



***Rick* by Alex Gino**

Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic Inc., 2020

ISBN: 9781338048100 (Hardcover)

*Age Range: 8 to 12 (Suggested by Publisher)

Grade Range: 3-7 (Recommended by *School Library Journal*)

BOOK SYNOPSIS

From the award-winning author of *Melissa*, the story of a boy named Rick who needs to explore his own identity apart from his jerk of a best friend.

Rick's never questioned much. He's gone along with his best friend Jeff even when Jeff's acted like a bully and a jerk. He's let his father joke with him about which hot girls he might want to date even though that kind of talk always makes him uncomfortable. And he hasn't given his own identity much thought, because everyone else around him seemed to have figured it out.

But now Rick's gotten to middle school, and new doors are opening. One of them leads to the school's Rainbow Spectrum club, where kids of many genders and identities congregate, including Melissa, the girl who sits in front of Rick in class and seems to have her life together. Rick wants his own life to be that . . . understood. Even if it means breaking some old friendships and making some new ones.

As they did in their groundbreaking novel *Melissa*, in *Rick*, award-winning author Alex Gino explores what it means to search for your own place in the world . . . and all the steps you and the people around you need to take in order to get where you need to be.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

★ “Gino...manages their material about children’s identities beautifully. Like *George* (2015), this is an important, innovative, well-plotted book that invites a large readership.” –*Booklist*, **starred review**

★ “Gino seamlessly introduces language to describe a variety of sexualities and gender identities through the perspective of Rick, who is learning many of the words for the first time. Although the book shares characters with Gino's Stonewall Award-winning *George* (2015), it stands alone. The cast (including students of color) represents a spectrum of genders and sexualities with an emphasis on self-identification and encouragement of exploration. A game-changing ace.” –*Kirkus Reviews*, **starred review**

★ “An enlightening and important novel about a young person’s experience with asexuality. A required purchase for middle grade collections.” –*School Library Journal*, **starred review**

Updated 1/24/2024

Scholastic Inc.

SchoolLibraryTeam@Scholastic.com

★ “[F]urther highlight[s] the power of authenticity and acceptance” —*Publishers Weekly*, **starred review**

“This is a timely story for middle school-age children... This realistic fiction offering will help fill gaps in collections that need more LGBTQIA+ titles and will allow students to read about and consider their own sexuality. At the end of the book, the author's notes and acknowledgments provide helpful information, explanations, and reasoning for writing a much-needed story like this one... a worthwhile purchase for most collections serving this age group.”
—*School Library Connection*

“Rick’s relationship with his Grandpa Ray is refreshingly well developed... Rick’s redemption and coming-out journey affirm that people can both evolve over time and take comfort with who they are in the moment.” —*Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books*

“Gino's expressive narration brims with warmth and empathy for their middle school characters, and their careful pacing makes it easy to understand who's speaking, even during group conversations. Overall, it's an assured, encouraging performance of a much-needed story that will speak to a wide variety of young listeners.” —*AudioFile Magazine*

“Author Alex Gino has done a terrific job writing about an important, difficult subject for middle-graders. Their characters are credible and well-rounded, the situations are things to which kids will relate, and their handling of the subject matter is deft.” —*Manhattan Book Review*

“Perfectly paced and splendidly diverse, *RICK* should be mandatory for all readers, no matter their age... What *RICK* also excels at is exposing the heteronormative standards that are placed on children at a very early age... Educational without being preachy, enlightening and carefully crafted, *RICK* is a hopeful and life-affirming read perfect for anyone who needs a reminder that they are worthy – of love, of friendship, of support – unconditionally.” —*The Nerd Daily*

“Gino once again acknowledges the complexities of growing up and encourages readers to keep it simple: Be who you are... [a] moving follow-up.” —*Shelf Awareness*

“A sensitive exploration of how to be yourself in a world that sometimes doesn’t make that easy, and how to deal with unhelpful relationships, *Rick* is a lovely and important read.” —*Book Riot*

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- Children's Book Committee, Bank Street College of Education Best Children's Books of the Year List:
*Outstanding Merit
- Jane Addams Children's Book Award Finalist Titles for Older Children
- Maine Student Book Award Reading List
- *Kirkus* Best Book of 2020

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [Discussion Guide](#)
- [Read with Pride Resource Guide](#)
- [The Nerd Daily](#), author interview

Updated 1/24/2024

Scholastic Inc.

SchoolLibraryTeam@Scholastic.com

***A NOTE ON AGE RANGES**

A publisher-suggested age range covers the gamut of readers that publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate age range for the diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book's intended use.

Updated 1/24/2024

Scholastic Inc.

SchoolLibraryTeam@Scholastic.com