



***My Life as a Diamond* by Jenny Manzer**

Orca Book Publishers, 2018

9781459818316: (paperback)

\*9 to 12: (Suggested by Publisher)

Grade 4 to 7

## BOOK SYNOPSIS

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A heartwarming, funny, fast-paced story about the bravery it takes to live as your true self, no matter the cost.

Ten-year-old Caspar "Caz" Cadman loves baseball and has a great arm. He loves the sounds, the smells, the stats. When his family moves from Toronto to a suburb of Seattle, the first thing he does is try out for the local summer team, the Redburn Ravens. Even though Caz is thrilled when he makes the team, he worries because he has a big secret.

No one in this city knows that before Caz told his parents he was a boy, he lived a very different life. It's nobody's business. Caz will tell his new friends when he's ready. But when a player on a rival team starts snooping around, Caz's past is revealed, and Caz worries it will be Toronto all over again.

Will Caz's teammates rally behind their star pitcher? Or will Caz be betrayed once more?

## REVIEWS AND PRAISE

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"An engaging sports story." –*Kirkus Reviews*

"[Caz's] teammates lend authenticity and humor to the book. Family dynamics are portrayed honestly...Competition between teams is fierce, as is camaraderie within the team." –*Booklist*

"Baseball fans will enjoy the play-by-play, but more than that, readers will like the character of Caz. Acceptance of others is a good message for everyone." –*School Library Connection*

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"A great novel for elementary grades to learn more about gender, identity, and transgender issues...Filled with lots of baseball lingo and references, this is the perfect book for a die-hard baseball fan." –*Resource Links*

"Provides young readers with an opportunity to see a community that is accepting of Caz and who he is—not who they think he should be." –*Quill & Quire*

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## AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- Children’s Book Council & National Council for Social Studies Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People | 2019 | Commended
- Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice Awards - Diamond Willow | 2019 | Nominated
- Chocolate Lily Book Awards - Novels | 2019 | Short-listed
- Bank Street College of Education Children's Book Committee Best Children's Books of the Year | 2018 | Commended
- CCBC Best Books for Kids & Teens, starred selection | 2019 | Commended
- City of Victoria Children’s Book Prize | 2019 | Short-listed
- Forest of Reading Silver Birch Fiction Award | 2020 | Nominated
- TD Summer Reading Club Recommended Reads | 2020 | Commended
- Hackmatack Children's Choice Book Award | 2021 | Short-listed

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## RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES

“We’ve had enormous progress [for LGBTQ rights],” Michael Bronski, Professor of the Practice in Media and Activism in Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality, said. “These book bans — along with the bans on drag shows, along with the attacks on abortion, along with the attacks on trans youth — are really a last-ditch effort, almost magical thinking [from conservatives], to stop this push.”

“The main intention of all of these laws is to actually — an impossible task — eradicate the visible presence of queer people,” Bronski said. “If we think of the world as the legal sphere and the social sphere, the social sphere has actually evolved pretty quickly, and some people ... are uncomfortable with that, and they’re using legal tactics to stop that.”

But Bronski said these efforts can foster uncertainty and doubt in society and affect how the LGBTQ community is perceived.

Additionally, Schuyler Bailor, who is a transgender author, says, “These book bans absolutely affect authors, but I think they affect the children more,” he said. “Our stories are not getting out to the kids who need to be reading them.”

In an article from the Harvard Gazette: <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2023/06/lgbtq-book-challenges-are-on-the-rise-heres-why/>

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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

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appropriate age range for the diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book's intended use.