

Title: *Like a Love Story*
Author: Abdi Nazemian
Perspectives Category: LGBTQIA+

Reviewer Name and Grade: Kylee K., 11th Grade

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1. What is the main plot of this book?

The main plot of "Like a Love Story" revolves around the lives of three teenagers - Reza, Judy, and Art - as they navigate love, friendship, and identity amidst the backdrop of the AIDS crisis in 1989 New York City. The quote "But I also think about that time when we went to see Madonna, and it was like the world was changing, and it didn't care about what anyone thought. It didn't care about fear. It was living." illustrates the central theme of the book, capturing the essence of the characters' struggle for authenticity and acceptance in a society rife with prejudice and fear.

2. Which character did you most identify with and why?

Among the characters in "Like a Love Story," I found a deep resonance with Reza, particularly his struggle with reconciling his cultural identity with his sexual orientation. The quote "I'm not brave like you. I don't want to be an outcast. I don't want to be a freak" encapsulates Reza's internal conflict, echoing the inner turmoil experienced by many individuals who grapple with societal expectations and the fear of rejection. As someone who has faced similar challenges in navigating culture, I empathize with Reza's journey of self-discovery and the courage it takes to embrace one's true self despite the risks.

3. What do you believe is the main message of this book?

The main message of "Like a Love Story" is the power of love and resilience in overcoming hate and discrimination. Through the quote "We have to be stronger than hate," the book emphasizes the transformative potential of love and solidarity in challenging oppressive systems and fostering a more inclusive society.

4. Do you think the main message of this book was effectively integrated into the story, or did it come across as too "preachy"?

The main message of the book was effectively integrated into the story, as it emerged naturally from the characters' experiences and interactions without feeling preachy. The quote "Real love doesn't die. It lives on in the stories we tell each other" exemplifies this integration, as it underscores the enduring power of love to transcend time and adversity, serving as a poignant reminder of the book's central message without overtly preaching to the reader.

5. If two or more perspectives on an important topic were explored/presented in this book, which one did you agree with and why?

The perspective that resonated with me the most was the portrayal of love as a revolutionary force capable of inspiring change and challenging societal norms. The quote "Love is bigger than any plague. It's bigger than fear or shame or hate or stigma. It's bigger than AIDS. Love is so big

it has room for it all" encapsulates this perspective, highlighting the transformative potential of love in the face of adversity and oppression.

6. In what ways (if any) were your beliefs about a topic changed or reaffirmed through reading this book?

Reading "Like a Love Story" reaffirmed my belief in the power of love and resilience to overcome prejudice and discrimination. The quote "You don't have to be straight to be worthy of love" challenged societal norms at that time as well as the false views of many even today, and it reaffirmed my conviction in the importance of embracing diversity and acceptance in fostering a more inclusive society.

7. What perspective, if any, do you think was missing from this book?

While the book offered a nuanced portrayal of the LGBTQ+ experience during the AIDS crisis, it could have delved deeper into the perspectives of individuals from marginalized communities within the LGBTQ+ spectrum, such as transgender and non-binary individuals, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of their struggles and triumphs.

8. Did this book encourage you to pursue any topics further through more reading, research, action, etc., and if so, how?

This book inspired me to delve deeper into the history of the LGBTQ+ rights movement and the impact of the AIDS crisis on marginalized communities. The quote "We're not perfect, but we have the potential to be something so much better" fueled my desire to learn more about the resilience and activism of LGBTQ+ individuals throughout history, motivating me to take action in support of equality and social justice.

9. What type of reader (based on age, interests, perspectives, etc.) would you suggest this book to?

I would recommend "Like a Love Story" to readers of all ages who are interested in thought-provoking narratives that explore themes of love, resilience, and identity amidst the backdrop of significant historical events. The book's powerful message of acceptance and solidarity makes it particularly relevant for young adults grappling with issues of identity and belonging.

10. What other book(s) you have read that you think would make a good addition to this category of the Perspectives Bibliography, and why?

Another book that would complement "Like a Love Story" in the Perspectives Bibliography is "The Great Believers" by Rebecca Makkai, which similarly explores the impact of the AIDS crisis on the LGBTQ+ community while delving into themes of love, loss, and resilience. Both books offer poignant insights into the human experience amidst times of adversity, making them essential reads for those interested in gaining a deeper understanding of LGBTQ+ history and activism.