

YA Lit LGBTQ

By Haley Solomon

How the Young Adult Genre is Trailblazing LGBTQ Representation in Contemporary Literature

Since the fight for LGBTQ rights began, media representation has been at the forefront of the discussion. You've probably heard of the most hotly debated queer films and television shows, but when's the last time you've heard of LGBTQ themes discussed in a book? Young Adult Literature, or YA Lit, is a relatively new genre, and yet it is one of the fastest-growing literature genres in the country. And unique to YA Lit, it possesses a strong base of sincere authors who wish to challenge, inspire, and educate their readers on relevant teen issues ranging from first romances to body image insecurities to, you guessed it, LGBTQ themes. So how are these authors doing? Are LGBTQ teens able to identify with the characters they find in YA Lit?

Or do they feel misrepresented?

The mainstream of YA Lit is still largely hetero-normative, and with many trying to emulate the most popular titles such as Harry Potter, Twilight, and The Hunger Games, LGBTQ characters sometimes remain invisible. However, YA is overall leaps and bounds ahead of other genres of contemporary literature. Authors know they are writing for searching or inquisitive teens, and thus determine to open a venue of personal exploration in a variety of creative ways. Boy Meets Boy by David Leviathan takes place in a homo-normative world, with all the antics and humor that you would expect to find from a romantic comedy. In Will Grayson, Will Grayson, also written by David Leviathan and co-written