

**Two Boys Kissing**  
**David Levithan**  
**Alfred A. Knopf, 2013**

**Reviews**

- [\*\*The Guardian\*\*](#) (“**Two Boys Kissing by David Leviathan - review**” **16 May 2014**):  
“Two Boys Kissing is an important book. It is so extremely powerful and leaves you thinking long, long after you have finished reading it. With the unique writing concept, it is a true challenge to the traditional art form of writing. I imagine that this is going to be the book that children will read in school instead of Lord of the Flies and Of Mice and Men in the future; that’s how genre defining and influential this story is. With strong messages that can apply to much more than being gay, and more about the philosophy of freedom, equality and hatred with an application to homosexuality, Levithan has made a piece of art that can be admired for years.”
  
- [\*\*Booklist\*\*](#) (“**Two Boys Kissing**” **August 2013**): “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.”
  
- [\*\*School Library Journal\*\*](#) (“**Two Boys Kissing, David Leviathan - Reviewed from ARC.**”): Despite my reservations (and I’m not even listing all of them — Smita who will probably grow up to be a doctor triggered my stereotype alert, and she wasn’t alone, and the plot, such as it is, is made of tissue paper), I ended up all-in as I read Two Boys Kissing, and finished it wanting to hand it off to everyone. I absolutely see how this made the NBA longlist: it’s a powerful, important book and one that elicits genuine emotional response from every reader I’ve spoken to.”
  
- [\*\*Kirkus Reviews\*\*](#) (“**Two Boys Kissing Review**” **26 June 2013**): “The story drifts back and forth and among these seven youth under the watchful, occasionally curmudgeonly voice of the past, which weighs down the narrative too much at times. The novel has genuine moments of insight and wisdom, but it feels calculated and lacks the spontaneity that made Levithan’s first two novels so magical. Still, fans of his earlier works will appreciate the familiar tone, characters and themes they’ve come to love over the years. It’s well-intentioned and inspiring, but it doesn’t push any boundaries.”

- [Library Journal](#) (“**Best of: Two Boys Kissing**”): “Though the story lines rarely link up, the characters’ struggles echo one another deftly, creating surprising parallels and an inspiring sense of shared humanity. Like the author’s *Boy Meets Boy*, a landmark of LGBT and YA fiction, *Two Boys Kissing* is a bold, important novel that is bound to generate discussion and have an impact on many readers, regardless of their sexuality or gender.”
- [Publishers Weekly](#) (“**Two Boys Kissing**”, 3 June 2013): “Levithan builds a bridge between today’s young gay men and those who have come (and gone) before them through an audacious choice of narrator: the collective generation of gay men lost to AIDS. This chorus of voices holds court on body image (“When we were healthy we were ignorant. We could never be content in our own skin”), family (both biological and found), hookup apps, dancing, the reality of watching loved ones die, and the fleeting preciousness of life. The narrators are positioned as self-described “shadow uncles” and “angel godfathers,” but Levithan doesn’t canonize them. “The minute you stop talking about individuals and start talking about a group, your judgment has a flaw in it,” they observe when negative reactions to the boys’ kiss mount as it gains widespread attention. “We made this mistake often enough.” There are no chapters; the story moves among the characters’ experiences and the narrators’ commentary, proceeding ever forward in the way that life does.”

#### Awards

- [Stonewall Book Awards - Children’s and Young Adult Awards Honors](#), 2014
- [Lambda Literary - Children’s/Young Adult Awards](#), 2013
- [NAIBA Books of the Year - Young Adult Category](#), 2014
- [National Book Foundation - Young People’s Literature Longlist](#), 2013
- [Milwaukee County Teen Book Award nominee](#), 2014

#### Lists

- [Mid-Columbia Libraries: Diverse Reads](#)
- [New Trier Township High School Reading List](#)

#### Response to challenges

- [Two Boys Kissing Book Challenge Rejected by Fauquier Review Committee](#): “Fauquier County Public Schools review committee has unanimously rejected a book challenge that would have removed David Levithan’s *Two Boys Kissing* from the high school library. NCAC’s Kids’ Right To Read Project sent a letter to the school board prior to the meeting, warning that removing the book based on objections to the content was a disservice to students and constitutionally problematic.”
- [Polk County book review panels approve 3 books on LGBTQ topics for school libraries](#): “The committees reviewing books that have been targeted by a conservative group for removal from Polk County Public School libraries voted on three more of them Thursday, approving keeping the books at age-appropriate

levels. All three deal with transgender topics, with one book also detailing the lives of gay teenagers.”

- [\*\*New Trier \[IL\] officials, former students come to defense of novel ‘Two Boys Kissing’ after some parent complains:\*\*](#) “Tragos said that reading explicit excerpts without context is ‘intended to mislead people into believing the whole book is [graphic],’ but that conclusion ‘represents a misreading and misunderstanding of the novel.’ He credited New Trier’s English teachers with the capacity to guide students through the scenes with care. ‘The real missing piece here is the teacher,’ he said. ‘... No teacher would read this scene in the way you heard it tonight.’ Board members Jean Hahn and Kimberly Alcantara said they read the book over the weekend and were surprised to hear the commentary from those who opposed it.”  
NO ACTION MOVED ON THIS BOOK, HAS BEEN ON THE CURRICULUM  
READING LIST FOR SIX YEARS