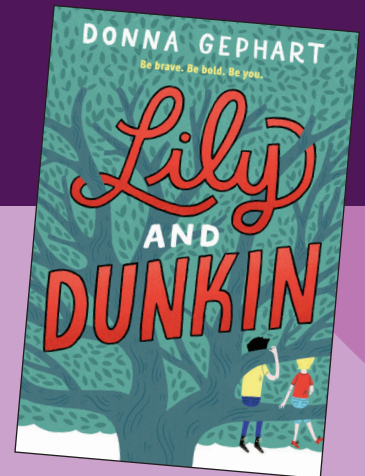


# READING BANNED & CHALLENGED BOOKS



## LILY AND DUNKIN BY DONNA GEPHART

Author Donna Gephart crafts a compelling story about two remarkable young people: Lily, a transgender girl, and Dunkin, a boy dealing with bipolar disorder. Their powerful journey will shred your heart, then stitch it back together with kindness, humor, bravery, and love.

- When and how did Lily begin questioning her identity? Which of Lily's family members are more supportive? Lily's dad has a tough time accepting her. What causes him to change his mind. Discuss the scene when her dad calls her "Lily" for the first time. How is this a turning point for Lily?
- What is the symbolism of the tree that Lily likes to sit in? Explain why she names the tree Bob. The city plans to cut down the tree. Chart Lily's efforts to save it. Discuss what Lily will lose if the tree is cut down.
- Dunkin, birth name Norbert Dorfman, has bipolar disorder. Why does he stop taking his medication? Explain why his mother suspects that he isn't taking it. Who is Phin? How do Dunkin's conversations with Phin concern his mother? Debate whether Dunkin's hospitalization is a turning point for him. How does learning about his dad's suicide change the way Dunkin approaches his own disorder?
- Discuss the friendship that develops between Dunkin and Lily. Why does Lily call him, Dunkin? Explain Lily's reaction when Dunkin wants to sit with the basketball team at lunch. Describe Dunkin's feelings when guys on the basketball team call Lily names. Dunkin is also bullied at school. Why are Lily and Dunkin hesitant to report the bullying to school officials?
- How does it take courage for Lily and Dunkin to share their secrets with one another? This book is about understanding. How does Lily and Dunkin's acceptance of one another carry them through some tough times? Lily attends the school dance in a dress, and Dunkin shows up after being discharged from the hospital. Why does Dunkin choose this moment to tell Lily that his dad committed suicide? What is the larger meaning of Lily and Dunkin dancing the last dance together?



- A group of parents in Wellington, Florida opposed the use of the novel in the classroom, and stated that they should have been notified before the novel was used. The school board heard the case, but voted to retain the novel. Discuss the benefits of studying the novel in the classroom. How does the book promote tolerance? What would you say to the school board members who voted to retain the book?
- There have been several attempts to ban the novel in school and public libraries in Kansas. The reasons cited: bullying, rebellion against the police, and Dunkin stopping his bipolar medication. How does reading the novel help readers develop empathy for kids who are bullied? Debate whether Lily is rebelling against the police, or simply trying to save a beloved tree. Describe what happens when Dunkin is unmedicated. What might readers learn from Dunkin's experience? Step into Lily and Dunkin's shoes, and respond to the parental complaints in Kansas.
- Look at this resource from Human Rights Watch: [hrc.org/resources/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-terminology-and-definitions](https://www.hrc.org/resources/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-terminology-and-definitions). What is gender identity? How does it differ from sexual orientation? Why is this distinction important? Why do people who seek to ban books often conflate the two?

**Guide written by Pat Scales, children's literature consultant.**

Check out [bit.ly/3Jj5OPG](https://bit.ly/3Jj5OPG)  
or scan the QR code for more  
information about book bans  
and how you can take action.

