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Danny thinks he must be the only seventeen-year-old guy in Cape Breton--in Nova Scotia, maybe--who doesn't have his life figured out. His buddy Kierce has a rule for every occasion, and his best friend Jay has bad grades, no plans and no worries. Danny's dad nags him about his post-high-school plans, his friends bug him about girls and a run-in with the cops means he has to get a summer job. Worst of all, he's keeping a secret that could ruin everything.

## Way to Go Details

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Author : Tom Ryan

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## From Reader Review Way to Go for online ebook

### Zoraida says

This is a beautiful story about a young guy coming face to face with who he really is.

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### George Ilsley says

This is clearly a YA book, and I have rated it on that basis. By no stretch of the imagination am I a YA. I only wish that there had been books like this when I was growing up in some rinky-dink little town in Nova Scotia and reading voraciously. I can't imagine what it would have been like to have read this book at that time, but reading it now makes me think of some isolated gay kid, today, in some little town somewhere, who is reading this book, and is able to glimpse a glimmer of light and hope at the end of the dark tunnel.

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### S.L. says

I live on Cape Breton Island and I've had the pleasure of meeting this wonderful author, so I must admit I wanted to like this book, but I began with an open mind. When I chuckled before the end of the first page, however, I knew I wouldn't be disappointed. By the end I was smitten with WAY TO GO.

The main character, Danny, is so easy to like and identify with as he figures his life out. A big part of his story is trying to accept that he's gay, but I think anyone, regardless of gender and sexual orientation will recognize the universal teen struggle of identity.

The secondary characters are quirky enough to be unique and interesting without ever seeming unnatural. Everyone had likeable and irritating traits, so that you never stopped loving them even when you wanted to shout them down.

This story was just easy to slip into, like a summer beach vacation a visitor could have in Danny's hometown of Deep Cove. I read one reviewer didn't like the ending, but I especially loved it. Perhaps if that reviewer ever experiences a summer's end on Cape Breton Island, he/she might have a change of heart.

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### Mrs. S says

Clearly, I was into this book--if you check the dates on my reviews, you'll see that I finished a different book on the same date. I picked this one up on my way home, and three long subway rides later, I was done. It's a classic coming-of-age story set in a small town in Nova Scotia, Canada. During the summer after 11th grade, protagonist Danny gets a summer job, figures out who his true friends are, and starts to get comfortable with new ideas about who he really is. What made it stand out were the supporting characters: Danny's little sister Alma was my favorite, with her wise-cracking, movie-quoting ways, and I loved the way Danny's opinion of his friend Maisie evolved as he--and we--got to know her. I also enjoyed the kitchen setting--my interest in food (i.e., eating it) and my interest in theater (having formerly spent a lot of time making it) combine into a complete fascination with stories about professional kitchens. I love the sense of urgency about something

that isn't life-and-death, but feels like it (we definitely had that sense backstage.) It was fast-paced, which could be a plus, but I liked the characters enough that I could have happily spent more time with them in exchange for a bit more detail and depth. That said, I thought it ended in the right place--at the end of the summer, when a lot of things were started, but nothing was really finished. Clean, simple, a perfect summer story.

\*\*Disclosure: I won a copy from the YAMazing Race, organized by The Apocalypsies. This is my honest review of the book.\*\*

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### **Angela says**

A truly heartfelt story. An excellent book! I highly recommend it!!

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### **Natalie Joan says**

Fabulous. Effortlessly took me back to summer of 94, and made me wish I was Dan's friend. I may have cried a little.

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### **Me says**

I don't think I can describe my hatred for this book; no matter how many words I am given. I would never have read this book if it wasn't a White Pine book. I even pushed it off to the last one I read. Just like the description suggested, I would hate this book and I did. Seeing no other work from this author, and not paying much attention to the writing style, I don't feel confident enough to bump this up to two stars. It was mostly the plot that bothered me. I could not care less if he ended up straight, gay, or liked purple chickens. I just don't care no matter what the book. So this is probably where the problem lies. I guess it's kind of harsh, as this is a real life problem, but I honestly don't care.

