

(Ebook free) Nina Here Nor There: My Journey Beyond Gender

Nina Here Nor There: My Journey Beyond Gender

Nick Krieger

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Nick Krieger : Nina Here Nor There: My Journey Beyond Gender before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Nina Here Nor There: My Journey Beyond Gender:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A unique offering to the typically presented "stuck in the wrong body" transgender narrative By Andrew Sass Welcome to our transgender world. Gender's not as black and white as you think. For those not as in the know, transgender refers to the experience of having been born biologically one sex but identifying mentally (and often physically) as another. This book is equal parts memoir and journey into the world

of gender identity, from the point of view of Nina Krieger, a female-born individual who begins exploring her (now his) gender identity in her late 20s and early 30s, eventually coming to the conclusion that she prefers masculine pronouns to feminine and needs to take steps to transition for her own comfort and peace of mind. This includes a name change to Nick, hence the author's name in the byline. I've seen comments about Nick Krieger's privileged background as it relates to his transition in other reviews. Perhaps due to my own privileged background, I don't see this as much of a negative, despite knowing I won't be able to afford even half the cost he paid for his top surgery anytime soon. On the contrary, I think Nick addresses privilege (including his own) well throughout the book and fits it into the story as much as is possible to show where he came from in terms of familial background and where he ultimately ends up by book's end. Where I think this book truly stands out however is the depiction of what some might consider a late-term realization of gender identity. It brings to light the fact that not all transgendered individuals knew they were transgender when they were children, either because the social environment in which they were raised wasn't optimal for it or simply as a result of not connecting the dots until later on in life. This certainly doesn't invalidate those who knew early on, but rather gives readers a glimpse of those of us who took more time getting defining our identities in terms of gender, or who might still be defining them to this day. Krieger's writing style is superb. It's difficult for me to really make an impartial judgment call on just how much of an emotional impact his writing is, since I personally identified with a lot of what he was going through and have a father I view as very similar in personality to Nick's. What I can say is that the scenes in which Nick is trying to level with his father about his own identity, only to be met with disbelief and even mild hostility, really shook me to my emotional core. Part of it is likely my relation to the situation, yes. I think another part is just how masterfully Nick captured the scenes. In fact, the only parts I didn't particularly identify with (and, as a consequence, didn't find myself really enjoying) were the liberal mentions of sex, drug use, and wealth among Nick's friends and acquaintances. Yet I think it's essential that some of those scenes were included, because transgender people don't exist in a vacuum. They don't always go through their exploration of identity on their own, although I do think many readers who don't live in San Francisco's liberal and mostly accepting Castro neighborhood will really be able to relate to the seemingly constant discussions of gender, preferred pronouns, queer and feminist theory that were portrayed quite often. There are a small handful of books that depict transgender individuals coming out as teenagers in high school (see: *Luna* for male-to-female and *Parrotfish* for female-to-male, both fictional), but I've seen far fewer books depicting adult gender identity discoveries and coming out stories. That's why this book is so incredibly important a piece of literature to add to the queer section of any bookstore (if one of those sections even exists in the first place). This was a fantastic, informative read.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. If you want to gain a better understanding of being transgender or gender fluid

By judy l. schroeder If you want to gain a better understanding of being transgender or gender fluid, reading Nick's (Nina's) book will help. This took a great deal of courage to share with the world, and I am grateful for their candidness.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Fantastic Read

By Andrea Oettinger Nina Here Nor There was a page-turner every step of the way. In a day and age when people still discuss gender simply in terms of male or female, Nick Krieger sheds light on the actuality that gender is a much more complex concept. He challenges that idea that people must fall within a category, be "diagnosed," or be located on a spectrum in order to have an identity. By exploring the diversified vocabulary pertaining to gender that floats around the LGBT community, Nick toys with the different labels society has for people and struggles with identifying terms that help him understand himself. Nick reminds us that truly knowing oneself is an ongoing journey for everyone. Superseding the theme of developing an identity, Nick emphasizes the importance of finding happiness within one's journey. Immersing himself in yoga, traveling, and engaging in discussions were all ways Nick used to grow as a human being and learn from the people around him. *Nina Here Nor There* reminds us of how important people are to the development of the individual; and how much we all really need each other.

