



Queer's Progress

Steven Key Meyers

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A compelling story of young love, narrated by Edward, Cuban-born and page at the New York Public Library (just a page, not a whole book or anything), handsome, charming, and reeking of sex. Ned joins in the narration after Andrew, new in town, falls in love with Edward at first sight, but seeks help from the master of gay Manhattan. Andrew makes his stumbling progress through gay New York, pushed and pulled by Edward and Ned.

Queer's Progress Details

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From Reader Review *Queer's Progress* for online ebook

Diane says

The back cover synopsis? I didn't feel it. I found the characters tolerable enough to allow me to get through this somewhat aimless story. The interactions between the three main characters were okay but the story never went anywhere. I did not think much of Edward throughout and my feelings were validated in the end, which was not so surprising after all. I wanted to like Ned but ultimately I could only consider his behavior selfish and manipulative. The one character I thought had some promise was Andy; too bad for him. Of all the others, I would have enjoyed more of Tia Luisa. A real character that one.

Bottom line: The book was just okay. Someone should have had a happy ending after all that. Chalk another one up to the NMCT (not my cuppa tea) pile.

I received this book from the author after being selected in the Goodreads First Reads Giveaway as a winner. Thanks!

Josh says

The back cover copy of Steven Key Meyers' *Queer's Progress* refers to it as a "compelling story of young love...a tale by turns savage and urbane, lyrical and full of wit-burnished emotion." If that is the novel that you are looking for, please, look elsewhere. If, however, you are interested in the Grey Gardens-esque decay of a rapidly-aging gay man in the early 90's, then *Progress* just may be able to hold your interest.

The novel attempts to be two loosely interwoven stories. One is a bildungsroman about a young, queer, Cuban-American man named Eddie, who is trying to come to terms with his fluid sexuality. The other is about Ned, a sixty-year-old, gay, failed-author, who is obsessed with aging and death and has existed up to this point on one successful *How to Score Tonight* pamphlet and inheritance from his father. The common thread joining them is Andy, a twenty-something research assistant under Ned's tutelage in the ways of gay life, who develops a tortuous, on-again, off-again relationship with Eddie. Despite having these three main characters, we are only given the perspectives of the former two, leaving Andy's motivations largely a mystery to the reader.

Meyers is clearly trying to make this an especially Literary novel, and he comes close at times. I certainly caught glimpses of various Wildean fops in Ned's character, who offers up such choice quips as, "While conquest is fun, occupation's a bore" (referring to sexual conquests; "Being examined by a doctor is a special kind of ecstasy. Like conversing with God, or being adored by a lover;" and "There is no sex without shame." He even compares himself to Dorian Gray at one point.

Unfortunately, Meyers is no Wild, and Ned's barbs lack real sting and his wit largely lacks humor. To be fair, this may be intentional. When we are seeing through Ned's point of view, he reigns as queen of the Manhattan gay community. He has slept with over 2000 men, he is the basis of characters in several novels, and he "helps" the people he is supposedly counseling as they come out by "laying on the hands, i.e. has sex with them when they are most vulnerable. When we finally meet him through Eddie, we start to see the chinks the armor. He has been working on his novel for 17 years and it still isn't that good, his apartment is covered in a layer of dust, he lives next to a pornographic photographer, several of his counselees have

rejected him, and his long-time partner, Wayne, may or may not exist in reality.

Ned is a deeply flawed human being, and learning about how he came to be the way that he is and ferreting out the truth behind his many facades provide the only real entertainment to be had in *Progress*. The Eddie/Andy love story quickly grows tiresome. Eddie is a petulant child and never grows beyond that, while we never get to see enough of Andy to care about him one way or the other.

Meyers' writing style took some getting used to. He tried and succeeded to have very distinct styles for the two narrators, Eddie and Ned. He did this, though, by writing Eddie's portion in an overly casual manner, frequently dropping subjects and verbs from his thoughts and sentences. I know he was trying to convey a sense of fast-paced youth, but it ended up being distracting and a little unrealistic, considering that Eddie is a good student in university. He also includes a few truly bizarre scenes that seemed tonally out of place and brought the story to jerking halts for me. In one, Ned's dog starts to lick lotion off of Eddie's penis. Meyers uses this to then show how emotionally unbalanced Ned is by having him freak out when Eddie pushes the dog off of him, but this could have been accomplished in a better way. In another, Andy reveals that Ned's book is not the artistic masterpiece he would have everyone believe, but the scene is broken up with frequent mentions of Ned farting. Seriously. Inclusions such as these speak to Meyers either having a unique sense of humor or needing a better editor.

