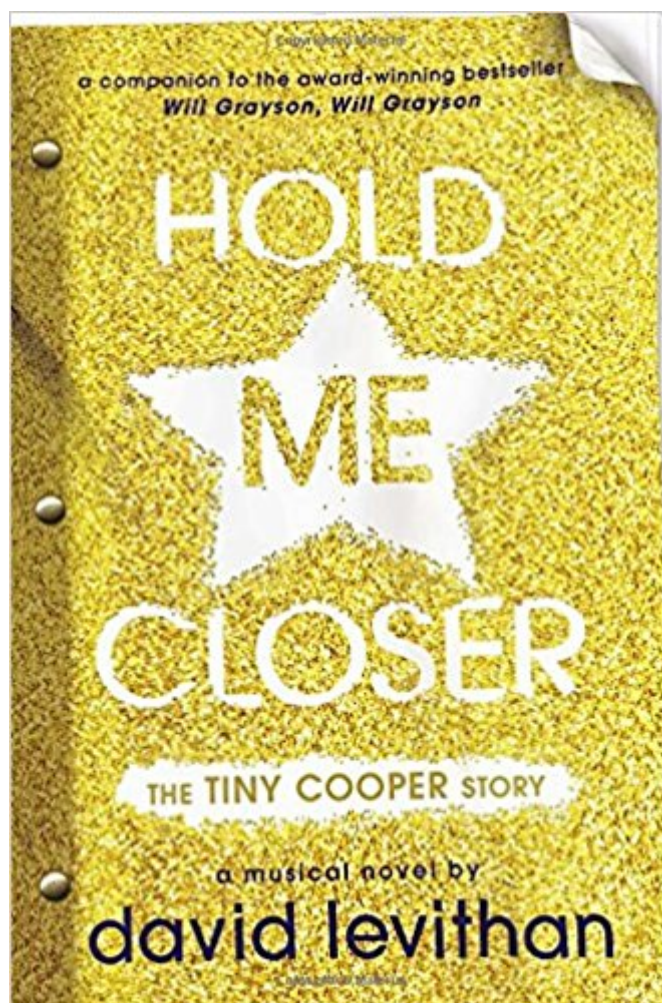


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Hold Me Closer: The Tiny Cooper Story



Synopsis

TIME's Magazine's Top Ten Children's Books of 2015 "Tiny Cooper stole our hearts." •Entertainment Weekly's Especially for those of us who ordinarily feel ignored, a spotlight is a circle of magic, with the strength to draw us from the darkness of our everyday lives. Watch out, ex-boyfriends, and get out of the way, homophobic coaches. Tiny Cooper has something to say—and he's going to say it in song. Filled with honesty, humor, and "big, lively, belty" musical numbers, *Hold Me Closer* is the no-holds-barred (and many-bars-held) entirety of the beloved musical first introduced in *Will Grayson, Will Grayson*, the award-winning bestseller by John Green and David Levithan. Tiny Cooper is finally taking center stage . . . and the world will never be the same again. "Tiny will have readers falling out of their chairs laughing. . . . It's big. It's gay. It's outrageous and hilarious." •Kirkus Reviews "Levithan has turned in another star turn with a book that is witty, wise, and well worthy of an encore." •Booklist, starred review "Tiny's passion for composing a big, beautiful life and a big, beautiful show overflows in this thoroughly magical book." •BCCB, starred review "Tiny Cooper . . . gets his own star turn." •Publishers Weekly, starred review

Book Information

Hardcover: 208 pages

Publisher: Dutton Books for Young Readers (March 17, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0525428844

ISBN-13: 978-0525428848

Product Dimensions: 5.9 x 0.8 x 8.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 21 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #139,100 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #24 in Books > Teens >

Literature & Fiction > Performing Arts > Theater #190 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Gay & Lesbian #356 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Dating & Sex

