



Read with Pride, Episode 11, Margo Zimmerman Gets the Girl

Transcript:

00;00;03;27 - 00;00;20;18

Voiceover

[VOICEOVER] Hello and welcome to Read with Pride, a podcast focused on LGBTQIA+ literature. Brought to you by the Ocean County Library's Ocean Pride Committee.

00;00;20;21 - 00;00;25;25

Diane

[DIANE] Hi, this is Diane, pronouns she/her, and I work at the Toms River branch. I'm part of the Ocean Pride Committee.

00;00;25;27 - 00;01;18;22

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Hi, this is Courtney, pronouns she/they, I work at the Lakewood branch, and I'm part of the Ocean Pride Committee. The book we're talking about today is Margo Zimmerman Gets the Girl by Brianna R. Shrum and Sarah Waxelbaum. Margo Zimmerman is gay, but she doesn't know it until now. An overachiever at heart, Margo is determined to ace her newly discovered gayness. All she needs is the right tutor. Abby Sokoloff has her own gayness, down to a science. But a flunking grade in US history is threatening her acceptance to her dream school. All she needs is the right tutor. Margot agrees to help Abby get her history grade up in exchange for queer one-on-one lessons. But as they spend more and more time together, Margot realizes she doesn't just want any girl. She wants "the" girl.

00;01;18;24 - 00;01;22;27

Diane

[DIANE] I'm going to ask you first what is your overall impression of the book?

00;01;22;29 - 00;01;58;05

Courtney

[COURTNEY] I love this book. It has such a playful tone to it. It explores this coming of age in such a beautiful way. Discovering that you're gay, not knowing how that context fits in the rest of your life, and sort of having to try to figure it out and the connections that one is sort of able to make along the way. It tackles this with humor and with heart, and I think it's just wonderful.

00;01;58;08 - 00;02;33;02

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah, I thought it was a really good book. You recommended it. So right away I looked and I think I got it on hoopla and it was really fast. Like I started reading it, listening to it. But what I noticed is when I'm listening to a book and I just go so fast, I think when we were talking about recording, all of a sudden I was like, oh, I'm 10% through already, you know, like it just really went fast. The characters are real and real, like, complexity to them. They weren't just, you know, it wasn't just two gay girls or a gay and a bisexual girl, you know, like it was - they were really, like many layers to the characters.

00;02;33;03 - 00;02;50;29

Courtney

[COURTNEY] They're so fleshed out, you can tell their like their dislikes, the way that they process information, their fears, which I think is very central to the story as a whole. And again, how they interact with each other. It really just makes the world feel lived in and it's very inviting.

00;02;51;01 - 00;03;10;24

Diane

[DIANE] So Margo, she's autistic. She, you know, and so we read it during April, which is Autism Awareness Month. But I think it's interesting because she talks about that like again, in real life settings. Not as a "Oh, poor me," just like, "This is who I am," you know?

00;03;11;01 - 00;03;38;17

Courtney

[COURTNEY] That was one of the things that surprised me the most when I first read this book, because I myself am autistic. That's something that I feel very comfortable disclosing with people. It's something that's very core to my own existence. And when I first read this and they mentioned that several pages into the beginning, I was like, oh, they just casually mention it. It's not something that they need to work towards accepting in any way of the text. It's just another part of who she is. And it was really validating to see that.

00;03;38;19 - 00;03;54;21

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah, and it definitely made her character more complex. And the facets just like every person has so many different pieces. And I thought Abby was very complex also. She had other things that we could have explored more, but we were focused, I think obviously more on Margot's journey.

00;03;54;24 - 00;03;58;22

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Did you find any similarities between you and any of the characters?

00;03;58;24 - 00;05;06;00

Diane

[DIANE] I think I found my similarities in different pieces of my life. When I was in high school, because this is, you know, the way books are set in high school setting. I don't remember being so questioning, but I was at different time. So like I'm now in my 50s doing more questioning of my sexuality than in

high school. But I definitely had friends like that. Not that question, but complex friends, like, you know, just like now. And I think now I can relate to Abby in the whole, like, is bisexual like, is it - I'm not saying valid - but there's parts in her journey that she's like, you know, has to come to terms with, oh, you can be bisexual. It's not that you have to be one way. Which was a stereotype or a thought that I had for so long in my life that like, oh, you can't, you have to be one way or the other. No. It's fluid. Yeah, exactly. So, I guess I feel like sometimes of perfectionism. I'm definitely not perfect, but I feel like I have to do everything so... perfection in many things. So I saw that with Margo more. What about you? Do you see similarities?

