



Kevin

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Kevin Keller, the first openly gay character in the history of Archie Comics, premiered last fall to an overwhelming favorable response. He will star in his own series of comics starting in June and his story will continue in this special paper-over-board novel to be released in time for Gay Pride (June 2012). This book is a perfect gift for anyone who loves Archie Comics or just wants to feel good about themselves.

Kevin Details

Date : Published April 18th 2013 by Grosset & Dunlap

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Author : Paul Kupperberg

Format : Hardcover 160 pages

Genre : Lgbt, Young Adult, Gay, Childrens, Fiction

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From Reader Review Kevin for online ebook

Rebecca says

Kevin Keller, the gay character of the Archie comics, had a tough time in middle school. He and his friends are all geeks and targets, though not so badly as Luke, who regularly gets beaten up by the school bully. Kevin thinks Timmy Baker is the coolest kid in the school; he hangs out with the geeks and the popular kids, though some of Kevin's friends think he's not quite so wonderful--or so interested in really being friends. As the middle school prom approaches, Kevin has to deal with sudden, confusing interest from his best female friend Sammie, Elliot the bully who's threatening to beat Kevin up for supposedly ratting him out when he was beating up Luke, Luke, who is keeping secrets and is afraid to be friends, and the defecting Timmy. How will it all play out?

This got good reviews and I was looking forward to it, but ended up being kind of disappointed. It's a very average school story, very simply written, and sounded almost like fanfiction by a competent but not great writer. Perhaps the author was trying to keep it as simple as a comic book, but that doesn't really work when there are no images to add depth to the story. For better middle-school appropriate books about GBLT issues, try Levithan's 'Boy Meets Boy,' Steve Kluger's 'My Most Excellent Year,' and Alex Sanchez's 'So Hard To Say.'

James Jackson says

I notice in the tags some have labeled this young adult. I think it is written for Middle Grade and that is how I rated it.

Kevin, the title character is at Riverview High as the story opens, but it quickly segues back to his year at Medford Middle School. His father is an army colonel, always being moved (but not at war) and so Kevin is the new kid in town.

He's chunky, pimply and wears braces, making him fair game for the middle school bully. He does have a group of friends and is not at the lowest rung of the middle-school social ladder, but he envies those at the top.

It's a book of discovery: about bullying, about sexuality, about right and wrong, about preparing yourself for adversity.

It is sparse, consisting mostly of dialogue with little exposition or setting. It's vocabulary is not challenging. It lives in the world of Riverdale, so there is no foul language--pansy is as bad as it gets.

And yet, even though it is so far from a current middle-grader's experience, the story can bring affirmation to those feeling on the outside looking in. It provides a moral compass for right behavior without preaching.

And softy that I am, it brought tears to my eyes at the conclusion. ~ Jim

Emily says

***I received a free copy of this book from a Goodreads First Reads giveaway, but this is all my honest opinion. :) ***

When I was younger, and really into Archie comics, I wish Kevin Keller had been a part of it. I'm so grateful that there is now a gay character in the series, and I hope that more comics will include more LGBTQ characters and give them back stories in the same vein as this book about Kevin.

This book is a short, sweet middle-grade(ish) look into growing up feeling like an outsider. The Geek Squad, Kevin's middle school friends, were nice and relatable, and I think *anyone* who felt out of the norm would enjoy Kevin's story. It's hardly even about being gay, but more about the struggles of growing up in general. That's what makes the book strong. Kevin realizes he may be gay at the very end of the book, it's a non-issue, and we're free to learn more about him in the comics.

It's definitely rushed at times, slow at others, and the characters all have kind of ridiculous 50's names, but I'd definitely recommend this book for any young person (probably middle grade) who feels in any way that they don't fit in.

Betsy says

3.5 Stars

The first openly gay person at Riverdale High (he's an Archie Comics character), Kevin recounts his tumultuous eighth grade year. He battles a bully, begins to awaken to his sexual orientation, and befriends an outcast boy, all in the lead-up to his middle school prom.

Kevin is immensely likeable. His friends' conversations have moments of vintage-throwback language, while the story takes place in current times (or recent history, as Kevin is looking back as a high schooler at his middle school days).

