

# *Think Like the Banned*

**Title:** *Heather Has Two Mommies*

**Author:** Leslea Newman

**Publication Date:** 1989

1. *What is the title, author, publication date, and plot (in 1-2 sentences) of this picture book?*

**Sarina P., 11<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Heather Has Two Mommies by Leslea Newman (1989). Heather Has Two Mommies is about a girl named Heather who has two moms who's going to a play group for the first time and learning about all the different kinds of families her peers have.

2. *Were you aware of the existence of this book prior to starting this project?*

**Sarina P., 11<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Yes, I'd heard of it.

3. *This book was challenged and/or banned in America frequently enough for it to be included in The Top 100 Challenged Books Lists (between 1990-2021) compiled by the American Library Association. Why do you think this book was targeted?*

**Sarina P., 11<sup>th</sup> Grade:** The book included representation of lesbian parents in a time when gay marriage was still illegal. Homophobes at this time didn't want to do anything to cause children to see gay people as normal.

4. *Think like a Book Prosecution Lawyer: If you were arguing in favor of banning this book, what would your argument be?*

**Sarina P., 11<sup>th</sup> Grade:** "This book promotes homosexuality, which is against the Bible. We shouldn't have children learning about sinful relationships."

5. *Think like a Book Defense Lawyer: If you were arguing against banning this book, what would your argument be?*

**Sarina P., 11<sup>th</sup> Grade:** "There's nothing in the Bible that actually states that gay marriage is wrong. What people believed to be a verse about men having relationships was actually a line discouraging pedophilia, because it translated to men sleeping with boys. Gay relationships are not any more harmful than straight relationships."

6. *The contents of this book may be inflammatory to some people. Do you think the information/plot of the book is presented in an unbiased way, or do you feel like it is pushing an agenda (if so, is it a positive or negative agenda)?*

**Sarina P., 11<sup>th</sup> Grade:** I wouldn't say that the author is unbiased, considering she herself is a lesbian, however, the message that the book is trying to encourage is a good message about supporting all kinds of families.

7. *This book presents information that may be useful and uplifting for some people. Can you cite any positive information or messages in the book?*

**Sarina P., 11<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Not only does it provide positive representation of gay couples, but also of other unconventional types of families such as single parents, divorced families with step-parents, and adoptive parents.

8. *Children's picture books are typically written for 2 to 8 year olds. One of the most frequent reasons children's picture books are challenged or banned in the United States is that they are considered to be "Unsuited for Age Group." What age group do you think this book is appropriate for?*

**Sarina P., 11<sup>th</sup> Grade:** 3 and up. It features a young playdate group.

9. *Think about the picture books you read as a child: Would this book fit into the themes of what you read back then, or would it stand out as an anomaly?*

**Sarina P., 11<sup>th</sup> Grade:** I don't believe I read books featuring LGBTQ+ families, but I was talked to about the topic, There wasn't a lot of media representation of the LGBTQ+ community when I was growing up.

10. *Pretend you are a Parent: If you were in a library, would you pick out this book and read it to your child; why or why not? Explain your answer.*

**Sarina P., 11<sup>th</sup> Grade:** I think there are more modern books on the topic now that have more depth, so I might not pick this one in particular, but I would definitely read my child books on similar themes.