

CREATORS ON CENSORSHIP!

Censorship disproportionately impacts comics. We gathered quotes from creators about censorship and the importance of free expression.



Alison Bechdel

My first reaction [to being banned] is: What a great honor! My second reaction is, it's a very interesting situation, and it's all about the power of images, which I think is something people need to talk about. I can understand why people wouldn't want their children to accidentally think this was a funny comic book and pick it up and see pictures of people having sex. I can understand that. I think banning books is the wrong approach. (Source: *The Comics Journal*)

Neil Gaiman

I don't think there is such a thing as a bad book for children. Every now and again it becomes fashionable among some adults to point at a subset of children's books, a genre, perhaps, or an author, and to declare them bad books, books that children should be stopped from reading. I've seen it happen over and over; Enid Blyton was declared a bad author, so was RL Stine, so were dozens of others. Comics have been decried as fostering illiteracy.



Photo Credit: Kimberly Butler

It's tosh. It's snobbery and it's foolishness...

Well-meaning adults can easily destroy a child's love of reading: stop them reading what they enjoy, or give them worthy-but-dull books that you like, the 21st-century equivalents of Victorian "improving" literature. You'll wind up with a generation convinced that reading is uncool and worse, unpleasant. (Source: *The Guardian*)

Neil Gaiman is the author of several award-winning novels and comics, including *The Sandman*, *Neverwhere*, and *The Graveyard Book*, all of which have been challenged.

Mariko Tamaki

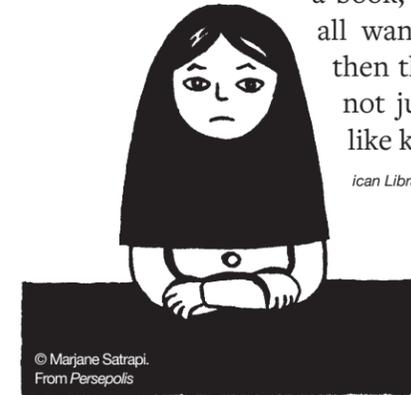
If you pull a book from a library shelf, it's not available to the kid who gets their books at the library. So, you're impacting that library as a resource to the readers who depend on it. (Source: *She Changed Comics*)



Mariko and Jillian Tamaki's *This One Summer* was the first graphic novel to earn the Caldecott Honor. CBLDF has defended the graphic novel from censorship on several occasions.

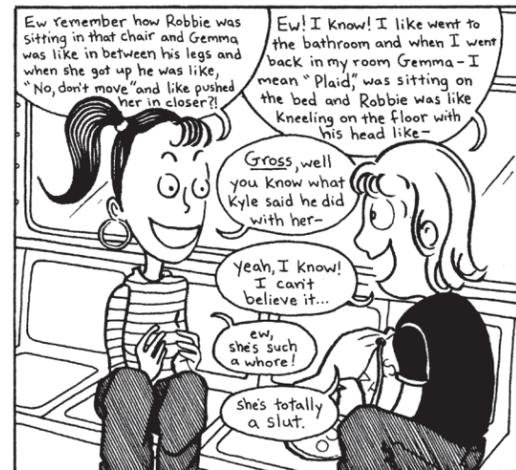
Marjane Satrapi

The good thing is that these people who ban things, it's like they are completely unaware of what a human being is. If you want to make adolescents read a book, ban it! And then they all want to read it. Because then they're rebellious. Why not just explain it? It's not like kids are dumb. (Source: *American Libraries Magazine*)



Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* is often challenged for the depiction of Islam.

Alison Bechdel's acclaimed *Fun Home* is one of the most frequently challenged graphic novels.



