



The Lesbiana's Guide to Catholic School by Sonora Reyes

Comstock Township Library, Friday 11/22/24 @ 4pm

Discussion Questions:

1. Did you finish reading the book?
2. Were there any scenes that felt very inauthentic to real life? Were there any scenes that felt “too real” (emotionally impactful, resonating, personal) to you?
3. Christianity (specifically Catholicism) is a theme throughout the novel. What are your thoughts on the intersectionality of Christianity and the LGBTQ+ community? What was your reaction to the scene in chapter 6 when Bo confronts the Priest during confession? What other aspects of Christianity or Catholicism surprised you (either positively or negatively) and why?
4. The Mayan Code of the Heart and poem by Luis Valdez (In Lak'ech Ala K'in, found in chapter 3) is important to Cesar and Yami; why is it important to them? Why do you think the author chose to title the first 22 chapters using language similar to the Ten Commandments and then use language from the poem for the final 5 chapters?
5. When Yami gets to take Bo and her parents to the Baile folklórico, she says “...for once, it's not my turn to be uncomfortable...I'm just sick of being the one to shoulder the un-comfortability of every situation so everyone can feel like everything is normal.” (p. 253) This scene does a great job of showing what it's like to be a person of color in a “white” world. Why is representation important both in the story and in real life? How does Yami's experience at the Baile folklórico compare to Bo's exploration of her own heritage?
6. Yami's relationship with her father changes considerably throughout the book. Do you think it'll be easier for her to cut him out since he's in another country or will she struggle with all the life events and the day-to-day absence of him that she's already experienced after he was deported?
7. Throughout the book we see a variety of responses from parents about their children's sexuality (Jamal's parents throwing him out, Bo's parents' instant acceptance, Yami's father's rejection of her and her mother's acceptance of both her children). What were your reactions to these different experiences? Do you think children owe anything to parents when they don't respond positively?
8. Did you connect with Cesar as he struggled with his mental health? Why? Did you connect with any other characters and their reactions to his mental health? Why? What was your reaction to Yami's mom initially blaming her for Cesar's mental health crisis?

9. The book emphasizes the significance of friendship and relationships in one's journey of self-discovery. How do Yami's friendships with characters like Bo and her brother impact her growth and understanding of herself?
10. Shame is a major theme in the book. "We start lining up by the confessionals, one pew at a time. Some people leave looking relieved, and some leave crying, which is super intimidating. It tells me I'm not the only one here who's carried their body weight in shame." (p. 189) What are your thoughts on how each character grapples with shame? Do you think her confrontation with shame is what pushes Yami to choose and reflect pride?
11. The book explores being queer and closeted through Yami and Cesar's journeys. Reflect on the stages of coming out for both Yami and Cesar – where they choose to be out and where they choose to hide their identities and how that changes through the book. What are some of the reasons people would choose to stay closeted and what issues do people face who choose to be out?
12. Would you say fictional stories can be just as meaningful to sharing queer experiences as non-fiction ones? Why or why not?



If you're interested, there's more online about the author and the book:

To Watch:

- ★ Banned Book Club Event with Sonora Reyes: The Lesbian's Guide to Catholic School (37 min):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2qBod9NQ_PY
- ★ Sonora Reyes on the Coming Out Journey: Author Interview (13 min):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71WhI7hylFc>

To Read:

- ★ Stuck in Fiction Author Interview with Sonora Reyes:
<https://stuckinfiction.com/2022/06/13/the-lesbianas-guide-to-catholic-school-author-interview-pride-month/>
- ★ Reads Rainbow Author Interview: <https://readsrainbow.com/2022/04/author-interview-sonora-reyes>
- ★ National Catholic Reporter Article: "Through their queer protagonist, novelist Sonora Reyes revisits Catholic School":
<https://www.ncronline.org/news/culture/through-their-queer-protagonist-novelist-sonora-reyes-revisits-catholic-school>