



## Read with Pride, Episode 5, Gender Queer

### **Transcript:**

00;00;09;15 - 00;00;17;25

Voiceover

[VOICEOVER] Hello and welcome to Read with Pride, a podcast focused on LGBTQIA+ literature brought to you by the Ocean County Library's Ocean Pride Committee.

00;00;18;18 - 00;00;44;25

Diane

[DIANE] Hello. Today we are going to chat about Gender Queer. The graphic memoir by Maia Kobabe. In this book, Maia speaks about her journey as a non-binary individual, gender and sexuality. This book has won several awards and it is also known for being the most banned book in the country. My name is Diane. Pronouns she/her. I work at the Toms River Branch and I'm a member of the Ocean Pride Committee.

00;00;45;14 - 00;00;52;17

Amy

[AMY] My name is Amy. Pronouns are also she/her. I work at the Lakewood Branch and I am a member of the Ocean Pride Committee as well.

00;00;53;11 - 00;01;00;19

Courtney

[COURTNEY] My name is Courtney. Pronouns she/they. I also work at the Lakewood Branch and I am also a member of the Ocean Pride Committee.

00;01;01;05 - 00;01;06;13

Diane

[DIANE] Okay, so the first question is, what is your overall impression of the book?

00;01;06;13 - 00;01;08;07

Amy

[AMY] Oh, I go first.

00;01;08;07 - 00;01;09;05

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah, you can go first. Sorry.

00;01;09;05 - 00;01;16;29

Amy

[AMY] No that's okay. Short, sweet answer. I really enjoyed it. And I'm glad that I finally got the chance to read it because it's been on my list for forever and I just didn't get to it.

00;01;17;26 - 00;01;38;01

Courtney

[COURTNEY] I'm also glad that I finally got the chance to read it. I found this to be a really profound and emotionally stirring memoir and a really incredible reminder that no one is alone, even when they think that they might be. Everyone's kind of going through their own journeys, and it's nice to see that reflected here.

00;01;38;17 - 00;01;56;12

Diane

[DIANE] So yeah, I also was happy to finally read it. I think probably the last few years I've been hearing of the book so much being that it was banned so often. I think it was a great read and a well needed resource for people that are curious or going through different things or similar things in their life.

00;01;57;07 - 00;02;01;02

Amy

[AMY] Next question is did you find any similarities between you and the author?

00;02;02;02 - 00;02;21;06

Courtney

[COURTNEY] I found so many. We're both librarians or, you know, library worker adjacent. We're both cartoonists. We were both theater kids and we're both exploring our gender expression and the way that we would like the world to see us in a variety of ways.

00;02;22;24 - 00;02;37;24

Diane

[DIANE] I saw some similarities between myself and the author just in that just questioning things. Maybe not as many as you, but I felt like just struggles with life in general is where I found some similarities.

00;02;38;16 - 00;03;01;26

Amy

[AMY] On that note, my answer kind of combines both of your answers a little bit because you reminded me, Courtney, in your answer, that, yes, I was also kind of a theater kid, and I also work at a library, obviously, but it's similar to your answer. Like I recently, I never had any moments like that with my gender or pronouns, but I recently, like about a year ago, realized like, oh, I'm bisexual. So that kind of helped me relate a little bit to the book.

00;03;02;08 - 00;03;16;09

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Yeah, I had already sort of been questioning before I read this book, and this book had sort of been recommended to me on that basis. And reading it and seeing this perspective became a nice supplement in that journey.

00;03;16;24 - 00;03;32;14

Diane

[DIANE] Is that - that's great, what books can do. Like, I feel like when I have been recently wondering about my own sexuality and somebody recommended some books to me also and it's like, oh, wait a minute. And then I'm like, oh, this is why they recommended it, I think, you know. Yeah. Interesting.

00;03;32;14 - 00;03;32;27

Amy

[AMY] I love that.