© Ariel Schrag. From "Plan of the Number 7 Bus," "Stuck in the Middle"

Ariel Schrag

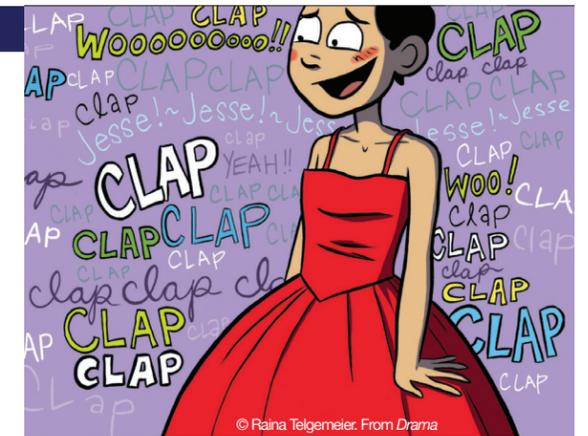
Every parent has the right to monitor his or her child's reading (or TV watching, or movie watching, etc.), and if you don't want your child reading *Stuck in the Middle*, I completely respect that choice. However, there's a big difference between making that choice for your child and making it for every child, which is what banning the book does. (Source: CBLDF interview, <http://cblfd.org/?p=30305>)

Ariel Schrag's anthology *Stuck in the Middle* has been challenged several times due to Schrag's commitment to authentic stories that accurately reflect the realities of middle school.

Raina Telgemeier

[The censorship of diverse content] sends a problematic message to readers. Every flavor of young person deserves to see themselves in literature, and the powers-that-be challenging content that isn't straight-white-cis-conservative tells everyone else that they're not worthy. The future is bright, though. The storytellers coming of age now have access to such a goldmine of diverse content, and they're already busy adding their own voices to the mix. I don't think anyone will be able to stop them. (Source: *She Changed Comics*)

Raina Telgemeier's *Drama* has been challenged for the depiction of gay characters.



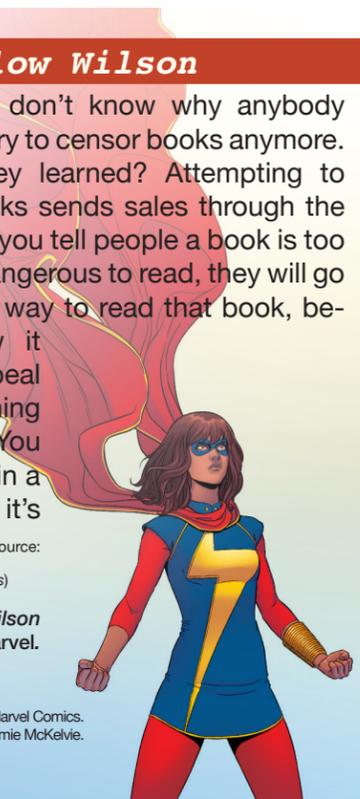
© Raina Telgemeier. From *Drama*

G. Willow Wilson

Honestly, I don't know why anybody bothers to try to censor books anymore. Haven't they learned? Attempting to censor books sends sales through the roof. When you tell people a book is too risqué or dangerous to read, they will go out of their way to read that book, because now it has the appeal of something forbidden. You can't contain a story once it's out there. (Source: *She Changed Comics*)

G. Willow Wilson writes Ms. Marvel.

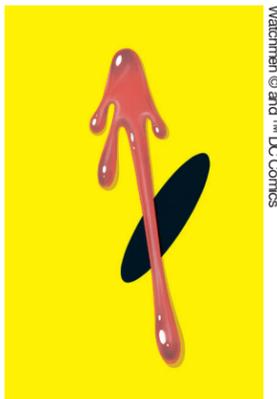
Ms. Marvel © and TM Marvel Comics. Art by Jamie McKelvie.



Alan Moore

If parents are making the decisions that their children can or cannot read this sort of book in the home, that's fair enough. The parents can take the consequences of that. It won't necessarily stop the children reading it, but at least it's a transaction between the child and the parent and it's the parent taking responsibility for their children... I prefer to let my children read anything, but I want to know what they're reading, and if there's anything they come across which might be disturbing, then I'm always on hand to talk about it with them. Which, to me, seems to be the responsible attitude. (Source: *The Comics Journal* #118)

Alan Moore's *Watchmen*, *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, and *Batman: The Killing Joke* have drawn the ire of censors.



Watchmen © and TM DC Comics