

## Felix Ever After

Kacen Callender

Balzer & Bray / HarperTeen, 2020

### Reviews

- [School Library Journal](#) (March 1, 2020): “Black, queer, and trans Felix explores love, friendship, and possibly retribution in this powerful #OwnVoices story of identity and self-worth. [...] Immensely readable, the narration and the dialogue are honest, smart, and at times, biting and vicious. Felix and friends are complicated characters, constantly fighting, messing up, and making up. Felix is achingly relatable, both vulnerable and guarded, often on the sidelines but wanting so much more. His explorations address privilege, marginalization, and intersectionality while he learns about what and who get to define a person. **VERDICT** Full of warmth, love, and support, this is an important story and an essential purchase.” (Starred review).
- [Booklist](#) (May 15, 2020): “Callender [...] populates Felix’s world with a cast of queer, trans, and racially diverse individuals, genuinely reflecting the lives of many who work hard to build a supportive chosen family. From its stunning cover art to the rich, messy, nuanced narrative at its heart, this is an unforgettable story of friendship, heartbreak, forgiveness, and self-discovery, crafted by an author whose obvious respect for teen readers radiates from every page.” (Starred review).
- [Publishers Weekly](#) (March 25, 2020): “Callender [...] excels, producing an exhilarating cast of queer characters, many of whom are people of color, who are as relatable as they are realistic, and a whodunit that will keep readers guessing to the last twist. Protagonist Felix is like the story itself—boldly empathic, hopeful, and full of love. This top-notch depiction of a messy, complicated, romantic young artist navigating the bumpy road to self-love and self-determination sticks its landing at every turn.” (Starred review).
- [The Horn Book](#) (July 21, 2020): “The writing is smart and engaging, and #OwnVoices author Callender includes sound information and responsible psychological guidance without bogging down the storytelling. Felix does ultimately find love in this sweet and tender trans romance, but his hardest-won victory is in the fight to validate his self-worth.”
- [Kirkus](#) (May 12, 2020): “Jealousies and deceit resolve into affirmation and artistic self-love. [...] Keeping up with his devastating episodes of self-doubt and anxiety along with the story’s complicated plot details make this an exhausting read, and although Felix ultimately overcomes some oppressive transphobia, the barrage of blatant ignorance and bigotry he faces might haunt readers despite the book’s ebullient ending. A trauma- and drama-filled demiboy’s story that’s not for the faint of heart.”

## Awards

- [ALA Stonewall Honor Book](#), 2021

## Lists

- [TIME's 100 Best YA Books of All Time](#)
- [Booklist Editors' Choice: Books for Youth](#), 2020
- [Booklist Best Fiction for Young Adults](#), 2021

## Response to Challenges

- Mosaic Community Library in Austin, TX, spotlighting *Felix Ever After* in a series on books under investigation by Texas State Representative Matt Krause: “One of the beautiful things about this book is that it is painfully honest about gender identity, transitioning, and finding your way to who you truly are. [...] It is an honest and real portrayal of queer teens and how they navigate a world that isn't always ready for them. Aside from minor drug usage, and alcohol consumption, there isn't anything that would be deemed 'inappropriate' for the YA (grades 9-12) audience, and even those things are a stretch, imo. A queer main character who has romantic feelings for people of multiple genders shouldn't be considered inappropriate, and yet some would disagree.” ([Mosaic Community Library](#))
- Author Kacen Callender, on writing Felix's character: “My favorite part was being able to take the power to declare that my and Felix's identities are powerful and beautiful, and to have the last word against the racism, transphobia, and anti-queerness I've had to face in my life. It was empowering and healing to create Felix's character.” ([Santana Reads](#))
- Front Royal resident Tina Johnson, on the same situation: “Banning books is not about books. Banning books is about people. It's about telling some children in our community their family is perverse and unwelcome. [...] Samuels is just one library, in our little county, but it is the front line, as is every library being targeted right now by systematic attacks on the First Amendment.” ([The Washington Post](#))

## References

“ALA Announces 2021 Youth Media Awards.” (2021, January 25). American Library Association. Retrieved September 11, 2023 from

<https://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2021/01/ala-announces-2021-youth-media-awards>

“Banned/Challenged Book Spotlight - Felix Ever After.” Mosaic Community Library. Retrieved September 11, 2023 from

<https://www.mosaiccommunitylibrary.org/blog/bannedchallenged-book-spotlight-felix-ever-after>

“Best Fiction for Young Adults: 2021.” (2021, March 15). Booklist. Retrieved September 11, 2023 from

<https://www.booklistonline.com/Best-Fiction-for-Young-Adults/pid=9744798>

“Booklist Editors’ Choice: Books for Youth, 2020.” (2021, January 1). Booklist. Retrieved September 11, 2023 from <https://www.booklistonline.com/Booklist-Editors-Choice/pid=9743352>

“Felix Ever After.” (2020, March 25). Publishers Weekly. Retrieved September 11, 2023 from <https://www.publishersweekly.com/9780062820259>

“Felix Ever After.” (2020, May 12). Kirkus. Retrieved September 11, 2023 from <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/kacen-callender/felix-ever-after/>

“The 100 Best YA Books of All Time.” TIME. Retrieved September 11, 2023 from <https://time.com/collection/100-best-ya-books/>

Bittner, Rob. “Felix Ever After.” (2020, May 15). Booklist. Retrieved September 11, 2023 from <https://www.booklistonline.com/Felix-Ever-After-/pid=9735479>

MacGregor, Amanda. “Felix Ever After.” (2020, March 1). School Library Journal. Retrieved September 11, 2023 from <https://www.slj.com/review/felix-ever-after>

Toth, Luann. “Felix Ever After.” (2020, July 21). The Horn Book. Retrieved September 11, 2023 from <https://www.hbook.com/story/review-of-felix-ever-after>

V., Carolina. “Happy Book Birthday Felix Ever After! - Interview with Author Kacen Callender.” (2020, May 5). Santana Reads. Retrieved September 11, 2023 from <https://santanareads.wordpress.com/2020/05/05/happy-book-birthday-felix-ever-after-interview-with-author-kacen-callender/>