00;05;06;02 - 00;07;08;02

Courtney

[COURTNEY] I am so Margo. My second reading on this, especially, I went, "Oh, I am so Margo" because when I was in high school, I was doing a lot of questioning, and that started very early for me. And the culture around me and the way that I think I was scared that my peers would perceive me, I kind of buried that part of myself for a really long time, or at the very least kept it very close to my chest. Because in a lot of ways, I think people already sort of saw me as different. And that was just another thing that I was like, oh, if I am a lesbian, that's just another piece of fodder that people can use against me, but it's not. And even by the time I think I was a senior in high school, I was actually identifying fairly openly as bisexual. And then that changed a little bit more down the line. But also with Margot, you know, her need to kind of know everything before she can jump right into something. Having to meticulously plan out and understand all of her options like that is that is very much me. And there's one quote from the book where she's talking with her brother Mendel, and she tells him that she doesn't know what she's doing when it comes to queer culture. She doesn't know how to speak the language. She doesn't know how to tell people that she's gay and she thinks that there should be like a brain scan assessment to, like, fully confirm for her, you know? Oh, wow. Wow. Yeah. There's no questioning those results. You're definitively gay. Congratulations. That's something that I think I was asking for. Whether I have the language for it or not when I was that age, because a lot of my thinking was, well, how do I know if I'm gay? If I've never kissed a boy? Like, how do I know if I'm gay? If I've never been in, like, a long term heterosexual relationship? But you don't need those things to concretely come to that conclusion. There's a lot of different ways that it can work.

00;07;08;07 - 00;07;42;00

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah, that's so interesting. And I think those thoughts you're saying right now again, I'm 51 and I'm like, how do I know? How do I know this? And I'm like, well, if I've been thinking about this woman for a few months, maybe that's an indicator, you know? But at the same time, I'm thinking about a man for a few months maybe, you know? So I completely agree. It's a YA book, but it's important. Like I said, adult female. I was like, oh, I'm like, I can relate to a lot of these things. Real life feelings and thoughts that like, oh, you wish you knew. You wish like someone could draw your blood and be like, oh, there you are. You know, like...

00;07;42;00 - 00;07;43;02

Courtney

[COURTNEY] The gay gene, yeah.

00;07;43;02 - 00;07;51;07

Diane

[DIANE] That's right, but that is not, you know, that's not how it happens. So maybe sort of what character you find yourself relating to the most.

00;07;51;09 - 00;08;48;04

Courtney

[COURTNEY] I know I just said Margot, I have 75% Margot, 25% Abby. I think again, a lot of Margot, a lot of her perfectionism and need for detail. I think that's definitely there. With Abby it's definitely a little bit more of the ADHD tendency, I think, because it's like, yeah, like I would just stare into space for 20 minutes, forgetting what I'm doing before kind of snapping back into figuring that out. But also with Abby, I think the gender presentation is a little bit more towards what I lean to. Like she definitely has kind of that more classic flannel snapback, torn jeans, lesbian look. And like that's something that I definitely gravitate towards, I think a little bit more. And I think Abby also trends towards escapism a little bit more when things get overwhelming for her. And that's definitely something that I see myself with too.

00;08;48;07 - 00;08;57;02

Diane

[DIANE] You know, you mentioned Abby and I completely forgot that. Oh, that's right, there's the ADHD thing. You know, like at the end that's sort of at the end of the book. And one of her teachers is like...

00;08;57;04 - 00;08;58;11

Courtney

[COURTNEY] You might want to look into this.

00;08;58;12 - 00;09;30;04

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah. Obviously as females we are a different like, I feel and I've seen it for myself. I'm probably still undiagnosed ADHD. I've got to go get tested for that. But it's so easy. It's like you overcome it. You know, you try coping skills and you find different ways. Oh, speaking back, what was interesting is in this book, when they spoke about Margo in the beginning of being autistic, they spoke about masking. And that I thought was really good that you gave clear terms to what it is. I don't know, 100%. I don't know if you want to talk a little bit about masking.

