

BOY MEETS BOY



Young Adult

By David Levithan

ISBN: 9780375832994

Book Summary:

A gay high schooler wants to have a romantic relationship with another young man who is initially in denial about his own homosexuality.

Summary of Concerns:

This book contains inexplicit sexual activities; alternate sexualities; alternate gender ideologies; and mild/infrequent profanity/derogatory terms.

2/**5**

Teen Guidance
BookLooks Review Rating

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1	<p>Back when I was in second grade, the older gay kids who didn't flee to the city for entertainment would have to make their own fun. Now it's all good. Most of the straight guys try to sneak into the Queer Beer bar. Boys who love boys flirt with girls who love girls. And whether your heart is strictly ballroom or bluegrass punk, the dance floors are open to whatever you have to offer.</p>
8	<p>I've always known I was gay, but it wasn't confirmed until I was in kindergarten. It was my teacher who said so. It was right there on my kindergarten report card: PAUL IS DEFINITELY GAY AND HAS VERY GOOD SENSE OF SELF. I saw it on her desk one day before naptime. And I have to admit: I might not have realized I was different if Mrs. Benchly hadn't pointed it out. I mean, I was five years old. I just assumed boys were attracted to other boys. ...Imagine my surprise to find out that I wasn't entirely right. Imagine my surprise when I went through all the other reports and found out that not one of the other boys had been labeled DEFINITELY GAY.</p>
9	<p>Mrs. Benchly looked me over and nodded. "What's gay?" I asked. "It's when a boy likes other boys," she explained. I pointed over to the painting corner, where Greg Easton was wrestling on the ground with Ted Halpern. "Is Greg gay?" I asked. "No," Mrs. Benchly answered. "At least, not yet." ...That night, I held my big news until after my favorite Nickelodeon block was over. My father was in the kitchen, doing dishes. My mother was in the den with me, reading on the couch. Quietly, I walked over to her. "GUESS WHAT!" I said. She jumped, then tried to pretend she hadn't been surprised. Since she didn't close her book—she only marked the page with her finger—I knew I didn't have much time. "What?" she asked. "I'm gay!" Parents never react the way you want them to. I thought, at the very least, my mother would take her finger out of the book. But no. Instead she turned in the direction of the kitchen and yelled to my father. "Honey ... Paul's learned a new word."</p>
11	<p>It was with Joni's help that I became the first openly gay class president in the history of Ms. Farquar's third-grade class. Joni was my campaign manager. She was the person who came up with my campaign slogan: VOTE FOR ME ... I'M GAY! I thought it rather oversimplified my stance on the issues (pro-recess, anti-gym), but Joni said it was sure to generate media attention. At first, she wanted the slogan to be VOTE FOR ME ... I'M A GAY, but I pointed out that this could easily be misread as VOTE FOR ME ... I'M A GUY, which would certainly lose me votes. So the A was struck, and the race began in earnest. My biggest opponent was (I'm sorry to say) Ted Halpern. His first slogan was VOTE FOR ME ... I'M NOT GAY, which only made him seem dull. Then he tried YOU CAN'T VOTE FOR HIM ... HE'S GAY, which was pretty stupid, because nobody likes to be told who they can (or can't) vote for. Finally, in the days leading up to the election, he resorted to DONT VOTE FOR THE FAG.</p>

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12	<p>In sixth grade, Cody, Joni, a lesbian fourth grader named Laura, and I formed our elementary school's first gay-straight alliance. ...Membership in the gay-straight alliance soon surpassed that of the football team (which isn't to say there wasn't overlap).</p>
13	<p>At first, I thought it was a strange kind of foreplay, but then I realized that their grunts were actually insults—queer, faggot, the usual.</p>
15	<p>I don't know when Infinite Darlene and I first became friends. Perhaps it was back when she was still Daryl Heisenberg, but that's not very likely; few of us can remember what Daryl Heisenberg was like, since Infinite Darlene consumed him so completely. He was a decent football player, but nowhere near as good as when he started wearing false eyelashes. Infinite Darlene doesn't have it easy. Being both star quarterback and homecoming queen has its conflicts. And sometimes it's hard for her to fit in. The other drag queens in our school rarely sit with her at lunch; they say she doesn't take good enough care of her nails, and that she looks a little too buff in a tank top. The football players are a little more accepting, although there was a spot of trouble a year ago when Chuck, the second-string quarterback, fell in love with her and got depressed when she said he wasn't her type.</p>
18	<p>Kyle is the only straight boy I've ever kissed. (He didn't realize he was straight at the time.)</p>
52	<p>From my first spin-the-bottle kiss with Cody to the final, conflicted kiss-off kiss with Kyle, Joni's been the one I've shared the stories with. So it comes as no surprise to have her question me now, on the phone, fifteen minutes after I've come home from Noah's.</p>
61	<p>I lean forward and kiss him. The flowers crush between our shirts. I touch his lips, I breathe him in. I close my eyes, I open them. He is surprised, I can tell. I am surprised, too. He kisses me back with a kiss like a smile. It's very nice. Actually, it's wonderful. "Hello," I say. "Hello," Noah says back. I hear footsteps coming down from upstairs. My parents. "Come in," I say. I hold the flowers in one hand and swing my other hand behind me. Noah takes it as he walks through the door. "Hello there," my parents say together as they reach the bottom of the stairs. In one glance they see the flowers, and me and Noah holding hands. They can immediately figure out that Noah is more than just a new friend.</p>
63	<p>Two minutes ago, I was kissing Noah and he was kissing me back. Now he's in the living room with my father. The boy I just kissed is talking to my father. The boy I want to kiss again is waiting for my mother to serve pancakes.</p>
69	<p>I imprint him with my shadow as I lean in closer. I kiss him once, but it lasts a long time.</p>
78	<p>"Meet me before the morning bell," I say, reaching up to touch his hair. "I'll be there," he replies, ruffling me back, kissing me good-bye.</p>
85	<p>I know some people think liking both guys and girls is a cop-out. Some of Infinite Darlene's biggest rivals save their deepest scorn for the people they call "dabblers." But I think they're totally full of garbage. I don't see why, if I'm wired to like guys, someone else can't be wired to like both girls and guys. "We could call you an ambisexual. A duosexual. A—" "Do I really have to find a word for it?" Kyle interrupts. "Can't it just be what it is?"</p>

