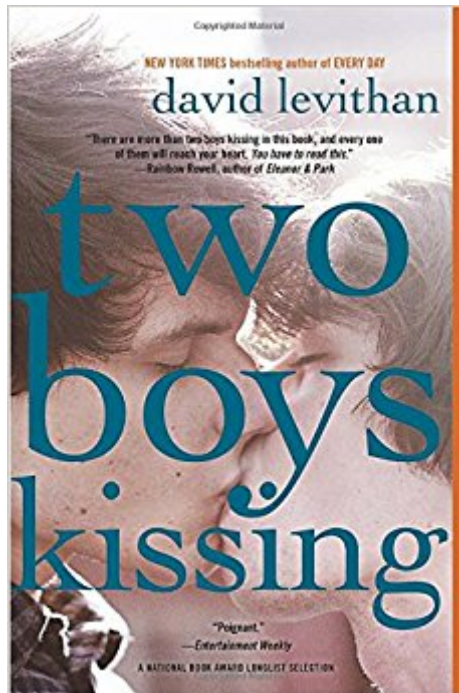




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# Two Boys Kissing



## Synopsis

"You have to read this." —Rainbow Rowell, bestselling author of *Eleanor & Park* In his follow-up to the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Every Day*, and David Levithan, coauthor of bestsellers *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* (with John Green) and *Nick & Norah's Infinite Playlist* (with Rachel Cohn), crafts a novel that the *Los Angeles Times* calls "open, frank, and ultimately optimistic." Based on true events and narrated by a Greek Chorus of the generation of gay men lost to AIDS, *Two Boys Kissing* follows Harry and Craig, two seventeen-year-olds who are about to take part in a 32-hour marathon of kissing to set a new Guinness World Record. While the two increasingly dehydrated and sleep-deprived boys are locking lips, they become a focal point in the lives of other teens dealing with universal questions of love, identity, and belonging. Named to the National Book Award Longlist, a Lambda Literary Award Winner, a Stonewall Honor Book, "An intriguing, complex narrative with an unusual point of view [and] a quality of retrospection that is rare (and refreshing) in YA literature." —*The Washington Post* From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 7 Up Narrated by an often heavy-handed Greek chorus of men who died of AIDS, this novel features the stories of one transgender and several gay teens. It focuses on Harry and Craig, friends and ex-boyfriends who have set out to beat the Guinness World Record for kissing. Harry's parents accept that he is gay and are there as witnesses, while Craig's parents find out that he's

gay after his mother is told about their record-breaking attempt. Other characters include Tariq, the victim of a hate crime; boyfriends Neil and Peter; and female-to-male (FTM) transgender teen Avery and his love interest, Ryan. Finally, there is isolated, angry, and disaffected Cooper. He spends his nights trolling sex sites online and runs away from home when confronted by his furious parents. Although Levithan has a tendency toward didacticism, his characters are likable, with some more developed than others. The story will engage readers, both female and male. The author's note discusses the true events that inspired this story. Despite its flaws, this title is recommended based on subject need. --Nancy Silverrod, San Francisco Public Library (c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

It's impossible to ignore the context of Levithan's latest novel. The timing is perfect -- in the age of Dan Savage's *It Gets Better* (2011) and recent Supreme Court rulings on marriage equality, a book meant for young adults features a real-life gay teen couple kissing on the cover, standing in for the book's two fictional boys, ex-boyfriends hoping to share the world's longest kiss. The story is narrated from the beyond by the "shadow uncles" -- gay men of the AIDS generation -- who tell millennial gay boys, "We don't want our legacy to be gravitas." These narrators marvel and remark upon Harry and Craig's kiss (a protest of hate crimes committed against a friend), the impact on two other couples at different stages of their relationships, and a hopeless loner in clear emotional danger. Levithan leans intensely into this work, which occasionally reveals the gears grinding the piece into shape, thereby dissipating some of the magic. Still, there's little doubt that this title, with its weight, significance, and literary quality, will find its way into LGBTQ and wider canons. Stock up. Grades 9-12. --Courtney Jones --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"The first sentence of the truth is always the hardest. Each of us had a first sentence, and most of us found the strength to say it out loud to someone who deserved to hear it. What we hoped, and what we found, was that the second sentence of the truth is always easier than the first, and the third sentence is even easier than that. Suddenly you are speaking the truth in paragraphs, in pages. The fear, the nervousness, is still there, but it is joined by a new confidence. All along, you've used the first sentence as a lock. But now you find that it's the key. Every now and then I read a book that I just know will stick with me forever.