00;09;30;05 - 00;11;32;05

Courtney

[COURTNEY] So masking is the tendency to try and conform oneself to the environment around them, to try and hide or mask with the intention of, you know, like the ideas, you know, you're putting on a mask to try and hide those autistic traits or at least suppress them in a way that they're not so noticeable. But it's really detrimental in the long run, because autistic traits, it's so core to expression and self-regulation and leads, I think, more directly to autistic people experiencing burnout because they're trying so hard to hide these parts of themselves. And I know it's a term that I don't think I was really

familiar with until I was probably an adult, and if I'm being completely honest, I don't ever really think I did it. You know, I did a lot of masking in my time growing up or like as a high schooler, even though I was always kind of the weird kid, like, I was always pretty identifiable as the weird kid. But I do have memories of, you know, stimming when I get overwhelmed, and then people making comments like, why are you doing that? Why are you making noises? Why are you doing that with your hands? That's so weird. Don't do that. But it's literally just it's as natural as laughing or it's as natural - it's just my response to the stimuli around me. It becomes too much. So I have to flap my hands. So, like, I'll start squeaking or whatever. And now in my adult life, I work very actively to not mask and to live my life away from that. And being in therapy in particular with my particular therapist, has been extremely helpful with trending towards that and living more authentically and not compromising myself for those around me.

00;11;32;05 - 00;11;58;03

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah, therapy is so good, right? I was excited to read in the book, like, such honest discussion, and I don't even know if masking - it was probably a term for a long time, but I don't feel like you even knew about it for maybe the last 5 or 10 years. You talk about it more. It's good to read it in books because it could open up your eyes to things that could be happening in your own life or in somebody else's life.

00;11;58;06 - 00;12;00;19

Courtney

[COURTNEY] What was your favorite part of the book?

00;12;00;22 - 00;12;48;07

Diane

[DIANE] Oh, my favorite part, and I don't have my quotes with me, but it's close to the end when Margo is really at first she was like, throughout, she's been trying to figure out, like, queer culture and what's queer culture and like, "Oh, is a flannel queer culture? Is lattes queer culture? And like at the end, there's a point where she's like, "Oh, queer culture is whatever I want it to be." I think that was when she had that, like, you know, there's no rules. And I think that's so amazing about the LGBTQIA+ community is that it is so fluid. It is so like it's anything and everything you want it to be. You know, or nothing. Whatever you want it to be is what it is. And so I think that was probably my favorite part, their revelation. And again I'm mad I don't have the quote. What about you? Did you have a favorite part of the book?

00;12;48;09 - 00;14;41;19

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Generally speaking, I just again, I love the connections with the characters were able to make with each other. Some points that stand out are when Abby is with Margo's family and she just realizes how much she loves being around these people. And it's kind of like the first time that she feels really safe and accepted and free to be herself. And then on the topic of masking at the end, when Margo sort of realizes, like, oh, Abby kind of cutting herself off emotionally immediately, like that's her way of masking, that's her way of sort of dealing with the things that overwhelm her. And like, this is

how she needs to overcome it. Or like, this is the challenge that she faces. I really think their transformation from the start to the end of the book is so powerful, and it's so clear to kind of see the amount of growth that they both go through and the amount of realizations that they have, and just the way that they're able to come into their own by the end of it. I also really like the final conversation that Abby has with her friend Charlie. Charlie, who was giving her a lot of problems throughout the whole story. Charlie, who kind of holds really biphobic views and has a very specific outlook on the gay community, and it's very resonant, I think, with some people I've known in my life and some people who kind of have that rigidity in terms of how they view specific roles and specific archetypes and I think, what does Abby say? She's like, "Margo's autistic, you garbage bag" when Charlie is, you know, saying like, oh, like, "This is just a phase for her. Like, being queer is just a phase. And she's going to move on," like, no, like you can't assume that of somebody. And the way that that was handled with humor and heart. I just thought that that was really great.

00;14;41;26 - 00;14;45;23

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah. The next one is, what is your least favorite part of the book?

