

two boys kissing david levithan

Two Boys Kissing by David Levithan is a poignant and compelling novel that explores the complexities of love, identity, and the experience of being a teenager in a contemporary world. Levithan, known for his ability to articulate the intricacies of young adult relationships, crafts a narrative that resonates with readers of all ages. This article delves into the themes, characters, and significance of the novel, shedding light on its impact on LGBTQ+ literature and culture.

Overview of the Novel

Published in 2013, *Two Boys Kissing* is inspired by a true event—the record-breaking kiss held by two teenage boys in a public space. The novel is structured around multiple narratives, focusing on the lives of various characters who navigate their identities, relationships, and the challenges they face as young gay men. The story is narrated by a collective of gay men who have passed away, observing the lives of the boys and reflecting on their own experiences.

Major Characters

The novel features a diverse cast of characters, each contributing to the overarching themes of love and acceptance. The primary characters include:

- **Craig:** One of the boys involved in the record-breaking kiss, Craig struggles with anxiety about his relationship and societal acceptance.
- **Harry:** Craig's boyfriend, who is more confident but faces his own challenges in understanding love and intimacy.
- **AJ:** A boy who has just come out and is exploring his newfound identity and sexuality.
- **Ryan:** AJ's boyfriend, who provides support and encouragement as they navigate their relationship together.
- **Peter and Neil:** A couple who reflect on their journey of love and the challenges they overcame to be together.

Each character's journey intertwines with the others, creating a rich tapestry of experiences that highlight the struggles and triumphs of young love.

Themes Explored in *Two Boys Kissing*

David Levithan masterfully weaves several themes throughout the narrative, making the novel not only a love story but also a profound commentary on

identity and societal perceptions.

1. Love and Acceptance

At its core, *Two Boys Kissing* is a celebration of love in all its forms. The novel portrays the beauty of young love while also addressing the fear and uncertainty that often accompany it. The characters' experiences emphasize the importance of acceptance, both from oneself and from others.

2. The LGBTQ+ Experience

Levithan's work provides insight into the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ youth. From coming out to dealing with societal prejudices, the characters' journeys reflect the reality of many young people today. The novel serves as a reminder of the importance of visibility and representation in literature, especially for marginalized communities.

3. The Role of History

The narrative is interspersed with reflections from the deceased gay men, who share their experiences and wisdom. This historical context underscores the progress made in LGBTQ+ rights while also highlighting the struggles that continue to exist. It serves as a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made by previous generations for the freedoms enjoyed today.

4. Identity and Self-Discovery

As the characters navigate their relationships, they also embark on journeys of self-discovery. The exploration of their identities, desires, and fears showcases the universal search for self-understanding that resonates with all readers, regardless of their sexual orientation.

The Significance of the Record-Breaking Kiss

The central event of the novel—the record-breaking kiss—serves as a powerful symbol of love and defiance. It represents not only the personal connection between Craig and Harry but also the broader fight for visibility and acceptance within society.

Impact on LGBTQ+ Visibility

The kiss serves as a catalyst for discussions about LGBTQ+ visibility and representation in public spaces. In a world where same-sex affection is often stigmatized, the act of two boys kissing in a public setting becomes an act of rebellion and a statement of pride.

Encouragement of Acceptance

The kiss also encourages readers to embrace love in all its forms. Levithan's portrayal of this moment challenges societal norms and urges readers to reflect on their own perceptions of love and acceptance. It encourages a dialogue about the importance of creating safe spaces for love to flourish, regardless of sexual orientation.

The Writing Style of David Levithan

Levithan's writing style is characterized by its lyrical quality and emotional depth. He employs a unique narrative structure that allows for multiple perspectives, giving readers a comprehensive view of the characters' experiences. His ability to capture the intricacies of teenage emotions makes the novel relatable and impactful.

Use of Collective Narration

The choice to use a collective narration from deceased gay men adds a layer of depth to the story. It creates a sense of continuity and connection, bridging the past and present. This narrative technique allows readers to reflect on the progress made in LGBTQ+ rights while honoring the struggles of those who came before.

Emotional Resonance

Levithan's prose is imbued with emotion, capturing the highs and lows of love and identity. His ability to articulate the feelings of his characters makes their journeys resonate deeply with readers. Moments of joy, heartache, and introspection are portrayed with authenticity, allowing readers to connect with the characters on a personal level.

Conclusion

Two Boys Kissing by David Levithan is a powerful exploration of love, identity, and the LGBTQ+ experience. Through its rich characters and poignant themes, the novel serves as both a celebration and a call to action for acceptance and understanding. Levithan's unique narrative style and emotional depth create a lasting impact, making the book a significant contribution to young adult literature.

As society continues to evolve, the importance of stories like Two Boys Kissing cannot be overstated. They foster empathy, understanding, and acceptance, encouraging readers to embrace love in all its forms. For anyone seeking a heartfelt and thought-provoking read, Levithan's novel stands as a testament to the power of love and the ongoing journey toward acceptance.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main theme of 'Two Boys Kissing' by David Levithan?

The main theme of 'Two Boys Kissing' revolves around love, identity, and the struggles faced by LGBTQ+ youth. It explores the significance of love and acceptance in a society that often marginalizes queer relationships.

How does David Levithan use narrative style in 'Two Boys Kissing'?

David Levithan employs a unique narrative style by incorporating a collective voice that reflects the perspectives of the gay community, including the voices of past generations of LGBTQ+ individuals, which adds depth and historical context to the story.

What impact does 'Two Boys Kissing' have on discussions about LGBTQ+ representation in literature?

The book has a significant impact on discussions about LGBTQ+ representation by highlighting the importance of visibility and authenticity in storytelling, encouraging readers to engage with diverse narratives and understand the complexities of queer experiences.

Who are the main characters in 'Two Boys Kissing' and what are their relationships?

The main characters are Craig and Harry, two boys in a romantic relationship who attempt to set a world record for the longest kiss. Their story intertwines with other characters, showcasing various facets of love and friendship within the LGBTQ+ community.

What role does the concept of history play in 'Two Boys Kissing'?

History plays a crucial role in 'Two Boys Kissing' as the narrative includes reflections from past LGBTQ+ individuals, which emphasizes the struggles and triumphs of earlier generations. This connection to history highlights the progress made and the ongoing challenges faced by the community.

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