

Book Resume: The Deep and Dark Blue



***The Deep & Dark Blue* by Niki Smith**

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2020

ISBN: 9780316486019 (Paperback)

*Age Range: 8+ (Suggested by Publisher)

Grade Range: Gr 4-7 (Recommended by *School Library Journal*)

BOOK SYNOPSIS

***The Witch Boy* meets *The Legend of Korra* in this breathtaking, epic graphic novel.**

After a terrible political coup usurps their noble house, Hawke and Grayson flee to stay alive and assume new identities, Hanna and Grayce. Desperation and chance lead them to the Communion of Blue, an order of magical women who spin the threads of reality to their will.

As the twins learn more about the Communion, and themselves, they begin to hatch a plan to avenge their family and retake their royal home. While Hawke wants to return to his old life, Grayce struggles to keep the threads of her new life from unraveling, and realizes she wants to stay in the one place that will allow her to finally live as a girl.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

★ “Grayce's coming-out subplot is affirming; she is met with love and support by old family and new. Woven with magic.” —Kirkus, starred review

★ “Children figuring out where they fit in will appreciate this stunning work that does double duty as an absorbing adventure and a gentle musing on gender identity, family, and acceptance.” —School Library Journal, starred review

“This full-color graphic novel has much to offer its readers: the action of a family coup, the world building of a fascinating faith of spinners and weavers, and a transgendered character finding her place in the world.” —School Library Connection

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“[C]apable worldbuilding and a positive look at transgender identity [...] Smith's anime-inspired illustrations are smooth and beautifully costumed, with an open, cartoon expressiveness.” —Publishers Weekly

“Smith's artwork, recalling classic manga, delivers clearly choreographed action and intense facial expressions, which capably communicate poignant emotion during the many bittersweet scenes. [...] A rich tapestry of a story, with action and character development in equal measure.”—Booklist

“Smith's quick pacing and world building make this a page-turner for lovers of adventure and magic.” —BCCB

“[The Deep & Dark Blue is] exactly the type of book to give to a trans child who's coming to terms with their identity. Smith designed the story to be gentle and empathetic while also providing the fun and thrills of a fantasy epic of daring-do and friendship. This is a complete epic story...a book for a kid to cherish and keep forever.” —Bleeding Cool

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- 2021 Prism Comics Award Winner, Young Readers
- A Kirkus Best Children's Books of 2020
- NYPL's Favorite Trans, Nonbinary, and GNC Titles of 2020
- A YALSA Great Graphic Novels for Teens of 2021
- A Top Ten 2021 Rainbow Book List Title
- A 2021 Lambda Literary Award Finalist
- Nominated for state awards and lists in Kentucky, Maryland, Texas, Massachusetts, Michigan, and South Dakota

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [INTERVIEW: Niki Smith talks color, queer rep, & world-building in THE DEEP & DARK BLUE - The Beat](#)
- [Meet the Author: Niki Smith - Roar Cat Reads](#)
- [Interview: Nikki Smith – Geeks Out](#)
- [GRAPHIC NOVEL CLUB: Niki Smith talks about the challenges of her color palette in THE DEEP & DARK BLUE - The Beat](#)
- ["The Deep & Dark Blue": Nikki Smith Talks about Her Pioneering LGBTQ Young Reader's Fantasy Epic Graphic Novel - Bleeding Cool](#)

RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES

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[St. Tammany library board chips away at mountain of challenged books \(St. Tammany Parish, LA\)](#) — retained in public library juvenile section

[Oregon Intellectual Freedom Clearinghouse \(OIFC\) 2023 Annual Report](#) — retained in public library

[A message to parents regarding library books. \(McKinney ISD, McKinney, TX\)](#) — response to challenges including *The Deep and Dark Blue*; retained in circulation

AUTHOR STATEMENT

It has unfortunately grown more and more common for books to be banned "quietly"-- surreptitiously pulled from shelves without the chance for authors, publishers or local communities to defend access to the titles being challenged.

Treating LGBTQ+ experiences as something 'obscene' that need to be censored is incredibly harmful to young readers who are just desperate to know they're not alone. I am a part of Authors Against Book Bans (<https://www.authorsagainstbookbans.com/>), working to protect the first amendment and the rights of young readers against these unconstitutional bans. When diverse voices are silenced and oppressed, we all suffer.

***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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