An interesting mix: Relationships that seem nearly too perfect to be true -- Kevin's father takes him for a morning run and then proudly teaches his son judo moves in the backyard while asking thoughtful questions about how Kevin is feeling, for example -- are a counterpoint to terrible bullying, mentions of Facebook, and some more current language.

Bert Zee says

Oh Kevin Keller!! What a special character he is...

I have to say I did enjoy this book but I had a different idea of what the book was, Kevin Keller is my favorite character from the Archie universe, hes funny, a great friend, stylish and very cool - the Kevin we see in this book is a very different Kevin, I should have done more research before reading because I didn't know that this was more of a prequel/ origin story of Kevin long before he enters Riverdale High. The story is cute, Kevin is a big geek, overweight, acne and braces - (a long shot from the stud he becomes later in life), he's badly bullied in school and is generally trying to figure out life. I read in just over a day, it's super easy to read and fast paced, Kevin's friends are very charming and I just wanted to give them all a big hug most of the time.

A bit of a lost opportunity in my eyes, I would've loved a full length novel of Kevin and the Riverdale gang instead of the Kevin presented here but I guess i'll just have to settle for the comics.

A fun light read for Kevin Keller mega fans.

Christopher says

Paul Kupperberg's novel simply titled *Kevin* is a novel that tells the story of Kevin Keller, the first openly gay character of the *Archie* comics franchise, first having appeared in the comic *Veronica* #202. The novel opens with Kevin preparing for a prom with his friends Veronica and Jughead (both classic *Archie* characters), as he is about to share with them a story of a prom that he attended at a previous school. This conversation serves as bookends to the story, as a majority of the novel is focused on the events leading up to the past prom as well as the past prom itself, events that ultimately lead to Kevin's newfound sense of confidence and self-discovery, while his interaction with Veronica and Jughead is limited to the very beginning of the novel and the very end of the novel. The story is typical of the Young Adult genre, a coming-of-age story of a (pre)teen who is confused about who he/she is and embarks upon a journey in order to make that discovery. The novel is quite cute and is a very fast read, but I do have some issues with it, as it is far from perfect. I would firstly like to say that a majority of the novel's narrative stays on a very linear path and does not take many unexpected turns; it is rather predictable. Very rarely was I surprised by anything that happened, although I was a couple of times. I also think that the novel could have been a bit longer just to provide more background information about the characters. Kevin's friends at his previous school (Sammy, Nicky, and Leon), for example, are very one-dimensional, and the author goes too far out of his way to demonstrate that these people are friends because of how much that they have in common, not doing enough to demonstrate their differences as individuals. I found it very easy to learn about the characters and who they are, which in some respects, is a positive characteristic of any story, but it was very easy to predict how they would react to situations, which is primarily because they needed more character development and were too similar. Elliot Kingman is the typical bully and has absolutely no depth to his character, no redemptive or likable traits, and even Kevin himself could have used some further development. I did a small amount of research about Kevin as an *Archie* comics character, for example, and discovered that he has two younger sisters, neither of whom are even mentioned in the novel, and Kevin's mother exists merely to acknowledge that he does, in fact, have a mother; all interaction between Kevin and his parents is done via his father, referred to as Colonel Keller, while his mother has absolutely no dialogue, and we learn very little about her. The character that arouses the most amount of emotion is Luke McPhee, a boy who has no friends and is constantly the target of Elliot, a character for whom I feel a great deal of sympathy, and while I do very much appreciate that the novel deals with the harmful effects of bullying, I don't think that it deals with this issue seriously enough. Something very serious, something very sad and tragic, happens near the end of the novel, but I wish that it had happened sooner so that the novel could have dealt more with the aftermath of the event rather than just graze it and not deal with it seriously enough. The event, in fact, seems to be an afterthought in present-day Kevin's mind rather than a grave emotional injury. I, overall, enjoyed the novel, as it is a fun, fast read with a likable, heroic protagonist, but I feel like it might have been a lot better if it had a different writer because, although I mean no disrespect to the writer, Kupperberg is primarily a comic book writer, and this definitely shows, as the novel features mostly dialogue and very little description. I am left wanting a lot more and feel ardently inclined to read *Kevin Keller: Welcome to Riverdale*, a graphic novel by Dan Parent; perhaps, that will offer me a little more insight into Kevin as a character, although I doubt that it does anything for the characters in the written novel who seem to be limited to his past school.

