

Good evening and thank you to Pittsburgh Arts and Lectures for the privilege of introducing *New York Times* best-selling author Sara Shepard. In my many roles at my high school, I get to share my love of books with fellow bibliophiles and aspiring writers on a daily basis. From a teacher's perspective, I love sharing books that resonate with my students; these books might have a strong protagonist, clever plot twists, or a writing style that we can use as mentor texts for our own writing development. And for today's young adults, who continually deal with issues such as identity, mental health, and social pressures, a book can be a gift to let them know they are not alone with their struggles. Sara Shepard's astounding resume of 40+ books as well as her newest release, *Wait for Me*, address many of these topics. Add fantasy, a little bit of the paranormal, and romance, and her newest release is a book that teachers will quickly add to their classroom library to engage readers.

In Ms. Shepard's recent work, *Wait for Me*, the protagonist named Casey is a female lead that is easy for people like me to relate to. It's refreshing to see characters that share similar ideals to the age group they are based on. Moreover, Ms. Shepard yet again manages to put her readers into a never-ending loop of questioning and guessing. When you believe you have figured out the answer to the mystery, another element gets added and the cycle of becoming an amateur detective continues. Authors like her, who manage to hook readers on their books with intriguing story elements, are what inspire the minds of upcoming generations to show interest in becoming writers themselves.

Bios:

A veteran teacher with 23 years in the classroom, Kristen Shaw is an advocate of literacy as an English teacher, Creative Writing teacher, English Department Chair, and book club advisor at Trinity High School in Washington, PA.

A sophomore at Trinity High School, Addison McCoy is an Honors student who loves to read and write. She recently finished writing six chapters of an original novel this past fall and is always seen with a book in her hand.