



Adam

By Ariel Schrag

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When Adam Freedman — a skinny, awkward, inexperienced teenager from Piedmont, California — goes to stay with his older sister Casey in New York City, he is hopeful that his life is about to change. And it sure does.

It is the summer of 2006. Gay marriage and transgender rights are in the air, and Casey has thrust herself into a wild lesbian subculture. Soon Adam is tagging along to underground clubs, where there are hot older women everywhere he turns. It takes some time for him to realize that many in this new crowd assume he is trans—a boy who was born a girl. Why else would this baby-faced guy always be around?

Then Adam meets Gillian, the girl of his dreams — but she couldn't possibly be interested in him. Unless passing as a trans guy might actually work in his favor . . .

Ariel Schrag's scathingly funny and poignant debut novel puts a fresh spin on questions of love, attraction, self-definition, and what it takes to be at home in your own skin.

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Adam By Ariel Schrag Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Schrag switches gears from her autobiographical graphic-novel series, *High School Chronicles of Ariel Schrag*, and turns to fiction, undertaking a major challenge. She attempts to convey the thoughts, voice, actions, and mind-set of a straight, wealthy 17-year-old California boy determined to meet the love of his life. She succeeds in being on target in tone, but the plot strains credulity. Adam hasn't even made out with a girl yet, so how does spending the summer with his older lesbian sister in New York City help with his quest? Casey, very much on the gay scene socially and politically, does take him places, and he even meets the redhead of his dreams. But Gillian, an attractive lesbian in her early twenties, beds Adam because she believes his deceitful claim that he is a female-to-male transsexual. To live this lie, he devises various deceptions involving bungee cords (don't ask). He can't share his outrageous secret with Casey, or her sometime lover, Butch Casey (again, don't ask), or apartment mate June, who lusts after Casey. Finally it is Ethan, who also shares the apartment, who becomes Adam's mentor in Schrag's unusual, very explicit coming-of-age novel. --Whitney Scott

Review

"The book is sincere, dirty (but not in an excessive way), and downright hilarious. Schrag somehow manages to walk the increasingly thin tightrope of being respectful and yet brutally honest about transgender issues...While this book will surely be on the summer reading list for anybody with a family member or dear friend that fits under the LGBT umbrella, it could and should be enjoyable to anybody who picks it up. After all, its core message is universal. Surviving our teenage years is no small task." --The Daily Beast

"[Ariel Schrag] the lesbian graphic memoirist, a successor to Alison Bechdel, breaks out..." --Boris Kachka, *Vulture*, "8 Books You Need to Read This June"

"This hilarious, frank look at a young man pretending to be a trans-man in order to get a girl is transgressive and brutally honest—the rare book that pulls no punches for anyone."--*Brooklyn Magazine*, "25 Best Brooklyn Books of the Decade"

"Colorful and smart, [ADAM] understands that the struggle to discover one's identity is somehow both ubiquitous and unique. With deep empathy and wit and humanity, Schrag has accomplished the seemingly impossible challenge of making the experience of marginalization and isolation feel universal." --Grantland, "June Book Recommendations: Young Adult for Adults"

"Ariel Schrag is one of the most talented human beings alive...Schrag's writing is sharp and stylish but also effortlessly graceful; you almost don't notice how great her sentences are because they flow straight into your brain, situating themselves there like some better, funnier version of your own thoughts." --Emily Gould, *The Millions*

"Compulsively readable, Adam sometimes seems like a YA novel, only with way more explicit sex. The book is also philosophical, presenting at its core, a question about gender, desire, and subjectivity: is sexual identity defined by who you have sex with, or who you think you're having sex with....The gimmick at the center of Adam is a good one, and the complicated issues it provokes are profound." -- *Bookforum*

"While the book is funny, it's also quietly revolutionary—Schrag writes honestly about gender identity and

sexuality in a way that's extremely rare, maybe unprecedented." --Gothamist, "Notable New Yorkers Share Their Summer Reading Recs"

"A completely original story, Adam tells a coming-of-age tale that is both modern and timeless, and one that both blurs the boundary between 'young adult' and 'adult' fiction."--Mashable, "24 Must-Read Books for Summer 2014"