Liviana says

Paul Kupperberg's novel based on the Kevin Keller character created by Dan Parent may not be as magical

as the others I've reviewed today, but it is pretty sweet. I was a bit worried when I read that the storyline dealt with Kevin's middle school year, when he wasn't a hot out jock but instead a bullied awkward kid. I was afraid it would be a step back into an older, more stereotypical storyline.

But the bullying is because Kevin's a nerd, not because of his sexuality. (Not that that makes it alright.) In fact, he's just discovering his sexuality. There is some homophobic bullying, but since this is the Archie-verse the strongest insult used is "pansy." KEVIN is short and simple, but it's a good storyline. Stand up for your friends, don't be ashamed of who you are, and you should pay attention to your dad's judo lesson. Older fans of the Kevin Keller comic might be bored, but younger fans should enjoy his foray into novels.

Amy Rae says

Kevin Keller is my favourite Archie character, so I wanted to like this--but ultimately, it's a weird, tepid little book. It reads like mediocre midgrade writing, but the subjects it touches, from suicide attempts to coming out as gay, are dealt with so off-handedly that I don't think it would actually be that appropriate for a midgrade audience. (I can see all of the subject matter *working* at a midgrade level, just...not in this package. At the same time, what teen is going to be captivated by the pat storytelling, overly easy lessons, and interchangeable characters?

Stick with the darling Kevin Keller comics and Archie comic universe as a whole, where the simple world of Riverdale is a lot more tolerable. This book is an easy miss.

Xavier Guillaume says

Kevin is the second book I won from the Goodreads First Reads giveaway. When I initially saw it listed, I thought it seemed kind of cute. I read about Kevin being the first gay character of the Archie Universe a little while back when it hit the news, and it got me kind of excited because it's nice that being gay is becoming more and more accepted in today's society. When I was a kid, there was nothing like LGBT literature for Young Adults. I don't even think there was an LGBT section in bookstores back then. So I find this new genre of literature to be kind of nice. If I read this as a child, I probably would have gobbled it up and thought it was the most amazing book of all time. :)

The story itself is simple. It's written at a 5th grade reading level, which is interesting because I think the majority of parents don't even talk to their kids about homosexuality at this age. I'm not sure who this book is really for. A parent would have to be pretty liberal to give this to their kid. (or maybe I'm wrong).

I don't want to give too much away, but it's basically about a young boy in Middle school who is overweight and has bad acne and gets picked on a lot in school. He has really great friends, which is nice, but there are dozens of others in the school who laugh and make fun of him. Luckily, he has a great dad for a role model, and the boy he admires in school is actually pretty nice to him. It's like Kevin walks this fine line from having low self-esteem from being bullied and made fun of at school, and being moderately well-adjusted due to his supportive friends and family.

I think a lot of people can relate to this story, especially other kids who are just starting to realize they are gay. If you happen to have a kid that has come out to you as being gay, I would definitely recommend this book. However, I think the kids out there who really need it, the ones who are scared and feel alone, and don't have friends and family that support them, they are the ones who would need this book the most, and

unfortunately, they are the ones who aren't likely to have the people looking out for them to give them it.

If I were to have one hope in life, it is that the kids out there in the world who feel hated and disliked by the people around them, that they discover that they are really normal, the people around them who put them down are wrong, and that things will get better. I think this book sends that positive message, and I hope at least some of those kids out there find this and realize that. It's an important message that needs to be spread, and hopefully there will be a day where we won't have this problem.

Kelsey says

I received this book via a Goodreads giveaway. I've read the Archie comics off and on since high school so I really loved reading the backstory for the character Kevin. It was a quick read and the story unfolded at a good and steady pace. Kevin is an awesome character, is very likable, and is relatable to anybody that is going through the process of figuring out who they are amongst people who may judge you for what you are and for what you do. I think it's great that there's a LGBTQ character in the series. By reading this book it gave him more dimensions and *real*. I wish that when I was younger there were more characters like Kevin to read about.

Overall, I really enjoyed the book!

April says

When I got Kevin by Paul Kupperberg in the mail, I initially was really excited because I assumed it was a comic book and was like awww yeah pictures! Then I opened it and saw all the words and I literally said out loud "this isn't a comic book!" I was a tiny bit pissed. You guys, I am a tiny bit of an idiot in case you cannot tell, because it turns out that Kevin by Paul Kupperberg is a neat little story about the first openly gay character in the Archie-verse. I am pretty sure that's kind of a big deal, then again all I know about Archie is that there is a character named Jughead.

