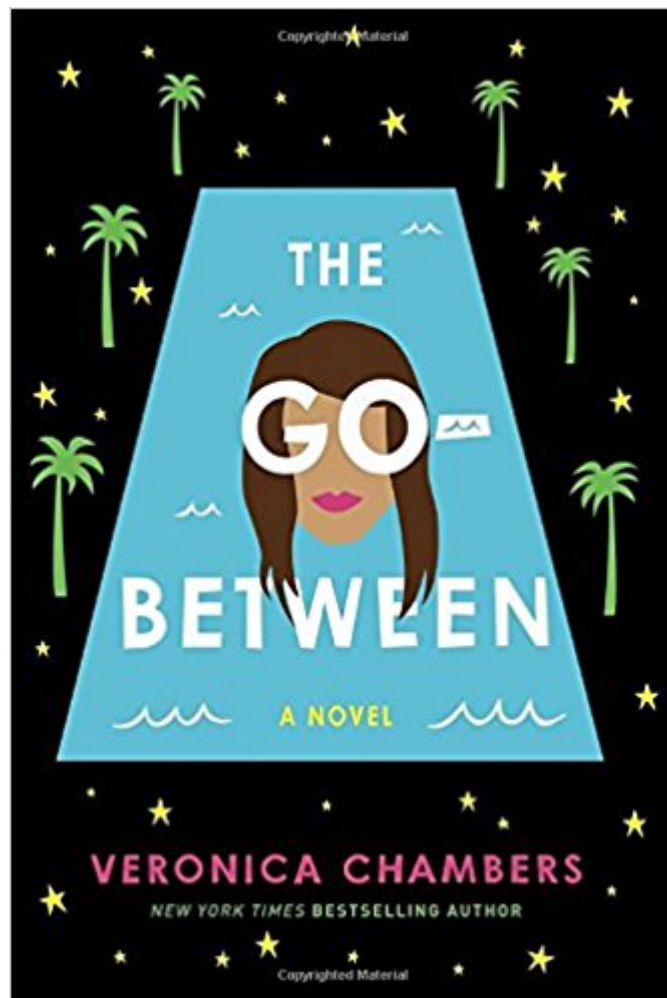


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The Go-Between



Synopsis

Fans of Jane the Virgin will find much to love about *The Go-Between*, a coming-of-age novel from bestselling author Veronica Chambers, who with humor and humanity explores issues of identity and belonging in a world that is ever-changing. She is the envy of every teenage girl in Mexico City. Her mother is a glamorous telenovela actress. Her father is the go-to voice-over talent for blockbuster films. Hers is a world of private planes, chauffeurs, paparazzi and gossip columnists. Meet Camilla del Valle — Cammi to those who know her best. When Cammi's mom gets cast in an American television show and the family moves to LA, things change, and quickly. Her mom's first role is playing a not-so-glamorous maid in a sitcom. Her dad tries to find work but dreams about returning to Mexico. And at the posh, private Polestar Academy, Cammi's new friends assume she's a scholarship kid, the daughter of a domestic. At first Cammi thinks playing along with the stereotypes will be her way of teaching her new friends a lesson. But the more she lies, the more she wonders: Is she only fooling herself?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Offers a distinct perspective on the complex and current issue of Mexican immigration to the U.S. . . a short but rich tale that illuminates the nuanced experience of a girl who, despite her privilege, still grapples with who she is and where she belongs." —Booklist "There's a well-researched authenticity to the author's descriptions of everything from Mexican culture to couture clothing, but it's the story's exploration of stereotypes that makes it memorable." —Kirkus Reviews

VERONICA CHAMBERS is a prolific author, best known for her critically acclaimed memoir, *Mama's Girl*. She has written more than a dozen books for young people, including *Plus* and the *Amigas* series, and has cowritten New York Times bestselling adult memoirs with Robin Roberts, Eric Ripert, Michael Strahan, and Marcus Samuelsson. She also cowrote Samuelsson's young adult memoir, *Make It Messy*. Veronica lives with her husband and daughter in Hoboken, New Jersey. Visit her online at veronicachambers.com, and follow her on Twitter at @vvchambers.