00;03;34;01 - 00;03;37;11

Courtney

[COURTNEY] What was your favorite part of the book? What was your least favorite part?

00;03;38;10 - 00;04;17;19

Diane

[DIANE] Okay, so I'm first going to say my least favorite part because as I read it, I was like, Oh, I do not enjoy this part as much. But it was when it was very informative when they were talking, there's a section closer to the end when they're talking about another author. I think the author wrote Touching a Nerve. So it was very like research-based. So wasn't that I mean, I feel like it's good and it's resourceful, but I felt like it sort of took away from the story for me. I wanted to know their story. So that was my least favorite part. My favorite part was the section where they spoke about the Spivak pronouns. Is that - am I saying that right, Spivak?

00;04;17;20 - 00;04;19;01

Courtney

[COURTNEY] I'm not sure how to pronounce that.

00;04;19;01 - 00;04;28;20

Amy

[AMY] I've been pronouncing it. I think it's either "Spi-vak" or Spy-vak." I think "Spi-vak" is probably the best with that.

00;04;29;07 - 00;04;38;11

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah, so that was my favorite part because it was like an enlightening moment for the author. And as a reader, I found that very like, oh, interesting.

00:04;38;25 - 00:05;09;07

Amy

[AMY] Yeah, I think that also that was kind of my favorite part or part of it. Like I just wrote when things started, like looking into place for Maia more, so like figuring out her pronouns and how they identified and stuff. That was my favorite part. I think I blanked out your least favorite part, Diane, because as soon as she said that, I was like, oh my God, I skimmed through that part so fast. But I also wrote just like Maia dealing people's confusion and refusal to try the pronouns like I wasn't. I obviously, I don't know. That part's obviously, like, upsetting.

00:05;09;17 - 00:06;16;23

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Yeah, my favorite part was anytime Maia was either talking about the things that e loves or made e feel passionate and happy and getting a peek into those interests, but also when Maia talks and shows about eir desire to be more non-feminine but not 100% male, that really spoke to me very personally. Also, just seeing the representation of art school. That's a very big comfort for me. I wouldn't say that this was my least favorite as in the worst part, although I do have to kind of circle back to what you guys said because that was maybe the most forgettable part for me, but I totally understand why it was included to kind of cut into the flow of the book. But for me, again, not least favorite as in the worst, but the visceral horror when e was talking about the pap smears. That was - I understand why, you know, why it was included, why it was shown as uncomfortable and as viscerally upsetting as it was. But it was hard to read.

00:06;17;09 - 00:06;17;27

Amy

[AMY] It was.

00:06;18;23 - 00:06;28;21

Diane

[DIANE] But that goes to our next question, which is examine how Kobabe's art and text interact. And does the text ever become inseparable from the art?

00:06;29;09 - 00:06;42;27

Amy

[AMY] So my question is short and easy because I didn't - I don't remember noticing anything, but I know as a fellow art major from school, Courtney is going to, you know, teach us some things that she noticed.

00:06;42;27 - 00:08;20;08

Courtney

[COURTNEY] So for clarity here, I majored in animation. However, my concentration was in storyboards. Storyboards are very similar to graphic novels because a lot of what you're doing is giving information to the audience visually and making sure that they're able to sort of clearly follow the story that you're telling. You're using the medium of visual art to tell your story, to guide the audience, and to give them the information to work off of, that supplements the texts that's being included in it as well. This felt

very standard for me in terms of how the text and the visuals interacted. It reminded me a lot of Fun Home, which I read a while back, but the vibe was very similar to me, both in terms of the art style, but also how the information was presented in both books. But there were certain parts of this specifically, such as the Pap smear part. I think specifically the first time that it happens when e has the visual of the pins sort of stabbing through their body or a little bit earlier on when e is explaining the concept of exploring eir gender in ways such as the plants blooming with all of the text coming off of the leaves or the shell that e feels stuck in and how it spirals around. Those are parts where the text and the visual feel one in the same. Neither is sort of outweighing each other. They complement each other and in fact feel like if you took away either element, something very big would be missing from that.