Read the rest of my review [here](#)

Review will be posted November 22, 2013.

Marsha says

Spirited, light-hearted in tone and yet quietly meaningful, "Kevin" sheds light on the common topics of striving to find dates, negotiating the paths between friendship and romance and struggling with sexual identity. Kevin is a genuinely decent guy, open, kind, amiable and accepting about his homosexuality. But he wasn't always like that and in his story (which is basically one long reminiscence about one hard year in middle school) he relates to Jughead and Veronica about how he learned who he was and how to stand up for himself and others.

This book is a disarming and fun read without being heavy or moralistic. For anyone who's ever read Riverdale comics, it's a fine addition to the canon. But it also works as a standalone book that doesn't require commitment to or in-depth knowledge of its origin material.

Charles says

First Reads Review - Kevin by Paul Kupperberg

So I won this through the goodreads First Reads program thinking it was a graphic novel, as I was familiar of the character through the Archie comics. Which just shows that I need to read the descriptions better, because it showed up and I discovered that it was a chapter book. So pushing past my mild disappointment that I was in for a longer read than I had anticipated, I waded into the world of not-Riverdale. At least, not of the story takes place away from the normal locale of the comics.

And what I got was a very good if very middle school book. It deals with some weighty subjects, from bullying to abuse to homosexuality, and meanwhile it maintains a very Archie feel, the characters real enough but very good, very driven to do the right thing. I mean, it's something that Kevin, in the book, struggles with, trying to do what is right even when it is frightening, but there really wasn't a whole lot of question that the story was going to have a happy ending. What was surprising to me was the darkness that seeps into the story, with Luke especially bringing the tone from what might have been light to something very serious. I'll just say that attempted suicide was not something I was expecting when I picked up the book, not that it wasn't handled well and with proper gravity in the story.

This is a book set in middle school, though, and has taught me that middle school is not something that I miss at all, not even really to read about. Because the author does a good job of capturing the feel of middle school, with the middle school pressures and fears. Kevin is written quite well and makes everything interesting, but in most ways this is a standard school bully story, where Kevin eventually stands up for himself and others. There is more going on than just that, though, and kudos to the book for taking some unexpected twists here and there. It is subtly crafted, if not entirely subtle in delivery. Things like Kevin starting to become aware of his own difference and homosexuality is well done and I liked his relationship with Sammie and Timmy especially.

And it is a story that refuses to give in wholly to the happy ending. It is more realistic that way, at least, leaving people better off mainly but not really getting what they really want. And I think that works. It was a fun read and fast, and I don't really mind that it wasn't a graphic novel. As it stands it was a good book and it almost makes me interested in checking out more about Kevin. As it stands, though, I have a lot of other books on my plate, and so I shall leave not-Riverdale and give the book four stars out of five.

Craig Wiesner says

Kevin

A Novel by Paul Kupperberg

Published by Grosset & Dunlap / Archie Comics / Penguin Young Readers

April 2013

Review by Craig Wiesner

Reach And Teach: Reach And Teach

As a youngster in Junior High School (AKA Middle School) I remember looking at the other kids in my class through the lens of Archie Comics. A boy who had been a really close friend for a couple of years, Wayne, was Archie (red hair and all). His best friend forever, David, was Jughead. There were girls who were perfect matches as Veronica and Betty. I could see someone to match everyone in Archie, except me. When Wayne and David started going gaga over girls, we drifted apart. Plus, there was some terrible stuff going on at school between me and a group of bullies, and home wasn't very safe either. Real life sucked.

Archie's life seemed pretty great. 40 years ago Archie Comics was like a glass window that I could look through and see all kinds of happy people, but nowhere in Riverdale did there seem like any place for me. Well, 40 years later, it turns out there is!

I just finished reading Kevin, the pre-story of a character who now appears in Archie Comics (including his very own comics), and I hope that every kid in Riverdale, AKA anywhere in the world where this book becomes available, gets a chance to read it. The book is great - a page-turner - and loaded with lessons about real friendship, love, relationships, courage, fear, bullying, upstanding, sexuality, crushes, and more (but wait, there's more!!!).

