

Reviewer username: Anonymous

School: Valencia High

Grade: Freshman

Book title: If You Could See the Sun

Book author: Ann Liang

Rate 1-5 (1-Lowest to 5-Highest): 4.5

If You Could See the Sun is a fast-paced lighthearted story that takes place in a prestigious Beijing international boarding school, and follows a Chinese American student named Alice Sun. From the start, Alice Sun has always felt invisible among her peers, who come from the richest families in China while she was the only student granted a scholarship. For the longest time, she always found herself studying for many restless nights, being the one achieving the highest marks, but with the exception of her academic rival, Henry Li. One day, she found herself with the power of invisibility, without knowing exactly how to control it. When her parents finally drop the news that they can no longer afford her tuition, she conspires on a plan to monetize her newly founded power to unveil her classmates' scandalous secrets in exchange for an upscale price. She even teams up with her longtime rival as her tasks become more and more vile and slowly loses her morals. In the end, she even starts to see Henry in a different light.

This book hit close to home, especially because of the amount of Asian culture that was sprinkled in much of the setting. Alice Sun is a character that resonated with me as she struggles with high expectations and always wants high achieving grades to make sure her parents do not worry. Additionally, I was surprised by the powerful message that the author gives to readers as well. The book addresses important real-life problems such as classism, racism, and inequality which are still ongoing issues. This book was irresistibly hard to put down and I found myself finishing it in a span of a few hours all in one sitting. Although I wish it was a lot longer, I still found the fast pace to be enjoyable.

I would definitely recommend this book to teenagers who enjoy a short, lighthearted book, and the academic rivals dynamic trope between two characters. In addition, those who are Asian American will especially relate to the characters in this book. Lastly, I'm excited to see more of Ann Liang's work and hope readers will enjoy this book as much as I did.