



## 8.1 Queer Media Recommendations

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### Novels

#### **Boyfriends With Girlfriends** by Alex Sanchez

One of Sanchez's most recent novels, the story focuses on four teenagers as they struggle with the fluidity of sexuality and the erasure of bisexuality. Sergio is proudly bisexual, with his previous relationship being with a girl. Lance, his love interest, has always known he was gay but struggles with understanding Sergio's bisexuality. Meanwhile, Lance's friend Allie finds herself falling for a girl, Kimiko, after just getting out of a two year relationship with a guy. Kimiko struggles with being a lesbian Asian-American and coming out to her mother. This book delves into the complexity of living as a bisexual teen.

**Why you should read it:** This novel by Alex Sanchez takes a very powerful look at bisexuality and queerness across multiple cultures.

#### **Getting It** by Alex Sanchez

High school freshman Carlos Amoroso is madly in love with Roxy, but she doesn't know he even exists. After seeing a TV show one night, Carlos decides to ask openly gay senior Sal to give him a makeover in hopes that Roxy will notice him after the transformation. Sal agrees only if Carlos will help him start a Gay-Straight alliance at the school with him.

**Why you should read it:** The novel follows Carlos in his questioning of his sexuality, and of his struggles to support his new friend Sal.

#### **Aristotle and Dante discover the Secrets of the Universe** by Benjamin Alire Sáenz

Set in 1987 El Paso, this young adult novel centers on the friendship of fifteen year old Aristotle and Dante as they navigate the world between being boys and being men. The story explores the boys' identity as Mexican-American teens navigating their realizations about their sexual orientation. Dante is open about his sexuality while Ari suppresses his.

**Why you should read it:** This novel is a powerful love story covering a wide breath of Mexican-American experiences with queerness, relationships, and identity through the eyes of two teenagers.

### **Juliet Takes a Breath** by Gabby Rivera

Juliet Milagros Palante is leaving the Bronx and headed to Portland. She just came out to her family a Puerto Rican Lesbian and isn't sure if her mom will ever speak to her again. She's interning with the author of her favorite book: Harlowe Brisbane, the ultimate authority on feminism, women's bodies, and other gay-sounding stuff. Will Juliet be able to figure out her life over the summer? Is that even possible? Or is she gonna running away?

**Why you should read it:** A unique perspective on lesbian identity through the lens of a puerto rican nerdy teenage girl.

### **None of the Above** by I. W. Gregorio

When Kristin Latimer is voted homecoming queen, it seems like another piece of her ideal life has fallen into place. She's a champion hurdler with a full scholarship to college and she's madly in love with her boyfriend. After, a visit to the doctor reveals the truth: Kristin is intersex, which means that though she outwardly looks like a girl, she has male chromosomes, not to mention body "parts."

**Why you should read it:** For the exploration of intersex identity and a unique perspective on gender binary.

### **Queer: The Ultimate LGBT Guide for Teens** by Kathy Belge and Marke Bieschke

This guide has everything from coming out discussions to gender exploration guides and queer terms. The guide has survived the test of time in terminology and advice. A great first read for those entering Queer identifies spaces.

**Why you should read it:** If you want a guide on various topics related to being queer and in the queer community.

## **Movies**

### **The Imitation Game**

Benedict Cumberbatch stars as Alan Turing, the genius British mathematician, logician, cryptologist and computer scientist who led the charge to crack the German Enigma Code that helped the Allies win WWII.

### **How To Survive a Plague**

A 2 Hour award winning documentary on the AIDS crisis of the 1980s and the LGBT activism it spurred with a focus on ACT UP activism.

### **Saving Face**

Saving Face is a 2004 American romantic comedy drama film directed by Alice Wu. The film focuses on Wilhelmina, a young Chinese-American surgeon; her unwed, pregnant mother; and her dancer gay girlfriend.

### **Boys don't cry**

Young female-to-male transgender kid Brandon Teena, leaves his hometown under threat when his ex-girlfriend's brother discovers that he's biologically female. Very tragic but ground breaking film.

### **Hurricane Bianca**

This film features a Drag Queen of Comedy, Bianca Del Rio from Rupaul's drag race. Bianca plays a richard, a Gay Science teacher from New York that is relocated to a small town in Texas. After getting fired, enacts his revenge on the school by coming back as the women Bianca Del Rio.

### **Blue Is the Warmest Color**

A French teen (Adèle Exarchopoulos) forms a deep emotional and sexual connection with an older art student (Léa Seydoux) she met in a lesbian bar.

### **Rocky Horror picture show (R-rated)**

In this queer cult classic, sweethearts Brad (Barry Bostwick) and Janet (Susan Sarandon), stuck with a flat tire during a storm, discover the eerie mansion of Dr. Frank-N-Furter (Tim Curry), a transvestite scientist. As their innocence is lost, Brad and Janet meet a houseful of wild characters, including a rocking biker (Meat Loaf) and a creepy butler (Richard O'Brien). Through elaborate dances and rock songs, Frank-N-Furter unveils his latest creation: a muscular man named "Rocky."

### **Rent**

Not explicitly queer, but rather this musical has strong queer themes. "In this musical, set at the dawn of the 1990s, a group of New Yorkers struggle with their careers, love lives and the effects of the AIDS epidemic on their community. Mark (Anthony Rapp), an aspiring filmmaker, and Roger (Adam Pascal), an HIV-positive musician, scramble for money to pay rent to their landlord and former roommate, Benny (Taye Diggs). Meanwhile, their friend Tom (Jesse L. Martin), a professor, has fallen for Angel (Wilson Jermaine Heredia), who is slowly dying of AIDS."

## **Comics/Graphic Novels**

**Lumberjanes** created by Shannon Watters, Grace Ellis, Brooke A. Allen and Noelle Stevenson

Lumberjanes is a comic about friendship between girls. The core five campers go on adventures through mystical egyptian ruins, far away lost islands and underwater lands filled with mermaids. Some

campers are attracted to other girls, one is trans and their genders and sexuality is rarely if ever a source of stress.

**Why you should read it:** You want a happy optimistic work about young girls with diverse sexualities and a trans femme main character.

**Assigned Male Comics** created by Sophia LaBelle.

Assigned Male is a webcomic about a young transgirl and her dealings with her family, friends and the world around her identity. Typically in four square panels dealing with a social issue or misconception about her identity. Assigned Male Comics, also has nonbinary, transmasculine and allied characters.

**Why you should read it:** You want a funny and sometimes sarcastic work about a young transgirl navigating life with a gender diverse cast. This is for you.

## **Music**

**Troye Sivan** (Australian Youtuber, Actor, and Singer)

Beginning his career as the young James Howlett in X-Men Origins: Wolverine, Troye Sivan rose to prominence as a youtuber, who came out as gay in 2014 in a video. Since then, Sivan has written and produced his own music, garnering international attention with his debut full length album “Blue Neighborhood.” The music video trilogy from this album (“WILD,” “FOOLS,” and “TALK ME DOWN”) tell a heart-wrenching story of two boys growing up, falling in love, and experiencing loss in a blue collar city. Sivan was named by Out Magazine as one of the top 100 influential queer artists under 30.

**Why you would like it:** Troye Sivan is a gay Australian singer whose album “Blue Neighborhood” explores queerness in working class Australia.