Honor Book for the 2012 Stonewall Book Awards in non-fiction *The next-generation Stone Butch Blues*--a contemporary memoir of gender awakening and a classic tale of first love and self-discovery. Ambitious, sporty, feminine capital-L lesbians had been Nina Krieger's type, for friends that is. She hadn't dated in seven years, a period of non-stop traveling searching for what, or avoiding what, she didn't know. When she lands in San Francisco's Castro neighborhood, her roommates introduce her to a whole new world, full of people who identify as queer, who modify their bodies and blur the line between woman and man, who defy everything Nina thought she knew about gender and identity. Despite herself, Nina is drawn to the people she once considered freaks, and before long, she is forging a path that is neither man nor woman, here nor there. This candid and humorous memoir of gender awakening brings readers into the world of the next generation of transgender warriors and tells a classic tale of first love and self-discovery.

Discussion Guide for Book Clubs, Classrooms, and Group Discussions

What did you know about transgender people before reading this book? How has your perspective changed? Did reading this book make you think about your own body, gender, and identity? In what ways? How do you feel about the way Nina treats her parents? How about the way they treat her? How would you react if your child was transgender? What role does Ramona play in Nina's journey? How do you envision gender a binary, spectrum, galaxy? What are some of the benefits to our culture of

gender? Some of the downfalls? How does the binary (man/woman) system help you? Hurt you? How do you relate to Nina's experience? In what ways is her story universal? Specific? In what parts of your life do you feel you are privileged? Have your privileges changed over time? Has this impacted your worldview? How is this book similar to other memoirs about gender? How is it unique? How does the diagnosis of Gender Identity Disorder and its classification as a mental illness affect trans people? What do you see as the main challenges for trans people in our society? Are these covered in the book, or are these from other sources and experiences? What did you learn through *The Boys*? How are their gender expressions and decisions similar? Different? Where do lesbian and transmasculine (trans people on the male side of the spectrum like *The Boys*) communities overlap? Where is there friction? What defines women's spaces and in what cases, instances, or places should transmasculine people be included? Excluded?