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### **Alexandra says**

This book inspired me to read because of what its about. A lot of my friends picked up this book and read the back and thought it was gross because it talked about sexual things. It didn't bother me because a lot of people go through this like gay marriages. The whole story basically circles around whether or not Danny is gay or not. He lives in a small town where no one is supposed to be gay, but slowly, he realizes what he wants to do with his life. The font is big, spaces between words bigger, so I finished the book in half a day. It's a short, light read. Most of the time, I wasn't completely sure what Danny wanted either. He talks about how he's into the new girl in town, Lisa, but at the same time, he physically analyzes other men in the community, For example, Lisa's brother. This is why I had to read it because it was DIFFERENT then other books. I find most books aren't as real as this one was not a lot of authors talk about what Danny was going through and for me its not REAL it has to be like something that could happen in someone's life.

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## Emily says

Review originally posted at Doodle's Book Blog

I was intrigued after reading the summary, but it doesn't do the book justice. From page one I was swept into Danny's world. Tom Ryan wrote a book that I will read over and over again.

Danny has just finished his junior year of high school and he isn't sure who he really is or what he wants to do with his life. It takes getting busted by the cops and forced into a summer job he didn't really want to push him to figure it out. He ignores his two best friends, Kierce and Jay, for the first few weeks of summer because of a girl, Lisa. She is energetic, beautiful, and easy going. With his reluctance, she gets him to dance, let loose, and have a little fun, something Danny doesn't do well on his own. Kierce is pushy and thinks the world of himself. Jay is the friend everyone needs. He is relaxed, easy to get along with, and accepting.

What I loved most about this book was Danny's little sister Alma. She is thirteen, loves classic movies, and she attempts to lighten the mood when things get tense. I found myself laughing throughout the book whenever she would make a reference to a movie. Another thing I liked was Kierce's rules. The book is littered with them. I would find myself rereading the rules because they were either true for most people I know or they were so ridiculous that I thought maybe I should add this to my list. For instance, "Rule Two: If you want to get rich, you've got to do well in school. Study as hard as you party." If you know where I go to college, then you know I attend the #1 party school in the US. This rule applies to everyone on campus.

Overall, this book was phenomenal and I recommend this book to everyone. It was amazing and held some life lessons that not every one achieves. Acceptance being the number one lesson on that list.

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## Michelle (FabBookReviews) says

Way to Go is the debut novel of Canadian writer Tom Ryan. It's a contemporary/coming-of-age YA novel that takes place in Nova Scotia in the 1990s. The narrator and protagonist of the story, Danny, is a teen who thinks he might be gay, but feels suffocated by his traditionally-minded father, his small community and is terrified about what might happen to him if he is outed. His two closest friends are always encouraging Danny to hook up with available girls and can't understand why he doesn't want to get laid. He's got a few girls that are interested in him, it would be a done deal, so what's his problem?

When Danny finds a summer job as a dishwasher in a newly renovated and chic-for-their-town restaurant, he begins to see the possibilities of a life outside of Cape Breton. He meets JP, a chef from Montreal who encourages Danny to think seriously about a career in the culinary arts, and he meets Lisa Walsh, a New York girl exiled to Deep Cove for the summer. To Danny, Lisa Walsh is everything he thinks could ever want in a girl, and feels that if he's not interested in this beautiful, sophisticated, cultured, music-loving girl, then he will never be interested in women. After Danny and Lisa meet, his life begins to change in many ways: some confusing, some awful and some not-so-bad ways.

I thoroughly enjoyed this novel; it's got a great blend of humour, family drama, nostalgia, growing pains, and heart. What is more, I think that Danny's narration of 90s attitudes and perceptions of homosexuality and life in small town comes across as well-articulated, down-to-earth, and authentic. If you like coming-of-age stories, then I recommend this read.