"Not only is Adam a wonderful book, it is quite possibly the best entry in the coming-of-age category since Adam Wilson's Flatscreen...Adam is one glorious buildup to something that you know can't be a fairytale ending, and Schrag pulls it off in one funny, oddly sweet, and unique novel that nails a plot that just about anybody else would totally butcher." --Flavorwire, "Best Book of the Week"

"Ariel Schrag's story about a teenager who goes to spend the summer in New York with his sister is unlike any coming-of-age story you'll read anytime soon. Funny and tender... Anybody familiar with Schrag's comics won't be disappointed with her work as a novelist; if you haven't read her other work, let Adam be your introduction and read everything else you can find of hers from there." -- Flavorwire, "10 Must Read Books for June"

"The story is heartfelt and hilarious, and explores concepts of gender and sexuality that aren't really explored in other YA books. At least, none that I've read in recent memory. Definitely pick this one up. It'll stick with you. " --BookRiot, "Best Books We Read in May"

"This book is EVERYTHING. Gorgeously observed, sharp-tongued, big-hearted, fearless. I can't wait for the HBO series (this is not like a thing Nikki Finke has reported, this is just my Dreamland Hollywood Development Slate). Schrag forever and ever." --Kit Steinkellner, BookRiot, "The Best Books of 2014 So Far"

"Gives an authentic glimpse into N.Y.C's underground queer culture...A compelling page turner with a suspenseful plot...A quick, easy, and captivating read, 'Adam' pulls you in." --**Bust Magazine**

"As a novel, Adam is novel. As a character, Adam is alive and well-written. In fact, all the characters are at once clearly and queerly delineated, uttering dialogue that is utterly colloquial. As far as prose goes, it is riveting, riotous, and ridiculously astute. Mendacity and veracity exist side by side, not separated by some great divide, the way gender and sexuality too often are...At its core, this is a story of transformations, celebrations, and revelations; of learning to embrace rather than efface the elasticity of gender and sexuality. Ariel Schrag doesn't give it to you straight: her book is incisive and divisive, ingenuous and ingenious. It puts the "New" in New York City. So take a big bite of Adam's Apple." --Curve Magazine

"Completely and totally charmed, and also vicariously embarrassed for the titular character." --The Chicago Tribune, "The Biblioracle: Favorite books of 2014...so far"

"[An] audacious coming-of-age novel...Schrag, best known for her series of graphic memoirs about her adolescence, has found compassionate and funny ways to talk about a subject most fiction avoids, and she has produced a truly original (and sexually explicit) coming-of-age novel...Adam is educational in the best sense of the word: Much of its audience will be as dazed and confused as Adam is in this brave new world, but Schrag sends you home with a greater understanding of all the permutations of what it means to be human." --The Miami Herald

"Graphic artist Ariel Schrag takes on the challenge of the traditional novel with the decidedly nontraditional Adam, about a boy trying to pass as transgender to win the lesbian of his dreams (really)." --The Miami

Herald, "A-Z of Summer Reading"

"Hilarious...Schrag's riotous, poignant debut novel will leave you reeling." --SF Weekly

"Schrag's frisky debut...is one of the most original coming-of-age stories of recent years." - Publishers Weekly

"Schrag's gifts for characterization and dialogue make the whole enterprise sweetly entertaining...A well-composed story about love and lust in all their myriad variations and about a boy finding his place in a mixed-up, muddled-up, shook-up world." -- Kirkus

"Ariel Schrag's book is a kind of 'Adam in Wonderland,' with its young hero exploring worlds usually kept underground. An insightful, funny, and unexpected love story, told with wit and compassion." —Aimee Mann

"The sexual revolution is finally over, and Ariel Schrag has won. Adam is the most twisted, hilarious, and deeply gratifying reading experience I have had in a long time." —Alison Bechdel, author of *Fun Home* and *Are You My Mother?*

"Hysterically funny and deliciously precise...Schrag writes as elegantly about sex parties as she does about the complicated emotions of awkwardness." —Nico Muhly, composer of *Two Boys*

"Sexually frank and frankly hilarious." —Ned Vizzini, author of *It's Kind of a Funny Story*

From the Back Cover

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Ariel Schrag grew up in Berkeley, California. She is the author of the graphic memoirs *Awkward*, *Definition*, *Potential*, and *Likewise*, and has written for television series for HBO and Showtime. *Adam* is her first novel. She lives in Brooklyn, New York.

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Users Review

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Rodney Sierra:

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