



***Gabi, A Girl in Pieces* by Isabel Quintero**

Cinco Puntos Press, an imprint of LEE & LOW BOOKS INC, 2014

ISBN: 9781935955955 (Paperback)

\*Age Range: 14 & up (Suggested by Publisher)

Grade Range: 9 & up (Recommended by *School Library Journal*)

---

**BOOK SYNOPSIS**

In this groundbreaking William C. Morris Award winner for a YA debut, Gabi's life is a mess—her family, her friends, her attempts at a love life—but writing helps, especially since it turns out she's pretty good at poetry.

Gabi Hernandez chronicles her last year of high school in her diary: college applications, Cindy's pregnancy, Sebastian's coming out, the cute boys, her father's meth habit, and the food she craves. And best of all, the poetry that helps forge her identity.

*July 24*

*My mother named me Gabriella, after my grandmother who, coincidentally, didn't want to meet me when I was born because my mother was unmarried, and therefore living in sin. My mom has told me the story many, many, MANY, times of how, when she confessed to my grandmother that she was pregnant with me, her mother beat her. BEAT HER! She was twenty-five. That story is the basis of my sexual education and has reiterated why it's important to wait until you're married to give it up. So now, every time I go out with a guy, my mom says, "Ojos abiertos, piernas cerradas." Eyes open, legs closed. That's as far as the birds and the bees talk has gone. And I don't mind it. I don't necessarily agree with that whole wait until you're married crap, though. I mean, this is America and the 21st century; not Mexico one hundred years ago. But, of course, I can't tell my mom that because she will think I'm bad. Or worse: trying to be White.*

---

**REVIEWS AND PRAISE**

★ "Reading Quintero's debut is like attending a large family fiesta: it's overpopulated with people, noise, and emotion, but the overall effect is joyous. . . Quintero, on the other hand, is utterly confident, gifting us with a messy, complicated protagonist who isn't defined by ethnicity, class, weight, or lifestyle. Gabi is purely herself—and that's what makes her universal." —[Booklist](#), **starred review**

★ "Readers won't soon forget Gabi, a young woman coming into her own in the face of intense pressure from her family, culture and society to fit someone else's idea of what it means to be a 'good' girl. A fresh, authentic and honest exploration of contemporary Latina identity." —[Kirkus Reviews](#), **starred review**

★ "Quintero's first novel quickly establishes a strong voice and Mexican-American cultural perspective through the journal of intelligent, self-deprecating, and funny Gabi. . . Her narration is fresh, self-aware, and reflective. The intimate journal structure of the novel is especially revealing as Gabi gains confidence in her own integrity and complexity" —[Publishers Weekly](#), **starred review**

Updated 1-12-24

LEE & LOW BOOKS INC.

Contact [marketing@leeandlow.com](mailto:marketing@leeandlow.com)

“Meet Quintero’s ‘fat girl’ Gabi, eating and starving and fighting and writing her way through the crushing pressures of high school boy desire, religious approval and Mexican cultural taboos. I cannot think of any book today for young adults as voracious, bold, truthful and timely.” —**Juan Felipe Herrera**, award-winning poet & U.S. Poet Laureate, 2015-2017

“Believing she’s not Mexican enough for her family and not white enough for Berkeley, Gabi still meets every challenge head-on with vulgar humor and raw honesty. . . A refreshing take on slut- and fat-shaming, Quintero’s work ranks with Meg Medina’s *Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass* and Junot Diaz’s *Drown* as a coming-of-age novel with Latino protagonists.” —[School Library Journal](#)

“Gabi’s voice is a completely bicultural and bilingual voice, so throughout the novel, you will have Spanish and English the way it’s really spoken in our families—it’s this crazy sort of Spanglish mix. And she’s bold. She will say the quote-unquote unthinkable things about her body, about sexuality, about the crazy, dual sets of rules for Latino boys and girls.” —[NPR](#)

“In Gabi, we have a protagonist who challenges expectations, thinks for herself, and isn’t afraid of putting herself out there or making mistakes. I can’t rave enough about how wonderful this book is. Not only does Quintero unflinchingly address important issues, she’s created multifaceted characters who leap off the page. . . An all-around brilliant and outstanding look at one ordinary year in the life of an extraordinary teenage girl.” —[Teen Librarian Toolbox](#)

## AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

---

- William C. Morris YA Debut Award (Young Adult Library Services Association, a division of the American Library Association)
- Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children’s Book Award (Texas State University College of Education)
- Amelia Elizabeth Walden Award Finalist (National Council of Teachers of English)
- YALSA’s Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers
- YALSA’s Best Fiction for Young Adults
- Amelia Bloomer Book List (Feminist Task Force and the Social Responsibilities Round Table of ALA)
- Américas Award Commended Title (Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs)
- *Booklist* Editors’ Choice Books for Youth
- *School Library Journal* Best Books of the Year
- Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC) Choices
- Center for the Study of Multicultural Children's Literature Best Books
- Los Angeles Public Library Best Books for Teens
- New York Public Library Best Books for Teens
- Skipping Stones Honor Book (*Skippping Stones Magazine*)
- Arkansas Teen Book Award
- Paterson Prize for Books for Young People (Passaic County Community College)
- Capitol Choices (DC) Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens
- California Book Award (Commonwealth Club)
- California Reads Teacher Recommended Books
- Connecticut Nutmeg Book Award High School List
- Illinois Abraham Lincoln High School Award List

Updated 1-12-24

LEE & LOW BOOKS INC.

Contact [marketing@leeandlow.com](mailto:marketing@leeandlow.com)

- Eliot Rosewater Indiana High School Book Award List
- Read Aloud Indiana List
- Iowa High School Battle of the Books List
- New Mexico Land of Enchantment Black Bear Reading List
- Oregon Reader's Choice Award List
- Rhode Island Teen Book Award List
- Tennessee Volunteer State Book Award List
- Texas TAYSHAS Reading List
- Virginia Readers' Choice List

## **MEDIA AND RESOURCES**

---

- [Teacher's Guide](#)
- [Educator's Guide from the University of New Mexico's Latin American & Iberian Institute](#)
- [Isabel Quintero's Morris Acceptance Speech](#) (video)
- [School Library Journal: Constructing a Life | A Conversation with Isabel Quintero](#)
- [YALSA's The Hub: 2015 Morris Award: An Interview with Isabel Quintero](#)
- [LA Review of Books: "My Writing is My Activism" | An Interview with Isabel Quintero](#)
- [TeachingBooks' Meet-the-Author Recording](#)
- [Latinx in Kid Lit: We Read Banned Books | Gabi, A Girl in Pieces by Isabel Quintero](#)
- [Lee & Low Instagram Live with Isabel Quintero](#) (video)

## **RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES**

---

[Wentzville School District](#): This book appropriately, eloquently and completely addresses the many issues facing our young people in today's world. The voice of Gabi, and her empathy and growth during the book, make this a valuable book for teens experiencing similar challenges of body image, family conflict, gender identity, school success, bullying, date rape, mental health challenges, and conflict resolution. The poetry as a vehicle of problem solving, personal journaling is very relatable to our teens. The language is very accurate and appropriate to the content of the book. Our students deserve to have this Mexican American teen's experiences.

## **AUTHOR STATEMENT**

---

"I was doing a small convention and a young woman showed up. And she came with her own copy of *Gabi*. And she said, 'I made my mom bring me out here. I just wanted to tell you that your book has helped me in my healing so much.' And I teared up. When I get responses like that from young people, I feel I did an okay job writing this book. Which is to show young people that life can be hard, life can be tricky, but it doesn't have to stay that way. You don't have to accept it like that. You can question, you can find your own answers. You don't have to keep or believe the answers that other people give you. You can find your own answers that serve you better, that make you feel better, that are healthier. You don't have to listen to other people, because sometimes adults are wrong. A lot of times, adults are wrong. Books are getting banned by adults, not children. So, adults can be wrong lots of time. . .

Thank you to all library workers and teachers and educators and authors who are standing up for our rights. Who are going to school board meetings to talk, who are speaking out at community events. I do know it's hard to put your job on the line and to speak up. Because your livelihoods are on the line, your safety is on the line. But I think that is necessary because the alternative is worse. The alternative is we descend further into a fascist state. Nothing is given to us. Sometimes things have to be taken back. I

Updated 1-12-24

LEE & LOW BOOKS INC.

Contact [marketing@leeandlow.com](mailto:marketing@leeandlow.com)

think it's important that we all support, and we don't leave all the work to the educators and library workers. It's also on our shoulders, as authors, and just as community members." —[Isabel Quintero](#)

### **\*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 1-12-24**

LEE & LOW BOOKS INC.

Contact [marketing@leeandlow.com](mailto:marketing@leeandlow.com)