00;08;20;14 - 00;09;21;15

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah, I think that, as not an art major, but I feel like, yes, the gyno visit there, even like on the page, there's a part where they say horror, you know, and I was like, yeah, that was hard. Like when you... you know and I think it's for many people, you know, when I think of myself, yes, it's when you go there, it's like, Oh, I like why are we still using these metal things, you know, like so, you know, so so yeah, it's, it's not a pleasant visit. And then another page was a little bit before that when e was setting up for their Halloween costume and it was like joyful and you could see like that it's like more flowy and very like fun and relaxing, whereas the other one is more dramatic. So yeah, I definitely think they interact and, you know, just well done. And I forgot about the shell until you said it, but yeah, that scene when you're like spiraling around and reading it.

00;09;21;15 - 00;09;24;28

Courtney

[COURTNEY] And then also the library bookshelf.

00;09;24;28 - 00;09;26;29

Amy

[AMY] How did we forget about that?

00;09;26;29 - 00;09;52;22

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Bookshelves, I think also when e presents the graphic of all of the books that e's read over like that ten year span, and you can break that down in text, sure. But isn't it so much more convenient and so much more well understood if you're using a visual to show just how, like what is the quantity? It's over a thousand books in the last 17 years.

00;09;52;22 - 00;10;01;20

Diane

[DIANE] I don't know why I think 17 - no, all the way at the back, right? When they were talking about the book they wrote, wasn't it closer to the back with the graphic of the books?

00;10;01;20 - 00;10;02;10

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Yes.

00;10;02;19 - 00;10;06;00

Diane

[DIANE] It's like a study that e did.

00;10;06;19 - 00;10;14;25

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Page 143 with the statistics reading 1786 books.

00;10;14;25 - 00;10;31;15

Diane

[DIANE] 1786, yes, but you're right, and one thing I thought was Maia is definitely well read, and there are so many like titles to reference to. Like if you're like, "Oh, what else can I read?" There are so many in there that you're like, "Oh, let me look at this book."

00;10;31;15 - 00;10;35;06

Courtney

[DIANE] Makes me want to read more honestly.

00;10;35;06 - 00;10;50;10

Amy

[AMY] I can possibly do that myself, but... oh, okay, next question. What would change if Gender Queer was written entirely in prose with no pictures? What is the graphic novel give to the story? I would feel like we kind of just touched on that but go on, Courtney.

00;10;50;10 - 00;11;54;01

Courtney

[COURTNEY] I mean, I can say more that the pictures 100% serve to elevate the text in all the ways that we just discussed all these beautiful and visceral ways. And it gives a better visual idea of things like Maia's transition and also how Maia reflects on eir self-exploration and also how it reflects on eir mood throughout the story. Because as we were flipping through, I also noticed when e's talking about the fanfiction that they were writing and how e was coming from this place of sadness and frustration and how the visuals of like the gloomy ring cloud over eir head really elevates and shows this state of mind. And again, just taking through this emotional journey and really giving more of a platform to it. Text really is one thing, but when you add a picture to it, it just brings it to a whole different place.

00;11;54;01 - 00;12;03;14

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah, I think the feelings, the emotions, that's I mean, I don't think I need to say anymore because you said it so well, but more feeling, right? I definitely feel it with the pictures.

00;12;03;21 - 00;12;18;19

Amy

[AMY] And I'll just add, which is probably funny to some people because I do read so much, but I'm recently realizing like, I don't - I have that thing where I don't necessarily always picture things in my head completely when I'm reading, so to have the graphic novel makes it much easier for me personally to do that.

00;12;19;13 - 00;12;24;00

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Okay, which scene has stuck with you the most?

00;12;24;00 - 00;12;27;14

Diane

[DIANE] I had one thought, but now I'm like, No, really, it's another thought.

00;12;28;00 - 00;12;28;16

Amy

[AMY] I agree.