## Kassilem says

This was an easy going book and intriguing enough that I finished it in a few hours. I was worried that it would be the classic teenage coming out story but wanted to give it try in case it wasn't. It isn't. The book is about more the process of understanding what matters in life. I kept expecting Danny to find a cute guy to hook up with but that never happened and after looking back on that, it was a little refreshing. It makes this book not about prejudices or love but about believing in yourself and coming to grips with who you are which is an important lesson for anyone. Danny was a fun character to follow; he's very relatable. One of the few things that lowered my rating was the anticlimactic ending. It seemed a little rushed. We follow Danny through his agony of refusing to believe he is gay but it seems like there was little transition between that and his acceptance. More on his thought process there would have been nice. Overall, a nice read. :)

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## Josh says

Ever the vigilant YA GLBT fiction enthusiast (so many letters), I try to keep my eyes and ears open for anything new in the category. It's often a hard quest, requiring star navigation and Google Maps routes. And then sometimes they just throw themselves at me. I found out about Way To Go after the author, Tom Ryan, followed me on twitter. As soon as I saw "gay" and "young adult" in the same sentence, I was in. So did it measure up? Let's see.

Way to Go is set in early/mid-90s small town Canada (are there any gay teen books out there that actually take place in a BIG city or some shit? No? hm...) and centers around Danny, the hero of the piece. Danny is, you guessed it, coping with confusing feelings of homosexuality and big-fish-little-pond syndrome. Everyone suspects it, but he's in denial. And when the mysteriously cool New York City girl shows up in town and happens to be a co-worker at his new summer job, he's out to prove he's totally into the v-jay.

Alright, now Way to Go isn't going to take up too much of your time. This is a weekend afternoon read at the most. I knocked it out in 2 evenings, thanks to being damned tired from this new job 'o mine. Anyways, the pacing is quick and coupled with the low page count, this one will be a breeze for most readers. Unfortunately, that's one of the factors hurting this book.

The problem I had is that I feel like we didn't accomplish much on this short ride. I never felt as though there was any clear goal in sight, other than for Danny to survive the summer before his final year of high school. I'm all for books where being gay isn't the major issue at hand, but this is a rare moment where I felt it should have been more of the book's focus. Danny may have talked plenty about fearing his gayness, but I never felt it.

Then there's the whole shebang about Danny realizing he loves cooking and wants to make a career out of it. It played a little like this: "Hey, you suck at washing dishes, why don't you peel potatoes? Oh, look at that, it's been a month and you're a whiz at whipping up a steak dinner. You should go to culinary school!" I take issue with that, but whatever. I guess it's possible for a 17 year old to, after 2 months working in a kitchen, be deemed good enough to apply to an elite culinary school. Stranger things have happened (like Michael Griffo getting a f%ing book deal).

And the dialogue; maybe Canadians say mean things to each other and it's all completely benign. I just find it hard to imagine someone telling me "It's none of your business," with a friendly smile on their face.

Witnessing such a thing would fill me with fear of an imminent slap or make me think the person is completely unhinged. There were more than a few of these moments where the characters' words didn't seem to mesh with their actions.

One thing I was happy to NOT find here was a lot of melodrama. While the dialogue wasn't great, it was at least honest and down-to-earth. There is one notable exception to this when, after learning his son wants to be a chef, Danny's dad throws a hissy over the thought of spending money on cooking school.

I also didn't care for the final chapter. It was far too saccharine. Like a bag of Skittles tied up with a little bow made of fondant. It was way too easy and all the conflicts (if there really were any to begin with) wrapped themselves up neatly. And that's the real issue I have with the book: I don't feel like anyone grew or evolved as a character. Danny barely manages to only come out a step or two ahead from where we first met him and everyone else is just kinda of there in the background, doing their thing.

Honestly, the book isn't bad. I've read bad books (still lookin' at you, Griffo. You useless mother#\*\$& son of a \$\*#@# who eats %&^@ for breakfast. GAH, IHATEYOUSOMUCH!) and this isn't what I would consider one. But it's definitely not going on my must-read list either. It's a solid 2.5 to 3 that I would put alongside Brent Hartinger's *Geography Club* and David Levithan's *Boy Meets Boy*, two other books that left me equally underwhelmed.

It's definitely a debut work, and I think there is room for Tom Ryan grow and produce more gay YA fiction, but, as per my extremely hard-to-please literary standards, for now I'll have to withhold my seal of approval. But by all means, give it a shot. You may have like it more than me.