[B]eautifully written Accessible and full of humor, there's no question that in the growing canon of first person transgender narratives, this is already a classic. *Curve Magazine* I found Nick Krieger's memoir to be non-threatening and honest. It was candid and answered many questions I didn't even know to ask. *Transforming Love* Nick's story is refreshing because he doesn't abide by the 'heterosexual man trapped in a woman's body' narrative that we're so used to hearing in the news. It's more nuanced and feels so much more real and personal. *Queering the Campus* "As Krieger explores the gender spectrum, we do too. At the same time he's seeing the blurred lines of woman and not-woman, we see it as well. The journey is a good one, shared. The book is a captivating fresh take on the fluidity of gender to which many LGBTs will relate. *Washington Blade* "Nina Here Nor There (and how clever a title is that?) is a very well-written, important book. *Nina Here Nor There* works on several levels as a guide for people who want to transition; as a conversation-starter for those interested in gender issues; as a heartfelt memoir; and as a fun, fly-on-the-wall look at San Francisco's diverse LGBT scene. *GO Magazine* Nick Krieger's *Nina Here Nor There: My Journey Beyond Gender* is a passionate and honest memoir. Krieger recounts his personal search for identity and gender with humor and emotional honesty, making this one of the year's most moving books. *Largehearted Boy* His experience as a travel writer brings cultural details into sharp focus, and weighs individual meanings. A well-written travel guide to Nick's corner of the world. *OUTview Online* The memoir is a journey that grabs your heart and stretches your brain into new ways of thinking. *The Windy City Times* A new and welcome voice in transgender memoir. *Kate Bornstein*, author of *Gender Outlaw* A personal, insightful, and nuanced discussion of the life experiences and tough decisions that inform transgender identities. The language is precise, the thinking is complex, and the self-questioning is funny and honest. This is a profound and moving book, and its existence makes me happy. *Stephen Beachy*, author of *Distortion* It's a rare memoir that can tell a story that seems brand new, but *Nina Here Nor There* does it. This one-of-a-kind narrator undertakes a quest that is unmistakably timely. But in its yearning for awareness and connection, this book feels timeless. *K. M. Soehnlein*, author of *Robin and Ruby* With inimitable charm . . . *Nina Here Nor There* depicts the trans experience in a way that anyone can identify with, and everyone will enjoy. *Thea Hillman*, author of *Intersex (For Lack of a Better Word)* "A beautifully rendered and personal account that feels like a fresh addition to trans literature." *Publishers Weekly* [A] humorous, moving, and engagingly authentic journey. *Whitney Scott*, *Booklist* Reading *Nina Here Nor There* is like taking a tour through San Francisco's trans male culture by the most charming guide you could hope for. An important contribution to the body of literature about contemporary queer culture and lives. *Nina Here Nor There* is a book queers across the gender and sexuality spectrum should read. An insightful, accessible, and witty page-turner, *Nina Here Nor There* is the transgender narrative we've been waiting for. *Lambda Literary* In our media context, where only one kind of narrative about transition seems to be allowed, this alternate personal story can feel pretty revolutionary. He writes incredibly perceptively about issues like gender and class, approaching them through storytelling and subtle personal exploration instead of explaining through standard social justice language. *Nina Here Nor There* offers an honest, personal take on many aspects of identity. . . . *Feministing* "[*Nina Here Nor There* is] an edifying, passionate memoir the uninitiated and the curious will find these pages brimming with an enlightening, first-person experience that is both intriguing and educating. What emerges is a powerful and moving portrait of one man's quest for happiness in finding the truest sense of himself. Krieger has produced an intimate memoir about how vital physical changes can beautify every aspect of life, inside and out. *The Bay Area Reporter* In a twist on the traditional transgender narrative, Nick identifies as neither male nor female and invites readers to view gender not as a binary or a spectrum but as an infinitely beautiful kaleidoscope. Narrated with verve, charm, and humor, Krieger's memoir doesn't hold back on self-examination and emotional honesty, and will likely upend some of your preconceptions. *Bust Magazine* About the Author A native of New York, Nick Krieger realized at the age of twenty-one that he'd been born on the wrong coast, a malady he corrected by transitioning to San Francisco. His writing has earned several travel-writing awards and has been published in multiple travel guides. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. One Ta-Ta tatas On a Saturday afternoon in May, tucked into a friend's backyard near my house in San Francisco's Castro neighborhood, only a few blocks from the supersize rainbow flag, the memorial triangle of pink stones, and the landmark marquee of the Castro Theatre, women surrounded me. They were my older, established, financially secure, coupled-off, home-buying, capital-L Lesbianas in women-loving-women friends. With money, influence, and good looks, they weren't quite mainstream, but part of the

