



Reading the Adolescent Romance: Sweet Valley High and the Popular Young Adult Romance Novel (Children's Literature and Culture)

AMY S. PATTEE

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Reading the Adolescent Romance provides an exhaustive study of the developments in young adult literature since the 1980s with a focus on Francine Pascal's "Sweet Valley High" series, which has become a cultural and literary touchstone for both fans and critics of the novels. Pattee carefully examines the series' content, structure, and readers, allowing her to investigate an influential marketing and literary phenomenon and to interrogate the intersecting influences of history, audience positioning, and readability that allowed "Sweet Valley" and other teen series to flourish.

This book demonstrates that, as a series of generic romance novels, "Sweet Valley High" exhibits tropes associated with both adolescent and adult romance and, as a product of the early 1980s, has and continues to espouse the conservative romantic ideologies associated with the time period. While erstwhile readers of the series recall the novels with pleasure, re-readers of Pascal's novels — who remember reading the series as young people and have re-visited the books as adults — are more critical. Interestingly, both populations continue to value "Sweet Valley High" as an identity touchstone.

Amy Pattee is an associate professor of library and information science at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Simmons College in Boston, Massachusetts. There, she teaches children's and young adult literature in both the library school and in a dual degree program affiliated with Simmons College's Center for the Study of Children's Literature.

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