Couldn't wait for another Veronica Chambers book, this one for YA readers! We've been reading her books for years. My multiracial daughter has loved growing up with VC's characters because they mirror her own life. After reading *The Go Between*, we ran out and bought copies for all of my daughter's friends, and got great book club discussions going by reading the book together. Chambers does what very few authors dare do, especially for young adults: she writes textured, colorful, lovable characters from multicultural backgrounds. That those characters are girls/women of color who celebrate their cultures and languages makes VC's books all the more precious manna. *The Go Between* is another triumph. This story is about Camilla, the daughter of a famous Mexican telenovela star, who moves to LA as a teenager. Once in California and attending an elite private school, Camilla confronts how relationships with her peers are complicated by lies and racial assumptions made both by Camilla and her new friends. No one's perfect but here's a book that does the rare yet important work of not shying away from discussions of race. VC's characters have some real and unvarnished conversations that we could all use. But what remains at the heart of this story and these friendships is caring -- about each other, about family, about the simple gift of friendship. Here's what really makes *The Go Between* a true gem: Camilla, a 21st century teenage girl, actually likes her family and has a healthy relationship with them. She does not hate her mother nor does she dismiss the adults in her life in the cliched way that so many teenage girls are normally written. Camilla has female friends and they don't spend all of their time talking-- or fighting-- over boys. This book aces the Bechdel Test with flying colors. Of course there are conflicts to be worked out. We're talking about teenage girls after all. As Camilla's family moves to the U.S., as she starts up at a pricey private school, as she forms new friendships, as she tests the boundaries of her identity (including completely made up ones), and as Camilla navigates how to align who she is privately with who she projects to the world, you'll fall in love with this girl. And so will your kids.

I got an ARC of this thanks to Vine and I have one word regarding this book: no. Actually, I have more than one word. Sorry for lying and being just as general as the book itself is. I'll do what it never did and be specific. The Go-Between is unusually short and that's because it's more like a first draft that lays out in general terms what happens in the book. Incidents are discussed without much detail and large timeskips happen often, leaving it feeling incomplete. This is the kind of book I'd write if I were one for writing awful first drafts that lay out the story's bare bones so I could go back and expand on scenes later. There's no emotion to be found. Heck, my book outlines are just barely more detailed than this book is. Her "best friends" Willow and Tiggy are ridiculously racist, especially the latter. While I understand Cammi eventually forgiving Willow once Cammi's jig is up, I honestly can't see why she forgives Tiggy. IT'S THAT BAD. AND THE USE OF SPANISH. Cammi spells out every single Spanish phrase she uses no matter how simple or obvious they are. Readers will get what's being said based on context clues/their own smarts and don't need to be patronized to? Other books have handled the use of foreign languages much better. To be truthful, I read this book over a month ago and forgot to take notes, but I'm still stewing in my anger whenever I think about this book. I'm sure you can find better Latinx representation. One suggestion: The Education of Margot Sanchez by Lilliam Rivera. It's got complicated characters, good use of Spanish language without treating readers like they need everything translated, and comes with a free bucket to help you catch all your tears. (Okay, that last one is a lie, but I recommend getting a bucket. The story and characters gave me a lot of feelings, okay?)

This is a fun read that tackles some issues without ever seeming preachy, yet also fell a bit short for me. Camilla moves from Mexico to LA and her identity as a rich girl who has everything changes dramatically once she comes to the United States. Her new friends automatically think she is a scholarship kid and Camilla finds out what it feels like to be stereotyped. While the premise of this novel is a good one, there are a few things within it that did nothing but reinforce stereotypes. At one point Camilla jokes that she might be schizophrenic. Although a joke, lying does not make anyone schizophrenic and seems in poor taste. At another point Chambers refers to Republicans negatively, stereotyping this group as well. I have a low tolerance for children's authors who try to push their political beliefs in fiction, and again this was another stereotype. Overall, this book is meant to be a fun read. Tween readers will probably enjoy the glamour of it all and not read as critically as an adult. On the surface they will see the message about stereotyping being wrong and find Camilla to be an entertaining rich girl.

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