Overall, *Queer's Progress* is a passable novel with at least one interesting story to tell. For aging queens trying to recapture their golden youth, though, I'll stick with *Grey Gardens*.

Steven Meyers says

Forgive my five-star rating of my own novel, but there's no way around it—*Queer's Progress* deserves it. A lively, feeling evocation of young men trying to find their way in 1990s New York—and of an older man using them to refind his way—written in two voices, it steams along with the stories of Edward, young Cuban immigrant, and Ned, 60-year-old Brahmin, exploiting Andy, who falls in love with the first and whose romance is assisted—in a counseling capacity—by the latter. Or, wait: Is Andy the exploiter? A fast, funny, romantic, innocent, sophisticated, heart-breaking romp, written with all the urgency of its Manhattan setting, and not a book you will feel neutral about.

Elena says

Yo! This book was presented to me through Goodreads First reads and I received the book for the wonderful price of free :) This in way has influenced my opinion or rating

This was an interesting read. I was captivated by the lively way it was written in the merging voices of two men trying to either discover or rediscover their way in the twisting path of life. It may have been my age or mentality when reading this but i did find myself having a hard time really being fully captured by the novel. I couldn't really pinpoint what i felt about Edward as i read but this led me to be pleasantly surprised with how he developed. Of course wrestling with sexuality is not something simple and i think Edward captured that almost desperate need for understanding of ones self that is common in people. The book captured how

Edward is just as self-destructive as any other person, gay or not.

Ned on the other hand was rather unexpected. The older, self proclaimed "Self-styled master of gay Manhattan" was nothing like i'd ever witnessed before. I don't know if there are actual people who have written guides or offered guidance and instruction to other gay people who need it the way Ned did so. I think that is a glorious idea and was more than pleasantly surprised to have read about this. Although my excitement fell a little upon discovering how Ned was to use Andrew, the poor unlucky fellow that fell in love with Edward, for personal gain. Of course this was more because i try not to believe that people are more than willing to actually do such things.

Through some humor, twists and turns and of course a mixed up love affair, the defining moments of theses people lives are shared. Betrayal, manipulation, excuses and hard decisions only help them discover themselves anew.

Overall this was a nice novel and I'm very glad that i had the opportunity to have read it.

Megan Miller says

The second decade of the '00 has become the era of the antihero: Tony Soprano, Walter White, Veep Selena. After reading the novel *Queer's Progress* by Steven Key Meyers, I am ready to add his protagonists Edward, Ned, and Andrew to this list as well. Including anti-heroes is not the only way that Meyers has proved himself to be ahead of the curve in writing this novel.

The novel opens with Edward: young, beautiful, self-destructive, charming and wrestling with his sexuality. Edward is a student at City College (CCNY) and working as a page in the New York Public Library. (Edward quips, "just a page, not the whole book or anything.") Ned is an older man, the "self-styled master of gay Manhattan," who has written a manual entitled *How To Score Tonight* and is founder of Gays Reaching Out (GRO). As part of GRO, Ned offers guidance and instruction to other gay men as needed. Ned follows the voice of Andrew; a young scholar who has the ill fortune to fall in love with Edward at first sight. Ned claims that he will help Andrew get Edward's attention, but is more interested in using Andrew for personal gain. Andrew's progress through New York as he pursues Edward is stumbling, as each character attempts to define himself. Edward, hell bent on escaping a pregnant hookup, is playing more than hard to get. As each character betrays, manipulates, makes up, makes excuses, and confronts truths, the pacing of the novel races to a surprising, yet inevitable, ending. You may find yourself wanting to chronicle this little gem of a book into "gay fiction," but Meyers does not make it that easy for you. The author writes in such a way that the reader feels that they are witness of any ordinary relationship (with all the backstabbing, manipulations, and misunderstandings that can and will appear); any ordinary relationship that just happens to be between characters of the male sex. I believe this also puts Meyers ahead of the curve. This is not "gay fiction," this is contemporary, well-written fiction.

Queer's Progress is a completely engrossing novel; rife with humor, chronicling the lives of its characters in New York City. It is evident that the author has spent substantial time living in NYC, he describes landmarks deftly and expertly. His sardonic tone lends the city itself all the trappings of a third character. He brilliantly captures not just the physical scene, but the idea of the city.

Meyers uses humor, vivid descriptions, and snapping dialogue that keeps ones attention throughout the novel. I found myself so engrossed in the plot and invested in each character that I almost angrily turned the page at the end of each chapter so I could find out what happened. I know it will be the same for you.