emerging gaystream, those targeted by the New York Times, Hillary Rodham Clinton, and marketers of the pantsuit. I called them my A-gays. Our host, Stephanie, appeared at the top of the stairs, sporting a J. Crew sweater, gold necklace, and designer jeans that hid a small tattoo by her hip. Hellooooo, ladies! she shouted, before descending into the yard. Her girlfriend, Beth, followed close behind, sporting a collared shirt, silver thumb ring, and cheap khakis that hid a small tattoo by her ankle. After a lifetime in the womens athletic scene, I was accustomed to the understated casual wear, parties reminiscent of halftime huddles, and a definition of ladies that implied ass kicking rather than good manners. My connection to everyone in the backyard crew stemmed from soccer, a sport I stopped playing a couple years before, tired of competition and commitments that required me to run around at specific times. I came to this postgame gathering to see Zippy, a tiny and witty monkey-like thing whod recently moved to LA for a film career and was back in town for a visit. She and I were younger than the others, less accomplished, A-gays in training although we werent really on course to pass the entrance exam. We sat across from each other on folding camping chairs, rickety on the yards uneven slabs of stone. Pockets of flowerbeds and banks of shrubbery sprouted around us, the dirt still wet from the morning rain. Well, isnt this my lucky day, Stephanie said, placing one hand on my shoulder and the other on Zippys. A special day indeed when you kids come out to join us. Zippy sprang out of her seat, shooting her tricolor pompadour-mullet to the sky. Well, wouldnt you know, its my lucky day too, be-otch. The two of them hugged before Stephanie opened her arms toward me. Always a pleasure. Had Stephanie not meant every word, her exaggerated pleasantries wouldve been embarrassing. I felt myself blush all the same from her kindness. Hows your writing? she asked. Yeah, how is your writing? Beth seconded. And when do I get to see what youve been working on? She winked, just as she did at the office when she caught me with one of my essays open on my computer. Beth had contracted me to do web writing at the bank where she worked and considered my employment supporting the arts, as did a handful of other A-gays I worked odd jobs for over the past three years. They couldnt get enough of the mass e-mails and blog posts I sent from my trips backpacking in Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia, bicycling from Canada to Mexico and, much to my appreciation, always helped my traveling-writer lifestyle by employing me and buying me drinks whenever I was back in San Francisco. I knocked around a few pebbles with the toe of my hiking boot. At the rate Im going, Ill have some quality writing in a few years, I said. And I got first dibs, Zippy jumped in. Well, Ill be waiting patiently. Beth offered me an encouraging smile before turning to Zippy. For your next film project as well. Zippy motioned me back down to our seats and scooted hers closer. So, what are you working on? she whispered. Ever since Zippy had read one of my early travelogues, forwarded by a mutual friend, shed been my biggest fan. When I returned from that trip, she found my number and called me six times in one day, begging to hang out, a near stalking that mightve scared me had I not been laughing so hard from her messages. We ended up chatting for hours about our book and film influences and passions, barely stopping to breathe. For a few weeks, early in our friendship, I thought I might be in love with her, until the moment she flipped upside down on her couch, inhaled a whip-it balloon, and I knew she was too out of control to date. Zippy was a best pal, the only one I ever showered with, which had happened once when we were unable to pause an exciting conversation. Of all the things I missed about Zippy since she moved, it was our artistic talks, creative speed as we called it, that I missed the most. I told her about the essay collection I was developing out of an unfinished one-woman show she and I had collaborated on about my futile quest to find a girlfriend, now going on nearly seven years. Whos your latest crush, or should I say character? Zippy gibed, nudging my foot with hers as if we were both in on the joke that my life only existed to serve my writing. Let me guess, unrequited? Yeah. Shes straight. I avoided Zippys eyes, knowing they would be both chiding and compassionate, as I described the flighty girl in my graduate writing program. She confessed to having a crush on me. Then for the next three months, whenever we went to a bar after class, she made sure she was never left alone with me. Classic. Zippy slapped her leg a few times. A half-dozen zippers fluttered on her baggy pants. They looked like something Michael Jackson wouldve designed for MC Hammer, but on Zippy they seemed cool. Everything did. From my jeans, I pulled out a glass bowl and weed from a medical dispensary. I claimed anxiety to receive my cannabis card, although New York City Jew wouldve been equally accurate. I packed the bowl and waited for Zippy to take the first hit. It gets worse, I said. I lit the last patch of green and inhaled deeply. I finally got her alone and made a move. She said she wasnt ready. I blew out my frustration in a huge cloud of smoke. The following week, she asked me to walk her home and invited me up. We ended up messing around in her bed. I stayed over, but no sex. She said she wanted to, but pulled time of the month. I still dont believe her. I tapped the pipe against my hand. The ashy residue stuck. We met up a few days later at a literary event. She brought some guy. He groped her the whole time. Why do you do this to yourself? Zippy asked. Dude, this guy was such a loser. She could do so much better. Like you? Yes, like me. But shes not a lesbian. I banged the pipe on the stone at my feet, nearly cracking it. In the hammock across the yard, two women lay entwined, swinging gently. Next to them, Beth was curled into Stephanies lap. I prefer straight girls, I said. You do see the problem, right? They dont like the hooaha. I grabbed my Milwaukee Best, one of the many leftover cans from the soccer field, out of the chairs cup holder. The beer tasted like piss, but I chugged the rest, the same move I made when anyone implied they might want to get near my hooaha. Leaning back into my chair, I could see through the protective cover of the trees. My eyes followed the white trail of clouds off into the distance. I could really use a trip, I said. It hasnt even been a year. Arent you just getting settled?

