



Title: Both Sides Now
Author: Peyton Thomas
Imprint: Dial Books
Publisher: Penguin Young Readers
On sale date: August 24, 2021
ISBN: 9780593322819
Format: Hardcover
Age Range*: 14 and up
Grade Range: Gr 9 Up

BOOK RESUME: BOTH SIDES NOW

BOOK SYNOPSIS

A witty and warm-hearted novel about a trans teen finding his place in the world perfect for fans of *Red, White and Royal Blue*

There's only one thing standing between Finch Kelly and a full-blown case of high school senioritis: the National Speech & Debate Tournament. Taking home the gold would not only be the pinnacle of Finch's debating career, but the perfect way to launch himself into his next chapter: college in Washington, DC, and a history-making career as the first trans congressman. What could possibly go wrong?

Well, for starters, Finch could develop a teeny tiny crush on his very attractive, very taken, and very gay debate partner, Jonah. Never mind that Finch has never considered whether he's interested in more than just girls. And that dream of college in DC? Finch hasn't exactly been accepted anywhere yet, let alone received the full-ride scholarship he'll need to make this dream a reality.

Worst of all, though, is this year's topic for Nationals: transgender rights. If he wants to cinch the gold, and get into college, Finch might have to argue against his own humanity.

People say there are two sides to every argument. But, as Finch is about to discover, some things—like who you are and who you love—are not up for debate.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

★ "Queer issues are given center stage, evoking the lived experiences of many in a sensitive and sympathetic way...These characters feel nuanced and genuine, with their identities and backgrounds as integral parts of the plot and characterization. Emotionally charged and politically relevant, this is a must read."—*Kirkus*, starred review

★ "Thomas' debut is achingly vulnerable... There's no debate: Both Sides Now is a compelling, heartfelt must-read." —*Booklist*, starred review

"Debut author Thomas's conversational writing style is highly engaging and should draw readers in with a compelling story of self-realization and a bit of youthful romance."—*The Horn Book*

"A sharp, witty narrative... full of cerebral teens with big plans and snark to spare."—*School Library Journal*

"This coming-of-age romance poignantly depicts self-discovery and finding your place in the world."—*BuzzFeed*

Updated 10.1.2025

Penguin Random House

Contact BannedBooks@penguinrandomhouse.com

*Publisher suggested age range covers the wide range of readers 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 range for their diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book's intended use.

"A delightful YA read."—*The Advocate*

"A heartfelt, witty debut novel."—*Buffalo News*

"One of the best Canadian YA books of the year."—CBC

"In this sharp and emotional first novel... Thomas doesn't pull any punches on difficult topics and never once reduces his characters to objects of pity. Instead, he depicts teenagers who are working hard to find their places in a world that has thrown obstacle after obstacle in their paths. The novel balances serious political conversations and scenes of moving emotional hardship with moments of comedy and a spirit of true camaraderie."—Bookpage

"Peyton Thomas's debut novel is a wonderfully nuanced exploration of what it means to be a transgender teen... *Both Sides Now* is an impressive debut that focuses on fully realized trans and queer characters, with a high-stakes plot that will keep readers invested until the very end."—CM: Canadian Review of Materials

"Thomas writes with effortless ease; his convincing characters have notably diverse traits and he's clear that what they are doesn't necessarily define who they are."—Shelf Awareness

"An excellent, engaging read. And I just can't help but feel a particular affection for a kid who dreams of egging Mitch McConnell's house."—Pride Source

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- A Junior Library Guild Selection, Young Adult
- Manitoba Young Reader's Choice Award, Northern Lights, for Grades 7-9 (Manitoba, Canada)

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [TeachingBooks.net resources](#)
- [Penguin Classroom Discussion Guide](#)
- [The Advocate Interview with Author](#)
- [Tundra Books with Author](#)

Updated 10.1.2025

Penguin Random House

Contact BannedBooks@penguinrandomhouse.com

*Publisher suggested age range covers the wide range of readers 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 range for their diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book's intended use.