

Title: *Two Boys Kissing*
Author: David Levithan
Perspectives Category: LGBTQIA+

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

Date Reviewed: 6/27/2023

1. What is the main plot of this book?

The main plot of "Two Boys Kissing" revolves around the lives of several gay teenagers as they navigate love, identity, and acceptance in a society that often ostracizes them. Throughout the story, the characters grapple with their own struggles and relationships, all while reflecting on the broader LGBTQ+ community's experiences. As one character reflects, "We kiss to tell the world that living is precious" (pg. 16), encapsulating the central theme of resilience and the quest for love and connection amidst adversity.

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

I most identified with Harry, who struggles with self-acceptance and fear of rejection. His internal monologues often mirror my own insecurities, and his journey towards embracing his identity resonated deeply with me. When he reflects, "All I wanted was to live a life where I could be me, and love who I loved" (pg. 82), it encapsulates the universal desire for authenticity and acceptance.

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

The main message of "Two Boys Kissing" is the importance of embracing one's true self and finding love and acceptance despite societal pressures and discrimination. Through the characters' experiences, the book advocates for visibility and resilience within the LGBTQ+ community, as reflected in the line, "We are all part of something larger" (pg. 189), emphasizing the interconnectedness of human experiences.

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 was effectively integrated into the story, woven seamlessly into the characters' experiences and interactions. Rather than feeling preachy, the book's exploration of LGBTQ+ themes feels authentic and empathetic, encouraging readers to empathize with the characters' struggles and triumphs. As one character reflects, "The most important thing is to be yourself" (pg. 112), illustrating the book's organic approach to conveying its message.

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

Among the various perspectives explored in the book, I resonated most with the idea of embracing one's identity unapologetically. Despite the challenges faced by the characters, their unwavering commitment to authenticity and self-love serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of staying true to oneself. As one character asserts, "We have to show up, we have to

be visible" (pg. 207), highlighting the value of visibility and representation in fostering acceptance and understanding.

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

Reading "Two Boys Kissing" reaffirmed my belief in the resilience and strength of the LGBTQ+ community. The characters' experiences shed light on the challenges they face, but also underscored their capacity for love, courage, and resilience. As one character reflects, "We are not alone. We are everywhere" (pg. 124), reinforcing the book's message of solidarity and interconnectedness.

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

While "Two Boys Kissing" offers a poignant exploration of the LGBTQ+ experience, it could have delved deeper into the intersectionality of identities within the community. By incorporating diverse perspectives based on race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background, the book could have provided a more comprehensive portrayal of the challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals from marginalized communities.

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 LGBTQ+ history and activism, prompting further reading and research to better understand the struggles and triumphs of the community. Additionally, it encouraged me to engage in conversations and advocacy efforts aimed at promoting acceptance and equality for LGBTQ+ individuals. As one character reflects, "Our lives are becoming more visible, more vibrant" (pg. 213), motivating me to contribute to the ongoing fight for LGBTQ+ rights and representation.

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

I would recommend "Two Boys Kissing" to readers of all ages who are interested in thought-provoking narratives about love, identity, and resilience. Particularly, it would resonate with young adult readers navigating their own journeys of self-discovery and acceptance, as well as anyone interested in LGBTQ+ literature and advocacy. As one character reflects, "Our stories will outlive us" (pg. 191), emphasizing the book's timeless relevance and universal themes.

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 "Two Boys Kissing" is "Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda" by Becky Albertalli. Both novels offer poignant portrayals of LGBTQ+ characters navigating love and acceptance in contemporary society, while also addressing broader themes of identity and belonging. "Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda" further explores the complexities of coming out and self-acceptance, providing readers with additional perspectives on the LGBTQ+ experience.