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wasn't in the plan. And both found what they'd rather be. I really appreciate that there was such a strong assumption that the characters challenged without very meaning to it, and that leaving what they were used to cause them some suffering. They had to find something new now that Ruby couldn't do what Rubies do and Sapphire couldn't do what Sapphires do. They realized that there are several supposed to be gems like them, and coalesce into someone who had no supposed to's (because they're not supposed to exist) must have made it so much more joyful to explore what lay ahead. The art is pretty special - lots of disturbing images (though nothing too scary), lots of beautiful images, and a different style of cartoon - it's simplified and stylized, but it still gets a lot of emotion on those little faces. The backgrounds are beautiful as they generally are in the show, and the characters commenting on the text in a meta mode and talking to each other from little niches (Sapphire above, Ruby below) was really powerful. There's narration, but there's also Sapphire and Ruby saying how they felt about what was happening, and expressing opinions about each other's statements and caring about each other's distress. Eventually, they enter each other's rooms, comment on how they feel and share their perspectives. It seems simple, but it's quite a nuanced metaphor and I think many kids will understand, despite the complexity. Speaking of complexity, there are some concepts here that I think make this book best suited for people who context it out of watching the TV show. The fusion concept isn't presented all that accessible to new fans, and if you haven't seen the show before you don't know that when Gems' physical form is destroyed, they reform later (if their Gem isn't broken). You make knowledge with Pearl, even though she is there, and you have no context for illustrating Diamond (and her Pearl), and although Garnet is mentioned in the online description of the book, she is not mentioned by name in the story itself (as in the episode). It's also a little unclear in the book (but not the cartoon) why the other gems were furious with them for fusing, but I think the story had to be kept simple. There's also some complex language in the book - vocabulary words kids in the target audience probably won't see in school for a few years - but the presentation makes me think they have context to pick it up. I remember doing that a lot as a child with children's books that slipped in an advanced word here and there. I was hoping for a few things I didn't get, but I don't blame books for not living up to the expectations they didn't promise to fulfill. I was really hoping to hear a little more about the moment of Sapphire and Ruby's first merger, because in the show merger it's supposed to be about being on the same wavelength, and it seemed almost illogical that they could have melted at that time amid all that confusion. If they did, they must have wanted the same thing temporarily. I know what Ruby wanted - to save Sapphire - but I'd like to get a glimpse of Sapphire rather than just see some sort of blindsided by the rescue. I would have been really interested to see more of that moment of escape in their unheard of spontaneous relationship – the action that changed who they were figuratively and literally (not to mention saving the planet). The overall package is really precious and looks the way it should --like an age-appropriate, fairytale-esque storybook that's not anything strange or inappropriate at all. I can't even imagine reading this to a child and with them stopping me to ask wait, are they two girls??? because it's just so smooth and well told, and the characters' casually presented hugs and casual closeness uses the same signals we'd expect to see on a Disney princess dancing with her prince. It's just not. It's an issue. Not in the book. Outside of the book, I think it will be. I hope the crowds it creates is especially positive. And now, of course, it's made even clearer in this book that Garnet doesn't ask questions in the show because Rose told her not to and she took it very literally. (She seems to get around asking questions with awkward wording, though, instead of What have you seen? she'll say: Tell me what you saw.) If you already have the answer, what questions would you need to ask? And I have to say that Rebecca Sugar dedicating the book to Ian Jones-Quartey is really sweet. ... More... More

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