Customer Reviews

Gr 10 Up •Written as a two-act musical complete with stage directions and 25 provocatively

titled songs, such as "The Ballad of the Lesbian Babysitter" and "Summer of Gay," this companion to John Green and Levithan's award-winning *Will Grayson*, *Will Grayson* (Dutton, 2010) shines a spotlight on the larger-than-life Tiny Cooper, who was born "big-boned and happily gay." Accepted by his supportive parents, Tiny suffers no angst over his sexual orientation, despite having to contend with schoolmate bullies and a homophobic coach. Phil, his straight BFF, offers advice through Tiny's unsuccessful relationships with 18 different boyfriends, helping him eventually to realize that love is painful but worth it. Replete with laugh-out-loud one-liners ("sort of like a gay dance club has opened on Sesame Street"), in-your-face language (faggot and the invented term dickstrating), and showcasing Will and Tiny's "onstage" kiss, this edgy, au courant novel tackles a potentially difficult subject head-on, while giving sound, if liberal, counsel on sexual issues for gays and straights alike. Its solid story line and realistic, "colorful" dialogue will appeal to high school readers. VERDICT A welcome addition to progressive library collections, this unapologetic gem will encourage teens' discussion of a sensitive topic and potentially broaden their understanding of the meaning of "tolerance."

—Nancy Menaldi-Scanlan, formerly at LaSalle Academy, Providence, RI

TIME Magazine's Top Ten Children's Books of 2015
 ALA Rainbow List Selection 2016
 "Tiny will have readers falling out of their chairs laughing. . . . It's big. It's gay. It's outrageous and hilarious."
 •Kirkus Reviews
 "Levithan has turned in another star turn with a book that is witty, wise, and well worthy of an encore."
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 •BCCB, starred review
 "Tiny Cooper . . . gets his own star turn."
 •Publishers Weekly, starred review
 "[Hold Me Closer] is able to stand on its own as a story of coming out, looking (and looking and looking) for love, and valuing and trusting one's friends."
 •Horn Book Praise for *Will Grayson*, *Will Grayson*: New York Times Bestseller
 New York Times Book Review
 Editor's Choice
 ALA Stonewall Honor Book
 Children's Choice Book Award Winner
 Teen Choice Book of the Year
 Indie's Choice
 Young Adult Honor Book
 ALA Rainbow Project Reading List
 "Will Grayson, *Will Grayson* is a complete romp. [It is] so funny, rude and original that by the time flowers hit the stage, even the musical-averse will cheer."
 •The New York Times Book Review
 "[It] will have readers simultaneously laughing, crying and singing at the top of their lungs."
 •Kirkus Reviews, starred review
 "A terrific high-energy tale."
 •Booklist, starred

review ã ã "It is such a good book. [Green and Levithan] are two of the best writers writing today.ã ã ã ã •NPRã ã„çs The Roundtable ã ã "A brilliant novel.ã ã ã ã •Seattle Times ã ã " A winning combination infused with wit, sarcasm, and plenty of musical references.ã ã ã ã •Chicago Tribune ã ã "This novel has serious buzz.ã ã ã ã •EntertainmentWeekly.com ã ã "One of the best books of the year.ã ã ã ã •Bookpage

I'd rate this 4.5 stars. Will Grayson, Will Grayson, by John Green and David Levithan, was one of the best books I read in 2010, and years later, it remains one of my favorites. That book, populated by two very different high school students, both named Will Grayson. One Will Grayson's best friend, "Tiny" Cooper, who isn't shy about his size or his sexuality, and tries to push Will to declare his feelings for his best friend, Jane, all while Tiny is getting ready to produce his autobiographical musical. This "companion piece," authored by Levithan, is the script of Tiny's musical, complete with his commentary/stage direction, which in some cases, lets the reader in on how the lives of both Will Graysons, Jane, and Tiny progressed after the book ends. But mostly, the musical gives tremendous insight into what it's like to live a life where everyone thinks they know who and what you are, and just how much courage it takes to put yourself so far out there and be happy with who you are every day. "There are those of us who draw our power from those electric moments when everyone is watching, everyone is listening, and there is the most perfect silence you can imagine, the entire room waiting to hear whatever you will say next. Especially for those of us who ordinarily feel ignored, a spotlight is a circle of magic, with the strength to draw us from the darkness of our everyday lives." Tiny's character really resonates for me. I remember what it was like to feel most at home in the middle of a stage, singing my heart out to an audience, even if it was an apathetic one. I remember what it was like not feeling comfortable in my own skin, but still wishing that I'd find others like me. And I remember what it was like to like someone so much, and fall so fast, that the biggest mistake you could make was expressing how you felt too soon. His musical is full of the unconditional love Tiny gets from his family and his best friends, as well as flamboyant musical numbers, some of which even star the ghost of Oscar Wilde. While it's difficult to read a musical as if it were a book without knowing what the songs sound like, getting a glimpse into Tiny's heart, head, and personality more than makes up for it. Levithan once again treats his characters with the respect and love they deserve, and looks beyond the stereotypes. I hope this isn't the last we see of Will, Will, Jane, and Tiny...maybe Levithan and Green can team up again?

