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The Full Spectrum: A New Generation Of Writing About Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, And Other Identities



Synopsis

Teens are more aware of sexuality and identity than ever, and they're looking for answers and insights, as well as a community of others. In order to help create that community, YA authors David Levithan and Billy Merrell have collected original poems, essays, and stories by young adults in their teens and early 20s. The Full Spectrum includes a variety of writers—gay, lesbian, bisexual, straight, transitioning, and questioning—on a variety of subjects: coming out, family, friendship, religion/faith, first kisses, break-ups, and many others. This one of a kind collection will, perhaps, help all readers see themselves and the world around them in ways they might never have imagined. We have partnered with the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) and a portion of the proceeds from this book will be donated to them.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 10 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #95,218 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #8 in Books > Teens > Personal Health > Sexuality & Pregnancy #15 in Books > Teens > Social Issues > Being a Teen #16 in Books > Teens > Social Issues > LGBT Issues

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Grade 8 Up—Using works submitted anonymously through the Web site the authors created in conjunction with the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), Levithan and Merrell have selected 40 essays, mini-autobiographies, poems, and photographs that chronicle the lives of 21st-century young people, ages 13 to 23. The handsomely dense package includes real-life stories about coming out, falling in and out of love, mistaken identities, families and friends, misplaced affection, confronting homophobia, and more. A female-to-male transsexual teen

describes a first trip into the men's restroom. A young man recalls his close relationship with a trash-talking, pot-smoking, horror-movie-loving burnout, illustrating the blurry lines that exist between romance and friendship. While nearly half of the installments tell the stories of young gay men, a sizable chunk is devoted to lesbians, and more than half a dozen pieces are about transgendered youth. While many of the stories recall memories of isolation, others delve into a young person's awareness and involvement in a queer community. As a whole, the collection is comprehensive, complex, and the perfect title to put into the hands of teens who approach the information desk asking for real stories about coming out and coming to terms with anything remotely GLBTQ. --Hillias J. Martin, New York Public Library Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Starred Review Gr. 8-11. The 40 contributions to this invaluable collection about personal identity have two things in common: all are nonfiction and all are by writers under the age of 23. Beyond that, diversity is the order of the day, and the result is a vivid demonstration of how extraordinarily broad the spectrum of sexual identity is among today's gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth. That said, some of the topics addressed in these essays and poems are familiar (the agony of coming out, the heartbreak of religious opprobrium). What is new and encouraging, however, is that so many young people have felt free enough to share the truth about themselves in print and under their own names; as coeditor Levithan notes in his introduction, "One way to effect change is to share truths. To tell our stories." Insightful, extraordinarily well written, and emotionally mature, the selections offer compelling, dramatic evidence that what is important is not what we are but who we are. Michael Cart Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The most fascinating part of this book was comparing and contrasting each writer's experience to the others featured in the book and my own. Although some of the stories are a bit dated, it was very interesting to me, because the experience of a gay teenager has drastically changed in 10 years. I also liked that you can read the stories one at a time, or all at once (as I did). Although most of the stories are written by gay men, the expanded edition has many other stories from different identities (many of which were probably not common at the time the Full Spectrum was originally written).

A book that pulls on every heart string in you. It takes you on rides into the lives of people who have been through hell and back. So much respect and strength for these beautiful people and highly poetic writers. Recommended read!

This anthology presents a well-rounded view of the challenges and opportunities for young gay people. I read it as a community assignment, to determine whether it should remain on the shelf of the high school library. The committee voted yes, due to the various viewpoints expressed in the book. I recommend this to anyone who wants to broaden their knowledge of human nature.

The pieces in this anthology tackle a myriad of topics: coming out, religion, first love, unaccepting parents/peers, religion, supportive parents/peers, the Boy Scouts, the military, religion(!); in a variety of settings: high school, New York City, college, junior high, Egypt. They are written by young people who fall under the umbrella term "queer," but identify as gay, bi, trans, lesbian, gender-variant, and more. Some of the pieces are positive and affirming, some speak of overcoming unbearable hardship and hate, some end as hopeless as they began. All of them are important and valid, just like the young people who wrote them. As a collection, *The Full Spectrum* is ambitious. It strives to present a multitude of experiences and identities, and it does. The mix of guys and girls, trans or not, is great. The mix of topics is also expansive, and given how much religion is mentioned, the mix of opinions on it is also widely variant. Also the mix of poetry, prose, letters, and diary entries was great. I never felt bogged down in too much angst poetry or journal writing; all was in balance. This mix of writing styles will, hopefully, make this book accessible and attractive to readers of all stripes. My main problem was with the editing. Some of these pieces are beautiful bits of polished writing. Some of them are not. I imagine this has a lot to do with the state they were in when they were submitted. Many of these pieces were written by young people about the most traumatic periods of their lives! Everything is in their writing and everything is raw. Everything. It is completely understandable that some of them lack polish. These pieces could have used the guidance of a good editor, and it is a shame that they didn't get it. That said, these stories are compelling, each and every one. If I, an almost-30-year-old, engaged, queer woman had such a strong reaction to this book, I cannot even begin to imagine how much solace and revelation this book could provide for someone still going through the experiences described there in. I saw myself in these stories. I saw my friends. Everyone deserves to be able to see themselves in stories like these too. Book source: I bought it

Amazing! I figured this would be one of those books that I'd give up on and never finish reading. It turned out to be the most fantastic read I've had in a while. This is definitely one for everyone who supports the LGBTQ community. For anyone who thinks they are alone and that no one has ever felt the way you do now give this book a chance. I ended up finding myself and my story several times.

The Full Spectrum is a series of essays collected from America's young queer voices. In turns hilarious, heartbreaking, intellectual, and artistic, each of the essays (or poems, or pictures) provides a unique window into a small piece of our world and culture. I couldn't put the book down - it's simply fascinating how each writer's voice and experience comes through loud, proud, and clear, without a trace of cliché or "us versus them" politicism. The queer community is coming to life today in vibrant ways no one could have imagined a decade ago, but the fight isn't over until we can honestly say we're all just people. Getting inside the minds of these authors shows that it really is true.

This book is a fantastic answer to a lot of the older anthologies that I've read. It filled with hope and heartbreak and some really great stories. There's a wonderful variety of voices and identities through this book and it demonstrates some awesome commonalities across them all. The desire to feel accepted and loved and definite hope comes through. It's a great book to share with someone who might not understand GLBTQ issues and it was very personal and real. Loved it.

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