

**I'm a Gay Wizard**  
V. S. Santoni  
Wattpad Books, 2019

**Plot Summary**

You try magic once and it sticks to you like glitter glue . . .

When Johnny and his best friend, Alison, pass their summer holidays dabbling in magic, they never expect it to have consequences. Sure, it'd be great if they could banish bullies or change their lives for the better, and what harm could come from lighting a few candles and chanting a few spells? When they cause an earthquake that shakes Chicago to its core, they draw the attention of the Marduk Institute, an age-old organization dedicated to fostering the talents of young wizards.

Once there, Johnny and Alison are told they can never return to their previous lives, and must quickly adapt to a new world shimmering with monsters, fraternities, and cute boys like Hunter and Blake. But when they're pulled into an epic, supernatural fight that could cost them both their lives, Johnny and Alison find strength they never knew they had as they battle for love, acceptance, and their own happy ending—all with the help of a little magic. —[Wattpad Books](#)

**Reviews**

- [Kirkus Reviews](#) (15 August 2019): “A (presumably Latinx) gay teen is forcibly taken to a school for teen wizards. Juan "Johnny" Diaz and his best friend, a transgender girl named Alison, think they're just playing around when they cast a magic spell, but they are abducted to a secretive institute for teens exhibiting magical potential. At this facility, however, they are told that using magic is forbidden both on and off campus, so it's unclear how they are expected to be trained, and it seems its true purpose is to suppress magical powers, or maybe to conduct nefarious research, or perhaps to do some other dastardly thing to the teens—who alternately want to get the hell out and want to stay put, especially Johnny, who finds an instant friend-turned-boyfriend in Hunter (who rapidly goes from thinking he's straight to understanding he's gay—and then equally rapidly from wanting to keep that information to himself to wanting to shout it from the rooftops). Johnny and friends venture into the Everywhen, a place all humans enter when they sleep, and encounter monsters. The pacing can best be described as hurry-up-and-wait, and the characters' motivations and needs change by the page. Magical beings seem to be drawn from myriad mythological and literary sources, which would be interesting if they weren't so briefly visited and quickly dropped in favor of the next plot twist. The entertaining title is the best part of this disaster. (*Fantasy*. 14-18)”

- [Publishers Weekly](#) (5 September 2019): “Johnny and Alison are bully bait at their Chicago high school, where he’s gay, and she’s a trans goth. But after they experiment with protective magic, they are “extracted” and brought to a wizard academy. This is no Hogwarts, though: it’s essentially a prison, and the two teens quickly start to concoct escape plans, despite the formidable obstacles, including monsters. Meanwhile, Johnny falls for fellow student Hunter, who seems to return his interest, even as he insists that he’s straight. Debut author Santoni’s alternate universe is carefully detailed, but his characters are less developed. Johnny’s first-person narration allows readers to know him well, but Alison is stuck in snarky sidekick mode, and Hunter is a titch perfect: gorgeous, loyal, strong, and kind. In addition, contrivances weaken the plot: whenever Johnny and his team need a clue, it’s given to them; when they need a spell, it’s in a book they happen to have. Santoni’s refreshingly LGBTQ wizard world is made up of haves and have-nots, and a war for liberation is surely brewing, suggesting that a sequel may be forthcoming. Perhaps Johnny’s friends will receive fuller treatment in future volumes. Ages 14–up.”

#### **Awards**

- None

#### **Lists**

- [Banned Book](#) during the 2021-2022 school year

## Response to challenges

- [Virginia School Districts](#): “Seven school districts banned 16 books across the state. The most commonly banned books were... Other books that were banned include *I’m A Gay Wizard*, by V.S. Santoni, which is a story about a gay teen and his best friend, a trans girl, who spend their summer getting involved in magic...”
- [Henrico School District](#) (Virginia): “Two books have been pulled from the shelves of Henrico County Public School libraries and are under review after concerns about sexual content. Currently, Henrico students can’t check out *Out of Darkness*, the story of an interracial teenage romance or *I’m a Gay Wizard*, a young adult novel about a gay wizard and magic. ...The second book *I’m a Gay Wizard*, was in one library at a high school,” explains Eileen Cox, Chief of Communications for Henrico Schools. Cox stresses the books were removed so an instructional review committee can read and consider the content. She said, “This is not a book ban, this is a requested review by an engaged parent.” The [parent formally challenged](#) *I’m a Gay Wizard* in a complaint filed with the school district. The parent objects to “very graphic detail” of a boy in the book performing oral sex on another boy character. The parent writes that the book “could drive premature sexualization” and “possibly, contribute to the development of a pornography addiction.”

## References

Figuroa, A. (2022, April). LGBTQ community, people of color in the crosshairs of banned book movement. *Kansas Reflector*.

<https://kansasreflector.com/2022/04/18/lgbtq-community-people-of-color-in-the-crosshairs-of-banned-book-movement/#:~:text=Other%20books%20that%20were%20banned.A%20Gay%20Wizard%2C%E2%80%9D%20by%20V.S.>

O'Brien, K. (2022, January). Henrico schools pull two books for review over sexual content concerns. WRIC News.

<https://www.wric.com/news/local-news/henrico-county/henrico-schools-pull-two-books-for-review-over-sexual-content-concerns/>

Staff. (2019). I'm a Gay Wizard. *Kirkus Reviews*, 87(16), N.

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