I had to pick this up as my curiosity got the best of me after having read *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* and a couple of my friends raving about it. But be warned this is not a novel, but a screenplay (of sorts). What a surprise! I wasn't expecting to be as entertained as much as I was. There are many laugh out loud moments. We got snippets of Tiny's play in *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* but here we get the fun, fabulous and full play Tiny wrote, complete with stage directions and notes from Tiny himself. I thought there would be some more poignant moments, true to the styles of musical theatre and David Levithan, but *Hold Me Closer* fell slightly short of the feels in that department. But it is still a laugh riot, and I could easily picture it as a stage play in my eye. We get to live in Tiny Cooper's head for a while, as opposed to third person in the novel starring his best friend Will. There is a true spirit of acceptance, love and an indomitable spirit for life that shines through. 100% Tiny. This work really embodies all things Tiny Cooper. He is articulate and sensitive to all the characters he's based his musical on, without apology. It was ballsy, comical and touching. *Hold Me Closer* is a quick, fast read. I'm glad I added this to my collection, even though this is not something I would have readily picked up because written as a script, it was difficult to get into the narrative. Sometimes it felt jarring. And sometimes the cadence of the melody was difficult to pick, which annoyed me, dragging me out of the story all too frequently. Where some novels or series that release something extra to the collection usually consist of novellas, I enjoyed the point of difference in the reading a new format and getting to explore the play that was so prominently depicted in the story line of *Will Grayson, Will Grayson*. I'd recommend it to fans of David Levithan, lovers of Will Grayson, and anyone who has an itch for musical theatre.

David Levithan takes Tiny Cooper from the novel *WILL GRAYSON, WILL GRAYSON* (co-written with John Green) and allows him to complete the musical of his life (up to the age of sixteen, seventeen). The format may be strange to some readers, but I love the subtle way in which Levithan applies it. There are long bits of stage direction / sub-text which will not be performed during the musical itself, and it is in these bits of prose sneaked into the format of the musical where Tiny's true voice comes through: self-assured yet immature, self-aware yet not fully in charge. One needs to read the novel first to understand the musical well, especially the references to Will Grayson and to Phil Wrayson, but as such it is an excellent companion volume. To beef up the content, the first two

chapters of the novel, filling the last 17% of the ebook, are included.

I was so excited when I found out about this book, and it did not disappoint. It's a quick read, I blew through it in a couple of hours, but every word counts. The structure of the book is so well done, and the writing is everything I expect from Levithan. I could not stop smiling as I read it, and I have a couple dozen highlighted passages. The emotional moment towards the end caught me off guard, which I loved. I think the impact of it is even better than. If you read Will Grayson, Will Grayson, or just like well-written, fun books, then read this.

After reading Will/Will I bought this book. I chose not to read this story for several months. I didn't want the emotions of Will/Will to influence this story. Now I want to go back and re-read Will/Will because this book brought me inside the mind of Tiny Cooper. And I found his stage directions were just as moving as the songs and lines from the characters of his life. I read this book in one sitting.

4.3

This is a companion to Will Grayson, Will Grayson. You must read that before you read this. Trust me. Tiny Cooper wrote a musical about his big, gay life. It's fantastic.

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