Zippy said. How are your new digs, anyway? I thought of the parties at my house, my roommates friends with tattoo sleeves and septum piercings, boyish and manly dykes flaunting all that had been ingrained in me as disreputable. Its an education. Picturing the chest scars of the few folks who often went topless on my back deck, I added, And then some. I pulled a flier out of my jeans pocket, one of the many left lying around my kitchen. I unfolded it to reveal a grayscale guillotine, designed not with one hole for a head, but two holes. For breasts. Whoa, Zippy said. I felt relieved to see her large blue eyes expand as she stared at the words Ta-Ta Tatas on the top of the flier. My roommates talked about their friend Gregs top-surgery fund-raiser as if it was a common occurrence, like raising money for the AIDS ride as some of the A-gays did annually. I glanced at the flier again, at the guillotine. It was both sacrilegious and curious. I think I saw this on MySpace. You wanna go? Therell be hot girls there. Zippy sang the last word like an enticing advertising jingle. I anxiously patted my jeans for the pipe. Do you even know Greg? Not well. Just from flag football. I found out about her I mean histransition from our teammates. Id forgotten Zippy had played flag football with Greg and many of the others who hung around my new house. With a history of outsider experiences only a few people knew about, Zippy was deeply empathetic. Her greatest skill, other than a left-footed soccer cross, was chatting up the visitor from out of town, the wallflower, the lone guy, or the solo guest at a party to make them feel included. Id like to support him, she said. I want to support him, too. I jostled my legs, feeling the start of pins and needles where the backs of my thighs molded to my seat. Although Im not entirely sure why. If Greg thinks hell be happier as a guy, then he should go for it. It cant be that simple. I stood up, shook out my legs and unwrapped my hoodie from my waist. What does that even mean? As I zipped up my sweatshirt, Stephanie walked over. Youre not leaving, are you? The sun dipped behind the hill. I pulled the hood over my head and dug my hands into my pockets. Just cold. Were going to Gregs benefit party, Zippy said as if Id already agreed. Wanna come? Do I know Greg? Stephanie asked. He plays flag football, Zippy said. He used to be Kerry. Hes having a fund-raiser for top surgery. Stephanie looked at Zippy and then back to me. I felt uneasy, as if an unmarked dividing line between two social circles was cracking under my feet. Stephanie crossed her arms, pushing a bit of cleavage into the V-neck of her black sweater. Ill leave this one to you kids, she said, patting us both on the shoulder. But if you want to stick around and get cozy, Im about to get this fire started. I watched Stephanie head back across the patio and enlist Beths help in carrying the stand-alone pit from the corner of the backyard, springing everyone into action. Someone grabbed the pile of wood left over from the last bonfire, and another went inside for newspaper. They would be there all night; they always were, their gatherings like the San Francisco monoseasonsixty degrees and partly cloudy with a chance of wind and fogcomfortable and easy, so predictable and unchanging as to be suffocating. I wanna go, I said to Zippy. Lets go. Now youre clucking, big chicken. She popped a set of car keys out of a canvas shoulder bag and dangled them in front of my eyes. Ill even drive. We said good-bye to a few of the A-gays and said wed be back, a statement Zippy believed but I did not. When she turned on the car, the stereo blasted a female vocalist. She turned the volume down, barely, aware of my preference for conversation over ear damage, and started to tell me how her long-distance girlfriend, Sonia, thought trans gender people were setting back the progress of gays and lesbians. I listened to her ramble about the inequality of civil unions and "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" while I stared outside the window as the streetscape changed from colorful Victorian houses to highend restaurants, taquerias, and convenience stores displaying Spanish-language ads for money-wire services. "I don't have a stake in marriage and the military," I conceded, turning the knob on the radio volume down further to avoid having to yell. "But I still don't understand the 'my turn first, your turn later' mentality." "Hey, me neither," Zippy assured me. "Sonia just doesn't know any trans gender people in East Bumblefuck. It's still scary to her. So, I told her about SF peeps and set her straight. But not too straight." Zippy hit the gas and flipped the volume up to full blast. Belting the chorus, she cruised the last few blocks and pulled headfirst into a metered spot. We parked close enough to the neighborhood dive that I could see a bunch of people smoking and talking on cell phones by the entrance. From the outside, the crowded scene didn't seem all that different from that at the monthly dyke party I used to attend regularly there. At the door, a woman leaned over a cash box collecting donations, her T-shirt emblazoned with the image of the breast guillotine. I turned to the place in my brain that craves reason, but it fell silent as I handed over my twenty dollars.