

**Gender Queer**  
Maia Kobabe  
Lion Forge, 2019

## Reviews

- [Booklist](#) (“Alex Awards.” 15 March 2020): “Kobabe’s path to understanding eir gender and sexuality comes into beautiful focus in this graphic memoir, expressively illustrated with retro colors and simple lines. Readers will recognize a kindred spirit in Kobabe and/or gain insight into what it’s like to identify outside of the cisgender/heterosexual ‘norm.’”
- [JAMA](#) (“Graphic Medicine: The best of 2019.” 24 Dec. 2019): “*Gender Queer* explains gender nonbinariness in highly personal, intimate, patient, and deliberate ways. In light of the high rate of depression and suicide by nonbinary individuals *Gender Queer ...* offers health professionals a valuable opportunity to understand the experiences of patients, like Kobabe, who are in our practices and waiting rooms longing to be recognized and understood.”
- [Publishers Weekly](#) (“Comics Reviews.” 25 Feb. 2019): “This entertaining memoir-as-guide holds crossover appeal for mature teens (with a note there’s some sexually explicit content) and is sure to spark valuable discussions at home and in classrooms.”
- [School Library Journal](#) (“Recommended Reading LGBTQIA+.” June 2019): Grades 11-up. “This is a sensitive, nuanced graphic novel that includes depictions of masturbation, sex, and painful gynecological exams, but most of the story is concerned with the smaller moments of interactions with family and friends, and how being unsure of one’s gender can change the effect of even a well-meaning comment.”
- [School Library Journal](#) (“Middle to High School.” July 2019. Starred review): Listed in the reviews for middle grade to high school and rated as grades 9-up. “In this memoir, Kobabe chronicles eir life from the time e was very young through eir coming of age and adulthood. E describes common situations from the perspective of someone who is asexual and nonbinary: starting a new school, getting eir period, dating, attending college. The muted earth tones and calm blues match the hopeful tone and measured pacing. Matter-of-fact descriptions of gynecological exams and the use of sex toys will be enlightening for those who may not have access to this information elsewhere. VERDICT: A book to be savored rather than devoured, this memoir will resonate with teens, especially fans of Alison Bechdel’s *Fun Home* and Mason Deaver’s *I Wish You All the Best*. It’s also a great resource for those who identify as nonbinary or asexual as well as for those who know someone who identifies that way and wish to better understand.”
- [School Library Journal](#) (“Graphic Novels.” Dec. 2019): Grades 9-up. “Featuring realistic, earth-toned cartoons, this forthright memoir earnestly examines everything from pap smears gone wrong to experiments with sex toys. Kobabe is the reassuring older sibling that many LGBTQ teens will wish they’d had.”
- [University Wire](#) (“LGBTQ+ Representation in Youth Literature.” 21 Oct. 2020): Included on a list compiled by Bowling Green State University professor of English Amanda McGuire Rzicznek of

recommended youth literature that features LGBTQ+ characters and themes. Recommended for ages 14+. “In Maia Kobabe’s (e/em/eir) autobiographical graphic novel, e discusses eir experience with discovering eir identity. With events in eir life such as having adolescent crushes, coming out to family, and facing trauma, Kobabe’s graphic novel is a touching story that can be uplifting for anyone going through their journey of self-identity and discovery.”

- [USA Today](#) (“10 New LGBTQ books to Celebrate Pride Month.” 10 June 2019): Described as “a personal journey of self-identity and relates the experience of growing up gender nonconforming.”

### Awards

- [Alex Award](#), 2020
- [Garden State Teen Book Awards nominee](#), 2021 (voting ends Dec. 31, 2021)
- [Stonewall Award Nonfiction Honor Book](#), 2020

### Lists

- [ALA Rainbow Project Book List](#), 2020
- [ALA YALSA Best Books of 2020: Great Graphic Novels for Teens](#), 2020
- [ALA YALSA Outstanding Books for the College Bound](#), 2020
- [Chicago Public Schools Great Graphic Novels](#), 2021
- [Denver Public Schools Top 100 High School Books](#), 2020-21
- [Howard County Public Schools \(MD\) Best of the Year - High School](#), 2019 (log in to Titlewave)
- [Iowa High School Battle of the Books](#), 2021
- [Jefferson County \(KY\) Public Schools Recommended Reading Grades 9-12](#), 2021 (log in to Titlewave)
- [New York Public Library’s 50 Best Books for Teens](#), 2019
- [School Library Journal 17 Immersive Graphic Novels for Teens, Summer Reading 2021](#)
- [Texas Library Association: Maverick Graphic Novel Reading List, 2020](#)

## Response to challenges

- [Comic Book Legal Defense Fund statement of support](#): “This nuanced memoir examines nonbinary gender identity in a way that benefits both those who identify as nonbinary and those who wish to better understand nonbinary identity ... [C]hallengers have taken a scant handful of out-of-context images to falsely assert that the graphic novel is pornographic and obscene ... Public schools and libraries have an obligation to support intellectual freedom and to meet the needs and interests of their entire community, including those who would like to read *Gender Queer* ... Removing books such as *Gender Queer* based on the demands of the few violates the First Amendment rights of students, parents, and others in the community.”
- [“Opinion: School districts are banning my book. But queer kids need stories.”](#) by Maia Kobabe: “Queer youth are often forced to look outside their own homes, and outside the education system, to find information on who they are. Removing or restricting queer books in libraries and schools is like cutting a lifeline for queer youth, who might not yet even know what terms to ask Google to find out more about their own identities, bodies and health.”
- [Fairfax \(VA\) Review Committee Recommendation](#): “The book is a well-written, scientifically based narrative of one person’s journey with gender identity that contains information and perspective that is not widely represented. This depiction includes the difficulties nonbinary and asexual individuals may face. The book has literary value in its structure, voice, and themes and has won literary awards. Students with a related experience will feel affirmed and others can gain understanding and empathy. The resources referenced in the book provide access to additional, reliable information. The book neither depicts nor describes pedophilia.”