
International Exploration in Young Adult Literature: Stephanie Perkins's *Isla and the Happily Ever After* as Contemporary Romance and Women's Travel Writing

Margaret A. Robbins*¹

¹The University of Georgia – United States

Abstract

Stephanie Perkins's novel *Isla and the Happily Ever After*, the third in a series of realistic Young Adult literature, blends elements of travel writing and romance. Isla travels from New York City to a boarding school in Paris. Eventually, she and her boyfriend travel together to other cities in Europe. Both Paris and New York serve as important characters in the novel that help Isla to discover herself. Her travels among the different cities are both physically and emotionally constructive. In all three books in the series, which also includes *Anna and the French Kiss* and *Lola and the Boy Next Door*, place plays an important role. *Isla and the Happily Ever After* in particular presents a feminist view of travel. Isla learns to empower herself to reach her goals, and the novel challenges the trope of the woman who "follows a boy" to achieve happiness. Therefore, I argue for the value of studying this work of Young Adult fiction from the perspectives of feminist intersectionality and travel writing. In that context, I show how Perkins uses place description as well as characterization to tell a tale of a young woman who transforms through romance-related yet personally empowering travels.

*Speaker