjects raised by key moments here which would make for ideal classroom discussions.



Let me be clear: I would like to see this graphic novel used as an officially set text. How even *is* it that no graphic novel has been used in our national curriculum to this date? All education should be entertainment and **THIS ONE SUMMER** will have young adults absorbed, meaning that they will engage more thoroughly with the subjects at hand, as well as its key literary and visual skills.