00;12;28;28 - 00;12;48;27

Diane

[DIANE] So I think one of the scenes that stuck with me the most was when Maia was talking to their aunt, who was the lesbian, and they were - and excuse me, "em" was, not "them," right? When we say, not "they," so "ei" was?

00;12;48;27 - 00;12;49;26

Amy

[AMY] E-M. Eir.

00;12;49;26 - 00;12;52;09

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Eir. When Maia was talking to eir aunt.

00;12;52;09 - 00;13;59;26

Diane

[DIANE] Thank you. See, it's about learning, right? So when Maia was talking to eir aunt and the aunt who is, you know, open lesbian for all of Maia's life and how the aunt was so questioning, like, what do you mean? And I thought, well, that's not good, but it does happen. I feel like as an older generation, it's like, oh, wait, like I have a friend who is a gay man and my child is like, "Oh, I'm going to use the pronouns they/them." He's like, "I don't get this. I don't understand it." So it takes time to learn it. And you also have to respect that the person who's going through anything is the one that knows the best, right? Like I think that - so that something that really that scene struck me that like, wow, this was an aunt who was supportive and also probably I would think when they came out as a lesbian might have went through some challenges, was still challenging. But Maya was good about taking the time to answer the questions, e said until like 1 a.m. so...

00;13;59;26 - 00;14;26;11

Amy

[AMY] Right, yeah. So, yeah, I mean, that was definitely one. I had written something else down too, but as we're talking, I'm remembering other scenes. I think another one for me was when Maia was picking out eir Halloween costume because like, trying to figure out what fit best - for e? For em - what fit best for em and all that whole scene. It was just so great. And then to see em so happy when they finally - ei finally figured it out, when e finally, oh my God...

00;14;27;01 - 00;14;28;25

Courtney

[COURTNEY] That's okay.

00;14;28;25 - 00;14;31;11

Amy

[AMY] To see em so happy when e finally figured it out.

00;14;31;16 - 00;14;37;22

Diane

[DIANE] We should probably give a little thing that e, em, and eir are the Spivak pronouns.

00;14;37;22 - 00;14;38;02

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Spivak pronouns.

00;14;38;02 - 00;14;44;17

Diane

[DIANE] Spivak, Spivak. To people that are like, "Why do they keep saying this?" So it's just a little more...

00;14;44;17 - 00;14;45;26

Amy

[AMY] Specific?

00;14;45;26 - 00;15;34;29

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Also they're called Spivak that because that's the space in which these pronouns originated from. I actually did some research after the first time I read this book. So Spivak was, if I'm remembering correctly, like an online forum in the nineties, and I feel like it was tied to like a role play group or something similar to that or like it was like a forum group, but it included pronoun options that went beyond just he and she and I think maybe even they, and had things like e, em, eir, or I think like ve, vim, ver. V-E-R was also a very big popular one. There are others and I'm completely blanking on them.

00;15;34;29 - 00;15;42;01

Diane



[DIANE] Oh and yes, it said it was used in a book by American mathematician Michael Spivak. Oh, interesting.

00;15;42;01 - 00;15;46;25

Courtney

[COURTNEY] And then were adapted for online use because that's sort of where they came to popularity.

00;15;46;25 - 00;15;50;22

Amy

[AMY] Did you, Courtney, did you say your favorite scene?

00;15;50;23 - 00;17;38;09

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Yeah I got off track, as we do. I did not, but I marked down a couple of pages. So the first one was Maia's high school coming out journey and the timeline that e sort of put together, which got me to reflect on my own instances of gender and sexuality exploration and also confusion in my youth that I really came away with this just thinking about my own life. And it felt really cool to see something like this just put to visual and like even just, you know, laid out in this beautiful sort of winding line with these clouds of gender confusion in the background and pinpointing specific experiences. And I think also to that end, pages 120 to 121 when Maia is talking about the metaphor for eir gender being a scale where being assigned female at birth is permanently weighing down the one side, and then e adds other things to the other side to sort of balance it out. Again, not necessarily with the intention of completely transitioning eirselves to another gender, but to sort of balance out the feminine traits with neutrality. It just completely flipped the script for how I was looking at gender up to that point and felt really resonant. I also really loved, you know, as you were talking about when e was shopping for their Halloween costume towards the end when e was starting to sort of cultivate their own sense of style and sense of self and coming into their own.