When I find one of these special books, I want every person I know to read it and even ones I don't know to read it. That was definitely the case with *Two Boys Kissing*. This book was truly something special and I can't recommend it highly enough. "If you let the world in, you open yourself up to the world. Even if the world doesn't know that you're there," I read the audiobook version, which I was pleasantly surprised to find was narrated by the author himself. The book itself was powerful, but having the author read his own words made it that much more so. There's something about listening to an author reading their own words and realizing how much of themselves they put into the characters and the story, that made this one even more powerful and special than it would have been with a different narrator. You could hear his passion for the story in each word he spoke. And those words? They were beautiful and honest. The only drawback of reading this one in audiobook format is that there's no way to highlight the beautiful passages... and there were a lot of them. Had I read this in eBook format, I'd have highlighted half the book. I had to go seek out quotes on Goodreads. "...he hopes that maybe it'll make people a little less scared of two boys kissing than they were before, and a little more welcoming to the idea that all people are, in fact, born equal, no matter who they kiss or screw, no matter what dreams they have or love they give." *Two Boys Kissing* is inspired by a true story. Many of them, actually. While it's true the book mostly centers around Harry and Craig's endeavor to break the Guinness World Record for the longest kiss, there are several other characters whose stories are every bit as important to this book. Harry and Craig's bold gesture has a huge impact on these other characters who are attempting to navigate tricky situations on their own. "Love is so painful, how could you ever wish it on anybody? And love is so essential, how could you ever stand in its way?" This book was gorgeous and thought-provoking. I know it will stick with me for a very, very long time. It moved me to tears, made me appreciate the struggle of my gay friends, and most of all, made me realize that while progress has undeniably been made, there's still so much more left to achieve. I've recently read that some parents are petitioning schools to remove this book from their libraries. Now, I'm not going to get on my soapbox on this, but all I can say is that I hope that while the parents aren't open-minded enough to give this book a shot, that the school officials will take a few hours and read this beautiful, powerful book and realize taking it out of libraries would do more harm than good, by far. "You can give words, but you can't take them. And when words are given, that is when they are shared. We remember what that was like. Words so real they were almost tangible. There are conversations you remember, for certain. But more than that, there is the sensation of conversation. You will remember that, even when the precise words begin to blur."

wasn't sure how the Greek Chorus of gay men would work in this book. It took a little bit of time for me to fully embrace it, but it wasn't long before it became one of my favorite things about this book. Their voices were so honest and it was incredibly moving listening to their thoughts on the events taking place in current day, as compared to their struggles. I got entirely wrapped up in each individual character's story, though I don't think any moved me more than Cooper's. His voice and the rest of the voices were so authentic and believable. I've listened to friends talk about some of the same struggles and I think that's what made this book so personal to me. "We know that some of you are still scared. We know that some of you are still silent. Just because it's better now doesn't mean that it's always good. There's not one thing I would change about this book, except to maybe make it longer. The world needs more books like this, more writers like David Levithan. This was an emotional and hopeful read. We've come a long way, but there's still so much further to come. "We do not start as dust. We do not end as dust. We make more than dust. That's all we ask of you. Make more than dust."

It has been a really long time since a book has torn me apart like *Two Boys Kissing* did. Right at the start I knew that the unique narration of the story would do me in. I didn't know that the stories would too. The story revolves around Harry and Craig's attempt to break the record for the longest continuous kiss. Throughout their journey, we get to hear the stories of Tariq, who is Harry and Craig's friend and the stories of Neil & Peter, Avery & Ryan and Cooper, who don't know them at all. There is no way I can convey everything this book is. All I can say is that I am glad I read it. I loved it and I honestly feel that it's a book that everybody should experience for themselves.

Best book I've read in a long time. And that's not just hyperbole. I've been recommending this book to everyone I know since I read it in one afternoon (it's a very easy read. It's also a very difficult read) and I've bought the Kindle version for three friends. Really, this is a must-read. I was moved to tears more than once. It starts off kind of awkwardly and it took me a few pages to get into the flow of the narration format, but then I couldn't put it down. Very insightful, thought provoking and wonderfully written. I was tweeting lines from the book as I was reading it because they resonated with me. So many beautiful, perfect sentiments. *Two Boys Kissing* isn't just about two boys kissing. It's about love, empathy, strength, weakness, doubt, fear, courage. All of the things that make us human.

Dreaming and Loving and Screwing."Time can be buoyed by wordlessness, but it needs to be anchored in words.""If you let the world in, you open yourself up to the world. Even if the world doesn't know that you're there."This book made me feel all the feels. I read it in almost one sitting in less than 24 hours. I could not put it down. David Levithan's writing is so beautiful, true, and relatable.The story is told from the perspective of all those that died at the peak of the AIDS epidemic. Their omniscient presence gives the story such an interesting feel. There is knowledge and experience behind their words, the understanding of a generation past. The fourth wall isn't there and it feels like the book is talking directly to me.David Levithan always does an excellent job of making characters that feel so real and so relatable. The boys' stories in this book are all different, but rooted in the same world. Levithan shows different reactions to similar situations through different characters.At the center of the book is two boys kissing. Two teenagers attempt to break the world record in front of their high school. They must stand with their lips touching for over a day without sleeping or even sitting. Their story gets global attention and we see it through the other characters' eyes as well.I think all gay boys and men should read this. It explains so many things so well whether you are 60 years old or 14. This book shows the now and the future and how the past can not be forgotten.Actually, just everyone should read this book. I will be recommending this book to everyone I know. I give it a well deserved 5/5!

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