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## Hot Stuff for Cool People says

'Way to Go,' the first novel by author Tom Ryan, is a story that centers around the summer vacation of high school student Danny. At the beginning of the summer, Danny runs into a bit of trouble, which prompts his mother to demand he get a summer job, ruining the plans he had to spend the summer hanging out with his two best friends, Jay and Kierce. However, Danny soon finds that he enjoys his job, as well as his new friend Lisa, who works with him. Danny also hopes that Lisa may be the solution to an issue that's been plaguing him- he suspects he might be gay, but doesn't want to admit it to anyone, including himself. He's hoping that Lisa might be the girl to 'cure' him of it.

I felt that there were both strong and weak parts to this book. I enjoyed the story line, and the characters are all very well developed. The plot was solid and the setting of the book was presented in such a way that I actually felt like I was there.

However, I felt that this novel died down where it should have become more exciting. The anxiety Danny feels is obvious, but I thought the reader should have felt it more, as opposed to being told that it was there. There is a tension between Danny and Kierce throughout the entire book, and the two even come to blows over an argument, but the whole thing lacked some kind of depth I was looking for, and everything is forgiven and forgotten, without anything really getting worked out. The same thing happens when Danny and Lisa have a disagreement. In the end, things seem to be wrapped up neatly, but nothing really gets resolved. Although Danny does come to terms with his sexuality, it felt like he didn't want to touch it with a ten foot pole, and didn't want anyone else to know. This is understandable, but I wanted a little more substance. I needed more substance in nearly every scenario in the book.

I was also disturbed that, to help Danny with a college application fee, his mother takes money from her

husband's wallet without her husband's knowledge. She claims it was so Danny would feel like his father was supporting him, but it rang absolutely false to me. Isn't that *stealing*? What mother tells her child that this is acceptable?

Despite its flaws, I found 'Way to Go' to be easy to slip into, and it held my attention without becoming boring. For the subject matter, it's a relatively light, fun read, and I'd recommend it to anyone looking for that, or anyone who's looking for a good introduction to this genre. I think this author has quite a bit of potential, and hope he displays it in his future books.

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### **Natalina says**

I really liked this book, but it reminded me of Perks of Being a Wallflower in more ways than one. Obviously there were other characters, but there was a straight guy who tried picking up everyone, a straight guy who was winging life, a might-be-gay guy (the main character), and then two girls that have connections with the main character. There were also mix tapes and dancing, and even a fight about how the main character was trying to hide how he was (possibly) gay. Did I mention it takes place in the '90s?

Like I said, I loved the book, but at the same time the similarities are visible for anyone who's read Perks.

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### **Lindsay says**

Danny thinks he must be the only seventeen-year-old guy in Cape Breton--in Nova Scotia, maybe--who doesn't have his life figured out. His buddy Kierce has a rule for every occasion, and his best friend Jay has bad grades, no plans and no worries. Danny's dad nags him about his post-high-school plans, his friends bug him about girls and a run-in with the cops means he has to get a summer job. Worst of all, he's keeping a secret that could ruin everything.

*Way to Go* is a book filled with a mixture of emotions and realizations. It's smart, fun, happy, sad, easy, tough, and all kinds of complicated. Perhaps it's a coming out, but perhaps it's also a realization that it's okay to not have your entire life planned out when you're seventeen, that it's okay to still think about what you'd like to do in the future, that it's okay to explore. That it's okay to be you and not who people around you expect you to be.

Danny's is a kind and thoughtful voice, the voice of a teenage guy struggling to keep some things secret but to still sound normal around his friends and family. He thinks this secret will destroy everything around him, thinks it will ruin his life. Over the course of the book he's discovering who he is, what he wants to do. But will he keep hiding that part of himself?

It's not Deep Cove telling Danny he can't be gay, it's Danny himself who's suppressing this part of himself. It's sad that he feels he has to hide being gay from everyone. It's also sad that this has happened, does happen, and will happen in the future in real life. It's sad for everyone who feels that being gay is wrong, that it needs to be hidden, that being gay equates to not being normal. No one is normal anymore, everyone is different.

It's okay if you don't have everything figured out when you're a teenager, that's what those years are for. But during that time it's important to be the person you want to be. You're the one living your life, not your friends or your parents, so be who you want, like what you want, love whomever you want, life without fear,

because there will be those who love you no matter what.

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