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	"Of course," I say, even though in the bigger world I'm not so sure. The world loves stupid labels. I wish we got to choose our own.
88	We've also been kissing like crazy. Hours pass and we don't notice. We have all the time in the world because it feels like, for once, the world is giving us the time we need.
95	Tony and I figure the best thing a straight boy with religious, intolerant parents can do for his love life is tell his parents he's gay. Before Tony's parents discovered he was gay they wouldn't let him shake hands with a girl. Now if he mentions he's doing something with a girl—any girl—they practically pimp him out the door.
104	Then he pulls his face back, tears now released, and I kiss him. Just once, so I can take some of the tears away.
110	I know I shouldn't, but I lean over and kiss him. I press against his camera, and it takes pictures of our feet as he kisses me back.
115	"Perhaps it's time to send in the P-FLAG commandos," Jay suggests. In our town, P-FLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) is as big a draw as the PTA.
118	He needed me in a really serious way, so I kissed him.
146	I feel a hand on my back. When I don't move, Kyle turns me gently around. Then he leans in and kisses me. Softly, at first. Then embracing.
156	Still, (g) every time I see him, I (h) want everything to be right again and (i) want to kiss him madly.
171	He leans in and kisses me once. He says he's missed me, too.
178	I light the candles. The air smells like vanilla mist. Noah reaches over to touch my cheek. His thumb moves over my lips and down the side of my neck. He leans me back against the wall and kisses me. I kiss him back hard. We breathe each other in. As the sound system tests itself out and orchids are floated atop the tables, we grasp at each other and explore each other and mark the time in movements and whispers. It's only when Trilby calls out my name that we stop.
187	This morning I read about the Supreme Court agreeing to hear arguments against California's discriminatory Proposition 8. There have been drag queen quarterbacks and LGBT homecoming kings and queens. There are even kids who realize who they are in kindergarten, just like Paul. What seemed like fantasy in 2003 isn't fantasy at all in 2013. Which is as it should be.
189	I come from a liberal family where my gay uncle's boyfriend was always invited to the holidays. My best friend's other best friend came from a very conservative family that forced him into marrying a girl to save his soul.
192	This is an LGBT novel with no mention of hate/ intolerance/ prejudice/ bigotry. Why did you choose to leave these aspects out of your novel? Oh, they're there. Even when they are absent from the page, they're there. You have to understand, this novel is as much about Tony as it is about Paul. It is as much about the reality of Tony's town as it is about the ideal of Paul's town. Which leads to the next question ...
193	Why? Because, at the most basic level, what LGBT people are being asked (absurdly) is to prove that we are as much human beings as anyone else.
197	As for negative reaction—I think it's made me much more aware that we have to be vigilant about preemptive censorship just as much as we are about book challenges. That is to say—

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	<p>we know to fight for the freedom to read when a book is pulled from the shelf, but we also have to fight for the freedom to read when someone refuses to put the book on the shelf in the first place. Boy Meets Boy has been a big target in this way because of its title—the gatekeepers who don't want to deal with LGBT books in their collections (whether it be a bookstore or a library or a classroom) just don't put them there in the first place, thereby disenfranchising the readers—both straight and gay—who might want or need to read them. We have to insist on these books being included.</p>
201	<p>Infinite Darlene is preparing for a date. She puts on a layer of makeup, topping it off with some lipstick. As usual, she's grateful for her smooth chin, that God decided to give her stubble every week or two, not every single day. Her makeup is the kind that's meant to look natural—if she does a good job (and she always does a good job), nobody can tell it's there. Except for the lipstick. That's meant to be seen.</p> <p>While Infinite Darlene has many, many friends, she hasn't had many, many dates. She doesn't entirely know why this is. Maybe it's because she's so busy being both the homecoming queen and the star quarterback at her school. Maybe it's because guys are intimidated by a 6' 4" transgender superstar.</p>
204	<p>She can't see his ass as well in his jeans, but at the same time, the denim isn't as blinding as the usual polyester.</p>

Profanity/Derogatory Terms	Count
Ass	2
Bitch	2
Fag/Faggot	2
Fuck	2
Goddamn	2
Shit	8