00;17;38;09 - 00;17;39;03

Amy

[AMY] That was great too.

00;17;39;03 - 00;17;40;11

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Really, really loved that.

00;17;40;12 - 00;17;45;27

Courtney

[DIANE] So who do you think the audience Maia had most in mind when writing this book?

00;17;46;21 - 00;17;55;03

Amy

[AMY] My initial thought is probably like older teens and adults struggling with figuring themselves out. But I mean, probably anybody really.

00;17;55;21 - 00;18;15;00

Courtney

[COURTNEY] I said regardless, or maybe in spite of it being an adult book, despite it being an adult book, anyone who's ever felt uncertain in their body about how one is perceived by society or by the people around them, or anybody who needs to know that they're not alone in their journey.

00;18;16;01 - 00;18;38;17

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah. I thought people going through similar situations, but then I was like, anyone who wants to learn, you know, I think yes, I think that's the whole thing about books. It's supposed to, you know, there's that quote that books should be a mirror and a window and a door, you know, like it should be so many things for people. You should be able to see yourself or experience someone else's journey through books. Whatever you feel sounds better.

00;18;39;04 - 00;18;41;10

Amy

[AMY] Like it makes sense. I'm just thinking together. I don't know.

00;18;41;22 - 00;18;43;18

Diane

[DIANE] We just ask the question.

00;18;43;18 - 00;18;50;26

Amy

[AMY] Next question. What is Maia's experience with pronouns?

00;18;50;26 - 00;19;46;13

Courtney

[COURTNEY] So it is an uncommon set of pronouns. I almost called it a third option. That's not necessarily what it is, but it's just not one that people are used to necessarily seeing in a wider public context, I think, or maybe outside of the LGBTQ space. The big takeaway that I got from it was that using the Spivak pronouns is something that Maia finds real ownership in, and it sort of feels like the last piece of the puzzle almost, at least the way that the narrative shows in how e is sort of discovering themselves and setting a baseline for who they are and how e feels comfortable showing themselves to the world.

00;19;46;28 - 00;20;14;22

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah, I thought the section with the pronouns when they spoke to a - was it a cousin or a good friend? A good friend, right? Yes. When I felt like, oh, when they found these pronouns, e/em/eir, where they were like, e was like, "This is amazing," you know? And it was beautifully drawn. I do think this is

where a graphic novel, like looking at their friend and just coming to realize that like, Oh, this is an option, you know?

00;20;15;06 - 00;20;29;28

Amy

[AMY] Yeah, for those not seeing us, it's on page 189 If you have the book to reference where you know, eir friend talks about the pronouns that e uses, and then eir face just lights up and there's actual stars and yeah, it's...

00;20;29;28 - 00;20;32;04

Courtney

[COURTNEY] It's really beautiful.

00;20;32;04 - 00;20;55;14

Diane

[DIANE] But they also do have like the next page after is like, "Oh, how do I say this? How do I ask people?" And that's something that people that have different pronouns shouldn't be so challenging, you know? They should be able to ask and it should be done and obviously people should have grace and, and you know, people are going to make mistakes. But as long as just keep trying, right?

00;20;56;20 - 00;21;04;01

Amy

[AMY] Yeah. I mean we covered in my answer, but just taking time to figure out which pronouns were best and research was how Maia figured it out.

00;21;04;11 - 00;21;18;22

Courtney

[COURTNEY] So this book was the most banned book in the U.S. in 2023 and has drawn a lot of rebuke from people who cited sexually explicit nature and illustrations. What are your thoughts on this?

