



Two Boys Kissing

By David Levithan

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"You have to read this."* —Rainbow Rowell, bestselling author of *Eleanor & Park

In his follow-up to the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Every Day*, and David Levithan, coauthor of bestsellers *Will Grayson*, *Will Grayson* (with John Green) and *Nick & Norah's Infinite Playlist* (with Rachel Cohn), crafts a novel that the *Los Angeles Times* calls “open, frank, and ultimately optimistic.”

Based on true events—and narrated by a Greek Chorus of the generation of gay men lost to AIDS—*Two Boys Kissing* follows Harry and Craig, two seventeen-year-olds who are about to take part in a 32-hour marathon of kissing to set a new Guinness World Record. While the two increasingly dehydrated and sleep-deprived boys are locking lips, they become a focal point in the lives of other teens dealing with universal questions of love, identity, and belonging.

Named to the National Book Award Longlist
A Lambda Literary Award Winner
A Stonewall Honor Book

“An intriguing, complex narrative with an unusual point of view...[and] a quality of retrospection that is rare (and refreshing) in YA literature.” —*The Washington Post*

From the Hardcover edition.



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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 7 Up—Narrated by an often heavy-handed Greek chorus of men who died of AIDS, this novel features the stories of one transgender and several gay teens. It focuses on Harry and Craig, friends and ex-boyfriends who have set out to beat the Guinness World Record for kissing. Harry's parents accept that he is gay and are there as witnesses, while Craig's parents find out that he's gay after his mother is told about their record-breaking attempt. Other characters include Tariq, the victim of a hate crime; boyfriends Neil and Peter; and female-to-male (FTM) transgender teen Avery and his love interest, Ryan. Finally, there is isolated, angry, and disaffected Cooper. He spends his nights trolling sex sites online and runs away from home when confronted by his furious parents. Although Levithan has a tendency toward didacticism, his characters are likable, with some more developed than others. The story will engage readers, both female and male. The author's note discusses the true events that inspired this story. Despite its flaws, this title is recommended based on subject need.—Nancy Silverrod, San Francisco Public Library©(c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

From Booklist

It's impossible to ignore the context of Levithan's latest novel. The timing is perfect—in the age of Dan Savage's *It Gets Better* (2011) and recent Supreme Court rulings on marriage equality, a book meant for young adults features a real-life gay teen couple kissing on the cover, standing in for the book's two fictional boys, ex-boyfriends hoping to share the world's longest kiss. The story is narrated from the beyond by the "shadow uncles"—gay men of the AIDS generation—who tell millennial gay boys, "We don't want our legacy to be gravitas." These narrators marvel and remark upon Harry and Craig's kiss (a protest of hate crimes committed against a friend), the impact on two other couples at different stages of their relationships, and a hopeless loner in clear emotional danger. Levithan leans intensely into this work, which occasionally reveals the gears grinding the piece into shape, thereby dissipating some of the magic. Still, there's little doubt that this title, with its weight, significance, and literary quality, will find its way into LGBTQ and wider canons. Stock up. Grades 9-12. --Courtney Jones

Review

"There are more than two boys kissing in this book, and every one of them will reach your heart. ***You have to read this.***"

- Rainbow Rowell, author of *Eleanor & Park*

"Remarkable."

- Frank Bruni, *The New York Times*

Entertainment Weekly, August 21, 2013:

"Author David Levithan's poignant novel follows the stories of gay teens joined through an unconventional protest. **A-**"

The Washington Post, August 20, 2013:

"Over the years, Levithan has consistently explored new creative territory... 'Two Boys Kissing' reveals his command of an intriguing, complex narrative with an unusual point of view: the first-person plural. This 'we' is the combined voice of men who died during the AIDS pandemic several decades ago. As the boys' stories become more closely entwined and connect in a satisfying finale, the reflections of these 'shadow uncles' lend a quality of retrospection that is rare (and refreshing) in YA literature."

The Los Angeles Times, September 1, 2013:

"Open, frank and ultimately optimistic."

The Wall Street Journal Speakeasy, October 24, 2013:

"'Two Boys Kissing' couldn't have arrived at a more timely moment, just months after the Supreme Court decision on gay marriage. The shift in society's attitudes towards the LGBT community has long been embraced by many in the young adult crowd. Levithan seems to intuitively understand this generation—and his new book allows him to bring their particular struggles and joys to life."