00;14;45;25 - 00;15;13;13

Courtney

[COURTNEY] I don't think I really had a moment that I disliked. I don't read a ton of rom com, but sometimes it falls into the trap of like, oh, the characters aren't communicating super well. And I think every once in a while you saw that there was like, this would just be easier if you talked to each other, you listened to each other and kind of worked it out that way. But otherwise, I really don't think I had anything that was super egregious that stood out to me.

00;15;13;15 - 00;15;43;13

Diane

[DIANE] No, and I think most of it was really good. I, of course, like when Abby was realizing like, oh, this when she was at Margo's family, she's like, this is what a positive family could look like. That makes me sad. It makes me sad. Like, I think also to know that, oh, there are people out there that really their family dynamics and struggle and things like that. But I didn't have a least favorite part of the book. It was a good book. It was a cute read and it was, eye opening on many different levels. So yeah.

00;15;43;15 - 00;15;49;09

Courtney

[COURTNEY] How relevant or relatable are the themes of the book to your own life or society today?

00;15;49;11 - 00;16;33;22

Diane

[DIANE] I mean, I thought they were so many themes in the book, like when I think about them, like, oh, we spoke about autism, ADHD, different socioeconomic things. We spoke about all different parts of the queer community. So I think they're very relatable to so many things in my life and in society. I know it's a hard time right now. It was already a hard time for the LGBTQIA community. And then recently it started for the autism community. You know, there are some things in the public that are being said that

aren't accurate, you know, so I think they're really good topics to see with a lead character being autistic is really important to see. What do you think?

00;16;33;23 - 00;17;13;19

Courtney

[COURTNEY] No, I absolutely agree. They pull from so many different things. They really pack it into the story, but it works so seamlessly like nothing necessarily feels out of place in terms of the family dynamics or the neurodivergent representation or even the queer exploration as a whole. This is a book that I think if I had read it as a teenager, this would be my favorite book of all time. Like, it would have been something that made me feel so seen and so understood. It still does make me feel very seen and very understood. And it's definitely something that I think is very relatable.

00;17;13;22 - 00;17;40;11

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah. And you know, they do pack so much into it. And recently and probably in our lives, like I been saying this quote to myself and to people - "life happens all at once." It's so true. Like there's a lot in this book, but there's a lot in life, you know, like you've got you've got work, you've got friends, you've got family, you've got things in your own head and then you want to also have like social time and you know, like it's and that's how this book I'm like, yeah, there was a lot. But in my life every day there's a lot, right?

00;17;40;16 - 00;18;17;08

Courtney

[COURTNEY] And I really like too - now I'm thinking a little bit more about it - how Abby failing her history class is one of the core points that's driving the plot of the story, but when you take that in consideration with the circumstances around her, I really like that they expand it and was like, yeah, she's probably failing because she has undiagnosed ADHD and she's having trouble concentrating and studying in her own home. And that's because of the way her family is. Like, it just gives a reason for everything. It puts everything in its place. And like we said earlier, like it just makes everything feel so fleshed out. Realistic.

00;18;17;10 - 00;18;31;11

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah, a good book. It was a good recommendation. How does a novel portray and celebrate queer culture and stereotypes, and how does the novel address the challenges and nuances of being bisexual within the LGBTQIA+ community?

00;18;31;13 - 00;19;55;21

Courtney

[COURTNEY] As far as queer culture and stereotypes go, I know sort of the wider pop culture gets a couple passing mentions here and there, and I like that it's incorporated, but it's not overwhelming because like I know they mentioned, you know, like Thor Ragnarok and at one point they watch But I'm a Cheerleader and they talk about thinking Kristen Stewart is hot. Like it's all these things that are very easily identifiable and very popular, but it's just kind of fun to see them as passing mentions, like it's not

a huge impact. And I like that they take the time to talk about things like the way that people dress when they're queer, or the way that iced coffee is gay culture. The one thing that really got to me was the definition of how one dresses and the distinction between, like, Margo being kind of a lipstick lesbian and Abby not, and this being a point of contention at first with them and then Abby kind of realizing, oh, no, like I've been a horrible person because that's just because you do it one way doesn't necessarily mean that's the way that everybody has to present themselves. That revelation in particular, I think that it's really wonderful that they sort of went out of their way to break down that stereotype and being like, yes, this is one part of the experience, but it's not everybody like the universal experience.