Synopsis:

Kevin Keller, the first openly gay kid in Riverdale High, shares his bittersweet coming-of-age story. Before he became handsome, confident, athletic, and popular, Kevin was awkward and shy. As a military brat, he never stayed in one school very long and he never felt like he fit in. After settling in at yet another new school, Kevin had to face one of the biggest challenges of his young life: middle school prom. An awkward experience for any kid, it was made worse for Kevin after he realized that the girl he'd agreed to go with might like him as more than a friend... and the boy of his dreams acted like he didn't exist.

Why I Love This Book:

Despite feeling like an outsider in Riverdale, I nonetheless always loved Archie Comics. Yes, there were kids who acted snobbish and there were bullies, but overall, the people in Riverdale were wonderful. The parents were kind, if not a bit quirky. The teachers and other school staff seemed to really care about the kids. Archie and his friends cared deeply about each other, loved each other, stood up for each other, laughed with each other, had lots of fun, made mistakes... got mad, apologized, and were friends again. If there was anyplace in the world where a gay kid could have come out, it would have been Riverdale and the first person a boy would have come out to would have been Betty or Veronica.

In this book Kevin shares his coming-of-age story. Moved once again because of his father's military assignment, this time Kevin has found some really nice friends, known as the "Geek Squad." One other kid, Timmy, not part of the squad, in fact a really popular kid on the swim team, hangs out with the squad once in a while. When the school bully starts picking on Luke, the one kid in the school who seems to have absolutely no friends, Timmy stands up for him. Kevin, without realizing exactly what it is, develops a crush on Timmy, especially after Timmy stands up for Luke. Meanwhile, Sammie, a member of the geek squad develops her own serious crush on Kevin. When Kevin invites her to the prom, she thinks it is finally the start of something more than just friendship. Yep - it's Archie alright!

The story goes much deeper than any of the comics I remember. It explores what true friendship is about, showing what happens when friends hurt each other (which we do) and how real friends get past the hurts and make up. The bullying Kevin and Luke go through at school is horrendous, like real bullying is for real kids. Kevin's father is a wonderful character, active-duty military, gently guiding his son through troubled waters, teaching him how to protect himself. Kevin has a few opportunities to stand up against the bully, and the first few times he fails. Each time, he thinks about some lessons that came up in English class: Atticus Finch standing up against an entire town in *To Kill A Mockingbird*, and the words of Edmund Burke, "All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing."

Pretty cool stuff to include in a book based on Archie Comics!

The book does a great job of slowly, but steadily, bringing the reader along on Kevin's journey from being completely clueless about his own sexual orientation, to that lightbulb moment when all becomes clear. For anyone who wonders if the way that journey unfolds matches reality, I'm here to tell you it sure does (and

funny enough, my lightbulb flashing was also because of a member of the swim team - Steve M., wherever you are...)!

One thing I look for in a book that includes bullying is how the bullied person handles it when the tables are turned. Kevin's father started teaching Kevin some martial arts and in many stories there would come a moment when the bullied kid would beat the heck out of the bully. That doesn't happen here. Kevin protects himself, but doesn't strike back. Beautiful.

The other beautiful thing is the way Kevin reaches out to Luke, the most tragic figure in the story and the one in the most need of a friend. One of the greatest things a child can do in that lunchroom of hell that so many kids encounter, is to take her tray and sit down with that one incredibly alone other kid, sitting hunched over his lunch hoping no one picks on him that day. That act of walking over, in front of everyone, and saying hello, is one of the most courageous acts in the world. Kevin does that, and I love him for it.

The book is well written, funny at times, seriously sad at others, realistic for the most part, a bit silly here and there (it is Archie Comics after all), and an important gift to our changing world.

Missing are kids of color and of course we'll need to have a lesbian and trans story soon too. But for the moment, I'll give thanks that Kevin found his way to Riverdale, and this book found its way into the world.

Now Jughead and I need to go get some serious cheeseburgers!!!!

Buy the Book:

Buy the Book

Tanya says

I received this book from GoodReads in exchange for an honest review.

I was excited to get this book, yet mildly dissapointed there were no pictures. I was expecting a comic book like the real Archie stories.

Other than that you cannot help but like Kevin. He is an extremely likeable charactor. You want the best for him. He is bullied, has a military father and comes into his own sexually. You want him to succeed and do well!
