



Banned Book Club

by Kim Hyun Sook, Ryan Estrada and Ko Hyung-Ju
Iron Circus Comics, 2020

ISBN: 978-1945820427 (Trade Paperback)

Age Range: 13 And Up (Suggested by Publisher)

Grade Range: 9 and Up (Recommended by School Library Journal)

BOOK SYNOPSIS

When Kim Hyun Sook started college in 1983 she was ready for her world to open up. After acing her exams and sort-of convincing her traditional mother that it was a good idea for a woman to go to college, she looked forward to soaking up the ideas of Western Literature far from the drudgery she was promised at her family's restaurant. But literature class would prove to be just the start of a massive turning point, still focused on reading but with life-or-death stakes she never could have imagined.

This was during South Korea's Fifth Republic, a military regime that entrenched its power through censorship, torture, and the murder of protestors. In this charged political climate, with Molotov cocktails flying and fellow students disappearing for hours and returning with bruises, Hyun Sook sought refuge in the comfort of books. When the handsome young editor of the school newspaper invited her to his reading group, she expected to pop into the cafeteria to talk about Moby Dick, Hamlet, and The Scarlet Letter. Instead she found herself hiding in a basement as the youngest member of an underground banned book club. And as Hyun Sook soon discovered, in a totalitarian regime, the delights of discovering great works of illicit literature are quickly overshadowed by fear and violence as the walls close in.

In BANNED BOOK CLUB, Hyun Sook shares a dramatic true story of political division, fear-mongering, anti-intellectualism, the death of democratic institutions, and the relentless rebellion of reading.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

★ "The messages of hope are universal, as are the poignant reminders that change can happen when people are willing to speak up." -Publishers Weekly, starred review

★ "Affecting resonance sure to inspire today's youthful generation of tenacious changemakers." -Booklist, starred review

★ "Highly recommended for readers passionate about activism or political history, or for those who are simply looking for an excellent comic." -School Library Journal, starred review

"It's hard to imagine a world where Banned Book Club could be more relevant than it is right now" -AVClub

Updated 3/7/2024

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“‘Banned Book Club’ is the Daring Memoir That Comes Once A Generation. There is nothing else like this on the bookshelves. This is a book with a message that is as eerily timely and necessary as the atmosphere present on the pages—feels a lot like the world today in fact.

As a learning tool, Banned Book Club is a genuine look into the lives of those young people who wanted more not just for themselves but for their country.” -Black Nerd Problems

“This gripping story equals the suspense of the best thrillers but is all the more powerful for being true.” -Kirkus Reviews

“Reminds us of what the medium can do.” -Book Riot

“This startled me. It froze my heart.” -Ten time Eisner-winner Jeff Smith, creator of Bone

“A gripping graphic memoir.” -Assembly, a Publication of The Malala Fund

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- Freeman Award, Book of Note winner
- Librerías de Madrid Comic of the Year winner
- Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Award winner
- Shaded Choice Award winner for Best Graphic Novel
- Eisner Award nominee for Best Graphic Memoir
- Ringo Award nominee for Best Non-fiction Comic
- YALSA Award nominee for Excellence in Nonfiction
- YALSA Great Graphic Novels List
- Maverick Graphic Novel Reading List
- Texas Topaz Non-Fiction Reading List
- Capitol Choices Best Books List
- New York Public Library's Best Books of 2020
- NPR's Best Books of 2020
- Kirkus Reviews' Best Books of 2020
- Penn GSE Best Books for Young Readers of 2020
- CCBC Choices Best Books of 2020

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

[‘Banned Book Club’ Authors Offer Advice as Teens Confront Censorship](#) -School Library Journal

[Illustrated Q&A with Kim Hyun Sook and Ryan Estrada](#) -Rich in Color

[Foreword Face Off with the Authors of Banned Book Club](#) -Foreword Reviews

[A Conversation with Ryan Estrada](#) -This Book is Banned

RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES

In every library or school district where Banned Book Club was challenged, upon review it was determined to be safe for students and was returned to shelves.

AUTHOR STATEMENT

[‘Banned Book Club’ Authors Speak Out After Their Work Is Temporarily Banned in Florida](#) -School Library Journal

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***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.

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