00;19;55;24 - 00;20;11;11

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah. Well, I think realizing I'm bisexual recently, I'm like, well, I usually dress one way, but I do like to dress another way. It doesn't have to be one way or the other. You could be both. And I think they did talk about the challenges and nuances of being bisexual.

00;20;11;15 - 00;20;39;27

Courtney

[COURTNEY] 100%, and I'm so glad that they did, because I definitely think that's a conversation that people are still struggling to have or fully grasp or like, had you said earlier, you know, it doesn't need to necessarily be one or the other. It's fluid and the fluidity is there for a reason and the stigma is present, but it's also really great to have a piece of literature that does its best to break that down.

00;20;40;00 - 00;20;49;25

Diane

[DIANE] You think it's better in your generation? Like, I feel like my generation is still like, "You're one way or the other." Not that we're better. I feel like my parents generation. But do you think it's getting better overall?

00;20;49;25 - 00;21;22;23

Courtney

[COURTNEY] I think we're getting there. I'm trying to remember the exact statistic. Please forgive me if it's not totally correct, but I think as of 2024, bisexuality was the most common and self-selected sexual identification. Like there was some study that was released. There's a graph out there, I think I want to say it was New York Times. It might not be, but they had done a poll about, I think it was Gen Z specifically, like how, you know, they were identifying and bisexual as the number one.

00;21;22;23 - 00;21;23;18

Diane

[DIANE] So interesting.

00;21;23;22 - 00;21;37;13

Courtney

[COURTNEY] I think it's definitely present. Obviously. It definitely is seeing wider acceptance. And I think and I hope the conversation has been changing.

00;21;37;15 - 00;21;38;15

Diane

[DIANE] Oh, sure.

00;21;38;18 - 00;21;44;20

Courtney

[COURTNEY] How does the novel incorporate neurodiversity into the characters experiences and relationships?

00;21;44;27 - 00;22;18;10

Diane

[DIANE] Right. So we have spoken about this, obviously, that Margo Zimmerman is autistic, and I think we saw that in the beginning when she was really even talking about how she explores courses so intensely, and then also swimming like and now being gay, like, there's many topics that she like, explores them so completely, like all the facets of it. But then we also spoke about Abby and how at the end, she finds out she probably has ADHD and incorporates it so seamlessly, so naturally, you know, like, I don't feel it's, yeah...

00;22;18;10 - 00;23;05;13

Courtney

[COURTNEY] I know it really integrates itself into the narrative, even from the beginning when Margo first shows up to the nightclub and she's dressed in a very specific way, she kind of has, I guess, what we would perceive and what the crowd would have perceived as like the wrong look, like she's patterning herself against, like, what a gay man would do. It's very autistic and it's very masking, like, it's just gathering up this information, doing your research, saying, okay, I'm going to go do this full confidence and maybe not necessarily being the socially acceptable thing for that crowd, but, you know, it's her taking all this information, inferring it. And then putting on the persona to go do it a little bit.

00;23;05;17 - 00;23;08;21

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah. Have you read any books that are similar?

00;23;08;24 - 00;23;38;13

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Not off the top of my head that I can think of, but I also don't read romance a ton. I think the last lesbian romance I read, woman loving woman romance beyond this was Even Though I Knew the End by C.L. Polk, which is totally very different and is a little bit more focused on that sort of like murder mystery, supernatural element, like it's very different, but it is the first thing that comes to mind.

00;23;38;16 - 00;24;39;26

Diane

[DIANE] Interesting. So after I read this, because I did love it, I was like, oh, it's a really good book. And I was like, let me see if I can find, because I knew that would be a question. So I went on novelist and I put

in LGBTQ and I put in autistic because I was like, let's see what else is out there. I found a good amount. And I was like, most of them are in YA. Because I feel like YA books are a little more progressive. They definitely are. I found one and I really enjoyed it. It was called *This Is the Way the World Ends* by Jen Wilde. The lead character is autistic and it's a romance, but it's really - I love dystopian books and it's sort of well, it would probably be like an apocalyptic type of book. Like, I hope there's a second book, but I don't think there is because it was out a few years ago. And one thing that was interesting is in this book, the one that we read, *Margo Zimmerman* and also in *This Is the Way the World Ends*, both characters, both of them had cats that had fancy names. Like this one, I don't remember the names, but like in was this one that had Judi Dench?