00;21;18;22 - 00;21;48;14

Diane

[DIANE] So obviously there was part of me that wanted to read it because it was the most banned book because making me like, "Okay, why? Why?" You know, I think that in the contents of the book, what we were seeing was meant to be there, you know? Like I felt like it was - it was not anything more, and it was probably much less than many erotic novels. You know, like when you think of like 50 Shades of Gray or something like that. I was like, so that's my thoughts on it. And I think that...

00;21;48;14 - 00;21;55;01

Amy

[AMY] I mean, it was, I don't know, two or three pages, but yeah, I - sorry, did I cut you off?

00;21;55;01 - 00;21;57;09

Diane

[DIANE] No, no. We're having a conversation. No, it's fine.

00;21;57;20 - 00;22;06;02

Amy

[AMY] Yeah. So just, you know, like ultimately though it's written technically for adults. It's catalogued for adults. It's appropriate.

00;22;06;19 - 00;23;38;22

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Again, I've got to liken this to Fun Home because as I remember, Fun Home also had scenes similar to this. It's even referenced in the book at one point, which is funny because that's not a scene that I remembered from Fun Home, but I was thinking very specifically about when Allison is in college and is with her first girlfriend and it shows them being intimate for the first time and how that journey sort of takes itself. It's a very present theme and again, the fact that it was referencing here alone, but also the similarity. I think conservatives love to look at something like this on a surface level, a graphic novel for adults on a surface level and immediately point fingers because they're conflating the idea of a comic as a kid's book. This is completely ahistoric, just completely and factually ahistoric. The reality is that not only is it wrong, but adults are allowed to talk about sexually explicit ideas and exploration. And there's very clearly, as you guys said, a means to an end as to why Maia shows it in here. It's just another facet of the way e is showing eir exploration into eir life and gender and figuring emselves out for the better.

00;23;39;29 - 00;24;06;28

Diane

[DIANE] I think even the part when I go back to the original Pap smear thing, it's like, oh, the horror. And then e went to have another one, right? And I think it's important even to show that that basic thing that females need to do for their health, that the doctor is able to be like, oh wait, we have options. We can do this to make it better. So to show those scenes, it's important for females assigned at birth all over the world.

00;24;06;29 - 00;24;08;06

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Oh, yeah, absolutely.

00;24;08;06 - 00;24;14;13

Amy

[AMY] Yes, the exam is important. But yes, sometimes finding a second opinion is important to be more comfortable with.

00;24;15;00 - 00;24;20;02

Diane

[DIANE] Okay. Number ten, have you or would you want to read another book by this author?

00;24;20;14 - 00;24;27;14

Amy

[AMY] I have not, but I definitely am open to it. I don't even think I know what else e has written, but I'm going to look into it.

00;24;27;14 - 00;24;55;14

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Yes. Same. I would 100%. This was a delight. I know - and you have it with you - e worked on Breathe: Journeys to Healthy Binding, which has also been recommended to me and I'm very excited to check out, I think this is e's second mainstream publication, if I'm remembering correctly, although I do have to wonder if e has like a record of eir reading logs somewhere because I would love to read that actually. I think that would be really cool.

00;24;55;16 - 00;25;01;04

Amy

[AMY] Maybe like if e has a website or something, Might be on like extras.

00;25;01;18 - 00;25;08;00

Diane

[DIANE] I read Breathe this morning very briefly because, um, and I want to get it back into the library so that people can borrow it.

00;25;08;00 - 00;25;09;11

Courtney

[COURTNEY] This is brand new, right?