Newsday, August 21, 2013:

"We stand on the shoulders of those who came before us, goes an oft-paraphrased line. David Levithan gives vivid voice to it in his latest YA novel, 'Two Boys Kissing'.

BookPage, August 28, 2013:

"Levithan's powerful, multifaceted novel explores just how far things have come for many gay teens—and how far things still need to go."

Starred Review, The Bulletin, September 2013:

"Both celebratory and elegiac... There's much to discuss here about identity, about social media, about community—and it would be a particularly stellar choice for a multi-generational LGBTQ-focused book club."

Starred Review, Publishers Weekly, June 3, 2013:

"A landmark achievement from a writer and editor who has helped create, in literature, a haven for queer youth."

"No one does heart-pulling emotion like Levithan, and this book, coming a decade after his groundbreaking debut, 'Boy Meets Boy,' has special resonance."

- Gayle Forman, author of *Just One Day* and *Just One Year*, for Bookish.com

"Brilliant, moving, important, and wise."

- Jennifer E. Smith, author of *This Is What Happy Looks Like* and *The Statistical Probability of Love at First Sight*

WAMC Northeast Public Radio, September 19, 2013:

"*Two Boys Kissing* will make you laugh and cry, but best of all, it will make you relive those perfect innocuous moments of finding and then being with your first love."

Romantic Times Book Review, September 2013:

"Thought provoking, poignant and beautifully written, above all this is an unbelievably important book for anyone who has struggled with identity, love and loss. The omniscient narration is incredibly moving and appreciative of the fragility of life. A groundbreaking addition to the LGBT genre and community."

Kirkus Reviews, July 15, 2013:

"The novel has genuine moments of insight and wisdom...Inspiring."

Hypable.com, August 23, 2013:

"*Two Boys Kissing* by David Levithan takes the stories of all these boys and spins them into an interconnecting web that will leave you emotionally exhausted and absolutely thrilled to have read

something so beautiful and unique...Will educate, entertain and move you."

Bookish.com, May 6, 2013:

"Levithan takes contemporary to a whole new space with this novel, finding new ground in storytelling around important issues that directly affect teens today."

Booklist, August 1, 2013:

"Levithan leans intensely into this work...There's little doubt that this title, with its weight, significance, and literary quality, will find its way into LGBTQ and wider cannons. Stock up."

School Library Journal, September 2013:

"The story will engage readers, both female and male."

"The high level of imaginative and intuitive empathy that is apparent in all of his works is especially strong here—as not only are his protagonists fully realized, but so are the voices of the collective narration, whose experiences are as varied as the characters on the page... **It is the best book I have read this year.**"

- Maggie Tokuda-Hall, Books Inc.

"Everyone needs to read this, not just YA. **How perfectly David puts the past, present and future into one small novel.** Now, as soon as my eyes stop watering and the goose bumps on my arms go away, I can continue my day."

- Carolyn Anbar, Watchung Booksellers

"Levithan's choice of narrator was inspiring and heartbreaking. Giving a voice to that generation and exposing young kids to those voices, blew me away...**Two Boys Kissing** feels like a **very important book, something I think everyone should read** and something that's touched me in a way no YA has in a really long time."

- John Kwiatkowski, Murder by the Book

From the Hardcover edition.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Douglas Wyss:

Do you among people who can't read pleasant if the sentence chained from the straightway, hold on guys that aren't like that. This Two Boys Kissing book is readable by you who hate those straight word style. You will find the facts here are arrange for enjoyable reading experience without leaving also decrease the knowledge that want to offer to you. The writer regarding Two Boys Kissing content conveys thinking easily to understand by many people. The printed and e-book are not different in the articles but it just different as it. So , do you still thinking Two Boys Kissing is not loveable to be your top record reading book?

Sylvia Silva:

Hey guys, do you wishes to finds a new book to read? May be the book with the concept Two Boys Kissing

suitable to you? The book was written by well known writer in this era. Often the book untitled Two Boys Kissing is one of several books which everyone read now. This particular book was inspired many men and women in the world. When you read this publication you will enter the new age that you ever know just before. The author explained their idea in the simple way, consequently all of people can easily to comprehend the core of this publication. This book will give you a lot of information about this world now. To help you see the represented of the world on this book.

William Troutt:

The particular book Two Boys Kissing has a lot details on it. So when you make sure to read this book you can get a lot of help. The book was authored by the very famous author. The writer makes some research previous to write this book. This book very easy to read you will get the point easily after reading this book.

Danny Padilla:

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