

The Comedienne's Guide to Pride

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In *The Comedienne's Guide to Pride*, seventeen-year-old Taylor has all the usual senior dilemmas—plus one exceptional one: she's a lesbian comedian who hasn't come out as a lesbian—or a comedian.

Taylor's mother, once a rising comic herself, gave up her career when she became pregnant. And Taylor's touring comedian father left them for a younger woman. Taylor worries how her mother will react to her desire to follow in her doomed footsteps.

A wild dream comes true when Taylor learns she's a finalist for a diverse writers' internship at *Saturday Night Live*, but the news also starts a countdown clock on revealing her twin secrets. Helping her crush—an out-and-proud fellow senior, Charlotte—with a school project adds even more fuel to the fire. Before Taylor can risk being accepted by others, she'll have to learn to accept herself.

Salem, Massachusetts, is the unexpected setting for this coming-of-age comedy, and its quirks and absurdities prove to be the perfect backdrop. "Conveniently, since 2010, we'd been direct descendants of Bridget Bishop," Taylor says of her mother's decision to move to Salem and open a bed and breakfast. Taylor finds respite at Salem's Museum of Witchcraft, where she pines for Charlotte, watching her spellbinding portrayal of Abigail Williams in reenactments.

The most wicked thing about the book, however, is its sense of humor: Taylor's one-liners and blunt observations are biting and clever, though she also employs jokes as a shield and a safe haven. Her insecurities lead to harsh judgments of herself and others; Charlotte's easy confidence serves as a useful foil along Taylor's journey to self-acceptance.

Wrapping a coming out in a coming-of-age, *The Comedienne's Guide to Pride* is a sweet, funny take on a familiar young adult plot.

DANIELLE BALLANTYNE (July / August 2022)

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