00;24;39;26 - 00;24;50;17

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Yes. It was, Julie Andrews, Sir Anthony Hopkins, Sir Michael Caine, and Sir Sean Connery. And Dame Angela Lansbury was the lizard which I love.

00;24;50;18 - 00;24;56;20

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah. And so in this book also there had some cats that had famous people's names. And I'm like, how cute is that?

00;24;56;20 - 00;24;58;25

Courtney

[COURTNEY] I think that's so funny.

00;24;58;27 - 00;25;13;01

Diane

[DIANE] It really showed me also how, like, one of our databases Novelist really helped me find a good amount. And there's a few other ones that I have on my shelf to be read, but I'm reading specific things for different things. So, but yeah, I would put that on your list.

00;25;13;01 - 00;27;00;26

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Yeah. For sure. I did have another thing come to mind as we were talking, which was *Camp QUILTBAG*, which is also written by two authors, I believe it's Nicole Melleby and A.J. Sass, similar-ish set up. It's told from two different perspectives, and I think one author each wrote from each character's perspective. I don't remember I think actually maybe the main girl is named Abby, funnily enough, and she's also just realizing that she's a lesbian. They're a little bit younger. This is a middle grade graphic novel. They go to this queer-focused summer camp, and the story in it is a little bit more hijinx-y, like it's about, you know, like they're all in these teams and they're all like trying to compete. And I think whoever wins the week gets to like, rename the camp. It tackles self-exploration in this really beautiful way. There is this whole moment at the end with the main girl and the counselor that really made me cry. One of the minor characters is autistic, which I think is why this came to mind. And the two main characters are having like, a disagreement and this minor character, she's like, "Well, I'm autistic, and sometimes I don't always disclose that, but like, sometimes it's easier for people to kind of understand

what I'm thinking and how I process information when I tell them that and like, you know, help them make a decision and help me make decisions." It's this really precious book, and it delves into a lot of different identities and a lot of different forms of self-expression. And it's just a very joyful celebration of young queer culture and exploration. Have you or would you want to read another book by this author?

00;27;00;29 - 00;27;10;17

Diane

[DIANE] I don't think I ever had, but sure I would. I thought it was - well, so it was two authors, right? And then you were saying this other one Camp QUILTBAG that you think was two authors that did like alternating.

00;27;10;19 - 00;27;19;01

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Two different authors? I yeah, I'm not sure if they did alternating perspectives for this with this author duo, although I wouldn't be surprised if that was the case.

00;27;19;01 - 00;27;24;16

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah, I was wondering. So I have not, but I probably would. You know, it was a good read. Have you?

00;27;24;23 - 00;27;49;18

Courtney

[COURTNEY] I have not. I do know that Brianna Shrum, who I happen to have been following on social media before I read this book, has another one coming out, I think sometime in 2025 called Don't Forget to Breathe, which is another lesbian romance. I think it's a little bit more of a romantasy, which seems to trend in the direction of what she writes outside of this, but I would absolutely be interested.

00;27;49;18 - 00;27;57;20

Diane

[DIANE] So I enjoy a good romantasy. I have to give it a look. So before we do our little wrap up, is there any other thoughts you had?

00;27;57;23 - 00;27;59;10

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Not off the top of my head.

00;27;59;12 - 00;28;01;05

Diane

[DIANE] Now, how did you tell me you found this book again? This is a cute story.

00;28;01;05 - 00;28;58;09

Courtney

[COURTNEY] It's a really fun story. The author, Brianna Shrum one day a couple of years ago, it was when I had just started working here. So I think it was summer 2023. Happened to come into my Twitter feed of all places, because she had a post that was going a little bit viral about her, I think then eight year old son, she had taken him to an animal shelter and he bonded with this shelter cat named Captain Sushi, and he loved Captain Sushi. He was like, this cat is my soulmate. I want him so much. She, like, took him there to look at kittens, and he immediately gravitated towards Captain Sushi. And she ended up adopting him and another kitten for her other child. And like posted this really sweet video of them like meeting the cats for the first time. So as you can tell, you know, like she loves fancy names with their animals and it just knowing that and then reading this book, I was like, yeah, this tracks immensely.