00;25;09;23 - 00;26;07;25

Diane

[DIANE] This is this came out in May, so yes. Breathe: Journeys to Healthy Binding that Maia wrote also with a doctor, Sarah Peitzmeier, PhD. and when you read the book, you see, like I believe it was a research project that was done in 2015. They spoke to a certain amount of people that were binding for whatever reason. Interview 25 people who bind about their binding journeys. It asks the same people to do 90 days of surveys about their lives related to binding. I didn't know much about binding before. I mean before Gender Queer, I didn't even know, like things can hurt you. I didn't know that at all. So this was very informative. Again, like I'd rather read a more like light book, but this was so short that it wasn't - no, it didn't feel daunting. And at the end there are like some journal prompts and some interactive pieces which I mean, who doesn't love that, you know? So that was really good.

00;26;07;28 - 00;26;10;09

Courtney

[COURTNEY] That's great. Especially for a YA book. Yeah, that's beautiful.

00;26;10;09 - 00;26;48;04

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah, YA nonfiction. So the other thing is, oh, in 2025, Maia's next graphic novel will be coming out from Scholastic. Maia teamed up with artists Lucky Srikumar. It's a middle grade graphic novel being released through Scholastic's Graphix imprint. So I think it's called Saachi's Stories, so that we can all look forward to next year. It's aimed for a younger audience, but it is still about a character wrestling with their gender identity and sexuality. So that, you know, we'll put on our to-be-read list.

00;26;48;04 - 00;26;57;22

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Absolutely. Yeah, I love that we're getting more representation for that within the middle grade space. This is just another beautiful contribution.

00;26;57;22 - 00;27;10;04

Diane

[DIANE] For sure. So now I'm just going to jump into the five quick thoughts. We do - we didn't do it for our book cafe, but we do it at the end of all of our books. So would you recommend this book to someone on the street?

00;27;11;05 - 00;27;15;20

Amy

[AMY] I think it depends on the person on the street, but absolutely. If I thought it was in their wheelhouse.

00;27;15;20 - 00;27;27;29

Courtney

[COURTNEY] I said it depends on the street. I said if it was like a flea market or like a book fair or something, like absolutely. Or, you know, a pride festival then absolutely I would.

00;27;28;10 - 00;27;37;23

Diane

[DIANE] I think every book has an audience, you know? So I always am like, yes, I would recommend it, depends on the person. If you could give this book a different title, what would it be?

00;27;38;23 - 00;27;46;17

Amy

[AMY] This question was hard for me. I said maybe something like Discovering Who I Am, but then that sounds a lot less catchy than Gender Queer, so...

00;27;46;17 - 00;28;14;00

Courtney

[COURTNEY] I said either e/em/eir in reference to Maia's pronouns - I think that's an interesting way to lead with it - or something with snakes, because I know e established that e really loves snakes and even kind of towards the end described eir experiences with finding, like shedding a skin. So something with snakes I think would be really cool.

00;28;14;00 - 00;28;28;00

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah. Again, Gender Queer is a great title, but I was like, maybe like Making Peace with Myself, but I was like, I don't know. You know, I think e had the right idea. What emotions did you feel when reading this book?

00;28;29;10 - 00;28;44;09

Amy

[AMY] I felt a lot of emotions. For example, I felt happy when Maia was figuring out who e was and pronouns and all of that, and sad when e was confused. Just, you know, the general...

00;28;44;18 - 00;29;11;11

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Joy, validation, intrigue, nostalgia, empathy, and funny enough, a little bit of envy, but mostly comfort. I think comfort was a big theme for me when reading this. Comfort in terms of seeing things that I was familiar with, but also comfort in terms of seeing this other person's experiences. And again, kind of not feeling alone in that.

00;29;12;24 - 00;29;41;25

Diane

[DIANE] There was a large part of me that was sadness for Mala, not because of the end, were where e really is, figuring out things, but through it that the binding part I did not know that like it could be so, you know, injuring. But I think also it made me feel sad for Maia and people that have similar situations. But then I'm hopeful that this book is out there for people to learn from. So, number four, what format did you consume this book?

00;29;42;07 - 00;29;58;27

Amy

[AMY] I read it in print. I think that if I did it digitally, it probably would have been roughly the same experience. I don't know for this one IF there's an audio component. I know that some graphic novels do have that now, and I have been very curious to see what that's like. But I haven't done it yet.

