

## Banned Book Report, Gender Queer

There are two banned books with the same, or at least similar names. Genderqueer and Gender Queer, the latter actually being the most banned book this past year according to the list I am working off of.

Gender Queer, a memoir by Maia Kobabe is by a non-binary individual, in this case a woman while Genderqueer was written by a male (neither are transgender).

Similar to Genderqueer the content is primarily around questioning who they are as they do not fit neatly into familiar categories. My takeaway is that the heterosexual population that most of us belong to is a default and we simply do not think or worry about what to call ourselves. It is a kind of privilege (or luck) that we do not think of. Both the authors of Genderqueer and Gender Queer struggle with that question. I suspect that many young LGBTQ+ people question themselves in the same way.

Gender Queer is written in a cartoon format (Maia Kobabe is a cartoonist so it makes sense).

It is not anywhere close to obscene, pornographic or particularly graphic, after all it is a cartoon. Nor is it promoting anything, rather it simply explains and informs.

There is one passage made famous by the Senator from Louisiana, John Kennedy, who read it in the United States Senate. The is the most salacious, and that may be an exaggeration, piece in the book and it is of a sexting message to the author that consists of two panels on 2/3rds of a page. Not something you would read out loud, unless you are a US Senator trying to make the book sound dangerous. But it fits the narrative and purpose of the book, page 166 if you are interested.

The target audience for the book was the author's parents. It was a way to explain to them who she was and what she was going through. Technically, the correct chosen pronoun would be "E", which is part of a set of pronouns called Spivak.

<i>E</i> laughs	I hugged <i>Em</i>	<i>Eir</i> heart warmed
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Again, the intended audience is not young children, but certainly teens and, perhaps more importantly, the rest of us who will come away with a better understanding of people who do not deserve the hate that is being directed at them. It's a good read.

The organized efforts for banning these kinds of books and, more broadly, attacking the LGBTQ+ community is a bad faith, politically motived, campaign to create a wedge issue, disigned to convince parents that their children need to be protected. It is concerning that it has gained some traction.

We should feel comfortable in pushing back if we encounter efforts to ban these kinds of books and that comfort will only increase when we actually read them.

I'm happy to pass on my copies of Genderqueer and Gender Queer to anyone who would like to read them. [Next on the list is All Boys Aren't Blue.](#)

Ray Cole

Social Justice Committee