00;28;58;11 - 00;28;59;16

Diane

[DIANE] I love a good cat story.

00;28;59;23 - 00;29;19;11

Courtney

[COURTNEY] So I had checked out her profile and Margo Zimmerman Gets the Girl was like her pinned advertisement because I think it had just come out that past year. And I was like, oh, well, now I have to read this book because that directly appeals to me. And I had no idea about all the other wonderful things that I had in store. I just knew it was a queer YA romance.

00;29;19;12 - 00;29;32;06

Diane

[DIANE] Isn't it great how books, like, find you? I just think, like, sometimes books happen to find you. All right. So we're going to do five quick thoughts. So one, would you recommend this book to someone on the street?

00;29;32;10 - 00;29;32;23

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Yes.

00;29;32;25 - 00;29;39;28

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah I recommend books. You know I always say like the book just needs the right person. If you could give this book a different title, what would it be?

00;29;39;29 - 00;29;41;00

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Queer 101.

00;29;41;01 - 00;29;48;03

Diane

[DIANE] Oh yes, for sure, because that was what Margo... That's a great title for it. What emotions did you feel when reading this book?

00;29;48;05 - 00;29;55;20

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Just so much validation and joy and just love, really.

00;29;55;23 - 00;30;11;07

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah, I felt I mean, I felt a lot of like there was definitely humor and but it just always I'm like, oh, yeah, what's going on with me? Like, it - not that it's good to question, you know, like what I'm like, what's going on? Like, it made me question more, which again, I think is good.

00;30;11;07 - 00;30;11;26

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Yeah.

00;30;11;28 - 00;30;14;22

Diane

[DIANE] What format did you consume the book? Print, digital audio?

00;30;14;25 - 00;30;31;16

Courtney

[COURTNEY] All three technically. So the very first time I read this was the print book. And then coming back to read this for the podcast, I've started doing this combination of like digital and audio, and I think I mainly ended up listening to the audiobook this time around, and it's a really good audiobook.

00;30;31;18 - 00;30;56;05

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah, I'm an audio, I did audio, I do audio so fast though that when I put it on normal because when I'm writing the quotes, I'll put it down to like the 1.0, I'm like, oh my gosh, why are they talking so slow? But it was it was a good book. It was a quick, you know, because even if you're doing audio, if it's not a good story, it'll just seem really long. If you could pick a theme song for this book, what would it be and why?

00;30;56;08 - 00;31;12;25

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Okay, so you I was like lesbian songs, like as if I didn't know off the top of my head. And I eventually landed on Closer to Fine by the Indigo Girls, because I feel like it's just a really good, you know, letting go of that questioning and kind of welcoming acceptance. I think that it's very resonant.

00;31;12;28 - 00;31;30;20

Diane

[DIANE] I mean, I've always loved Closer to Fine by the Indigo Girls, which probably should be an indicator. I mean, I loved it for years and years, but that's a really good one. They speak about the The

Lonely Island, Andy Samberg, so I went to that one because they speak about it in the book. And I think you think the title was I Just Had Sex.

00;31;30;20 - 00;31;31;11

Courtney

[COURTNEY] That is the title.

00;31;31;12 - 00;31;35;16

Diane

[DIANE] That's the title. So that would be that would be the theme song for the book, I think.

00;31;35;16 - 00;31;48;08

Courtney

[COURTNEY] I know they talked about John Mayer too, at one point. I think a John Mayer song could probably... So I could see that working maybe, but also like Closer to Fine came to mind. I was like this is very in line.

00;31;48;13 - 00;31;53;17

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah. Oh, perfect, for sure. Great book. Great choice. Thank you for bringing it to my attention.

00;31;53;18 - 00;31;55;09

Courtney

[COURTNEY] Thank you so much for having me. This was wonderful.

00;31;55;09 - 00;31;58;23

Diane

[DIANE] Excellent. All right.

00;31;58;26 - 00;32;18;18

Voiceover

[VOICEOVER] Thank you for joining us today. Be sure to visit the Ocean County Library's website for more podcasts and events. All the titles mentioned in today's episode can be found throughout the Ocean County Library for free with your library card. Until next time, happy reading!

00;32;18;20 - 00;32;48;26

Voiceover

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