00;29;58;27 - 00;30;37;12

Courtney

[COURTNEY] I also read this as print. I also agree. I think if I read this as digital, it probably wouldn't have changed much. I've read a couple of graphic novels as digital before and the experience is by and large very the same. It's hard for me to imagine reading a graphic novel as an audio book. This specific book, I can absolutely imagine listening to it and hearing parts that would warrant me needing to like, stop and reflect upon them like it probably would have taken me much longer just to like, process what I was reading in a way that's not easy for me to like put a bookmark in it and stop and think and come back to it.

00;30;38;10 - 00;30;44;27

Diane

[DIANE] I took it out in print and digital because we didn't have it at my branch in print, so I want to, like...

00;30;44;27 - 00;30;45;13

Courtney

[COURTNEY] That's because I've been hoarding it.

00;30;47;04 - 00;31;24;28

Diane

[DIANE] Well, mine then came from Lacey, so... We do have a bunch. So I had the digital and I had the print and I'm glad I did get the print because I like feeling a book, even though most of my things are audio. Obviously, this one, like you said, there are some graphic novels that they create into audio. I don't believe this one is there, and I think it would probably - you'd miss some of the real emotions doing it that way. But I did have to make sure I carved out time for myself to really read it, not like putting it on and just listening. Not that it took long, maybe an hour and a half, you know, like graphic novels like this.

00;31;24;28 - 00;31;57;00

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Both times I read this, I was able to do it in a day. But, you know, it's definitely one where you kind of have to go back and take another look at things. Something is really pulling at you. I don't know how much this is present in the adult space. This might be me being used to children's and how children's works, but in the children's space, we have a lot of those Wonderbooks that are graphic novels. It's the graphic novel, but it reads along like with the audio as you read it. And I could see this serving this format very well.

00;31;57;00 - 00;32;00;17

Amy

[AMY] That makes a little more sense. Maybe they'll eventually do adult ones.

00;32;01;21 - 00;32;02;11

Courtney

[COURTNEY] That'd be nice.

00;32;02;23 - 00;32;06;14

Diane

[DIANE] I think they're supposed to. I think I saw at the public library convention.

00;32;06;15 - 00;32;10;12

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Oh, that's exciting. I know a lot of people, myself included, who would, like, really benefit from that.

00;32;10;12 - 00;32;14;22



Amy

[DIANE] Yeah, for sure. So if you could pick a theme song for this book, what would it be?

00;32;16;01 - 00;32;29;13

Amy

[AMY] I have so many songs in my head that I can't ever remember all of them, so I went with my first thought because I was like, "Let's go with this one." And I said, Unwritten by Natasha Bedingfield. It's like my high school days, but yeah.

00;32;29;25 - 00;32;34;01

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Going with the music that was discussed in this book. I said, Changes by David Bowie.

00;32;34;01 - 00;33;00;14

Diane

[DIANE] Oh nice. Oh, that is a beautiful page too. I did think of that... And then I went with one of the songs they spoke about, which was Born This Way by Lady Gaga. So really great music. So that is our talk on gender Queer. I would recommend it and I agree. I would love to read all of the books. Like I forgot about the pages of like all the books that Maia read. So yeah. Any last thoughts?

00;33;01;02 - 00;33;03;09

Amy

[AMY] Um, not that I can think of.

00;33;04;05 - 00;33;06;09

Courtney

[COURTNEY] No, I think we've covered it all.

00;33;06;29 - 00;33;07;11

Diane

[DIANE] Alright.

00;33;07;11 - 00;33;08;03

Courtney

[COURTNEY] This was great.

00;33;08;03 - 00;33;09;13

Diane

[DIANE] Thank you very much.

00;33;09;13 - 00;33;10;07

Amy

[AMY] Thank you.

00:33;11;00 - 00:33;31;19

Voiceover

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