

Heartstopper (Series, Vols. 1-6) by Alice Oseman
Hachette Children's Group, 2019-Present

Reviews

- [Kirkus Reviews](#) (5 May 2020), Volume 1: Mismatched British schoolboys fumble their way toward romance. Charlie is a waifish year 10 (equivalent to ninth grade) who is popular despite some taunting and social backlash for coming out at Truham Grammar School for Boys. Year 11 schoolmate Nick is a red-blooded rugby player with a warm demeanor and hunky exterior. When the two are paired in a vertical classroom experiment, Charlie develops an immediate crush on presumably straight Nick, and Nick craves more and more time with Charlie both on campus and off. As the two veer toward a mutual romance, they individually struggle through wondering how to make it come to fruition, questioning if it's even possible, and deciding whether a first boy-boy crush is a definite proclamation of gayness. Organic frame borders and fragmented panels underscore the respective action on the spreads (sweet and tender moments, run-ins with homophobic jerks) and prevent the visual graphics from going aesthetically stale. Handwritten text reinforces the lens of humanity through which Oseman spins this to-be-continued story. Crisp, clear-cut font is reserved for tech moments when back-and-forth texting is the storytelling vehicle. Charlie and Nick appear white, and there is ethnic diversity in the supporting cast. Fans of Oseman's debut, *Solitaire* (2015), will enjoy this story that centers on protagonist Tori's younger brother, Charlie; however, this volume stands alone and will engage readers new to her work. An adorable diary of love's gut punches. (Graphic novel. 12-16)
- [Kirkus Reviews](#) (10 November 2020), Volume 2: The sequel to *Heartstopper: Volume 1* (2020) continues Nick and Charlie's story as they discover new joys and hardships in their budding romance. Panels framed in diary pages at the beginning quickly recap the previous entry in which the British boys' relationship blossomed from a platonic friendship to something more, culminating in a kiss. But their relationship status—and how Nick, who previously identified as straight, feels about it—remained up in the air until now. This title documents how their relationship morphs into something more tangible and the issues that come along with that evolution. Nick must confront personal confusion and fear surrounding his sexuality while Charlie navigates being in a somewhat secret relationship with someone who isn't yet out of the closet. Illustrated in the same distinctive style as the first volume, the gentle blue shading and the dialogue's handwritten lettering lend a casual, human atmosphere to the story and its characters. Creative transitions from panel to panel and in the gutters of the pages shake up the layout and add artistic flair. Nick and Charlie's lighthearted and tender romance is delightful, and the genuine heart present in the characters makes for a wholesome and uplifting ride. Nick and Charlie appear White; there is some racial diversity among side characters along with positive representation of a trans character. Incredibly lovable from start to finish. (Graphic romance. 12-18)
- [Publishers Weekly](#) (n.d.), Volume 1: When lanky, openly gay Charlie Spring, 14, is seated next to burly rugby lad Nick Nelson, 16, in a new "vertical class group" at their English all-boys school, they form a friendship that appears unlikely to those around them, quickly

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becoming a central part of each other's lives. Charlie, having recently realized that the boy he thought might be his boyfriend is just using him for casual make-out sessions, starts falling for Nick, though it's presumed that Nick is straight. Nick, meanwhile, starts to examine how he feels about Charlie, and what that means about how he sees himself. A leisurely pace and focus on everyday events—school, sports, hangouts—allows the characters' relationship to develop in a natural, relatable way. Art by Oseman is loosely drawn in black, white, and a cool gray-green that fits the story's quiet, casual vibe; facial expressions, particularly Nick's, effectively communicate what the characters find difficult to say. While the familiar-feeling school romance doesn't break new ground, it does deliver a warm, comfortable story of fledgling love starring two shippable leads who will be familiar to Oseman fans. Ages 12–up.

Awards

- [Best Graphic Novels & Comics, Goodreads Choice Awards, 2020 \(Vol. 3\)](#)
- [Best Graphic Novels & Comics, Goodreads Choice Awards, 2022 \(Vol. 4\)](#)
- [Children's Illustrated Book of the Year Nominee, British Book Awards, 2022 \(Vol. 4\)](#)
- [Readers' Choice, Books Are My Bag Awards, 2022 \(All Vols.\)](#)
- [Massachusetts Teen Choice Book Award, 2022 \(Vol. 1\)](#)
- [Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards Nominee for Best Publication for Teens, 2023 \(Vol. 4\)](#)
- [The British Book Awards Shortlist, Book of the Year-Children's Illustrated, 2024 \(Vol. 5\)](#)
- [She Reads Best of Award for Graphic Novel or Memoir, 2023, \(Vol. 5\)](#)

Lists

- [New York Times Bestsellers List, Graphic Books and Manga, June 2022: Vol. 1 \(#2\), Vol. 2 \(#3\), Vol. 3 \(#6\), Vol. 4 \(#5\)](#)
- [New York Times Bestsellers List, Graphic Books and Manga, September 2023: Vol. 1 \(#2\), Vol. 2 \(#5\), Vol. 3 \(#6\), Vol. 4 \(#8\)](#)

Response to challenges

- [Columbia, Mississippi - 18 August, 2023](#): “ ‘Whenever I was in school, I only knew a couple of people at my school who were gay and all of them were scared to be open about it, scared to even say anything because they were afraid of being harassed, afraid of people attacking them,’ [a high school student] told the Mississippi Free Press. ‘ ... Having nothing and having just completely no representation is what made me feel afraid and made me scared. Not knowing whether someone would hurt me if I told them I was gay—people did try to whenever I did. And that made me afraid to even just exist, even with having her supporting me,’ they continued, gesturing to their mother. “ ‘I can’t even imagine what it’s like to have (a parent) who doesn’t, where something like a book, something that simple is enough to make them feel OK.’ ”

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- [Mainville, Ohio - 2 September, 2023](#): "All students, no matter their background, sexual orientation, or gender identity deserve to feel safe and welcomed in schools, libraries, and bookshops alike. Banning books because they contain LGBTQ+ content is a shameful attempt to silence LGBTQ+ stories. The dangerous practice of banning books is not new and has always been used by those who want to stunt progress, sow fear and division, and hide important truths. The Human Rights Campaign will always fight to ensure students have access to books that broaden their perspectives, help them learn and grow, and allow them to see themselves in literature and society."
- [Little Miami, Ohio - 26 September, 2023](#): "'I've just been flabbergasted at this entire situation," said Vanessa Srikantham, 39, the mother of a second grader. 'Censorship and book banning: If you want to get me riled up and cranky, that's the best place you can possibly start.' Srikantham said she made a point to read the book once fellow parents flagged it as potentially inappropriate. She said she found the work 'amazing.' 'There's healthy relationship dynamics in this book between peers and authority figures,' Srikantham said. 'There's bullying and how to stand up to bullies and how to help others stand up to bullies. There's stories in this book about positive role models and, yes, there's also a boy falling in love with a boy.'"
- [Clay County, Florida - 27 May, 2023](#): "Responding to the *Heartstopper* ban, Alice Oseman decried the growing number of book bans as thinly-veiled homophobia. 'Racism, homophobia and transphobia are thriving under the guise of 'concern for children'. This is not just a US issue either,' Oseman warned. 'We're seeing the exact same 'concern' here in the UK.' She also shared a statement by the Florida Freedom to Read Project, with the quote: 'Indoctrination happens when you remove access to ideas.'"
- [Llano County, Texas - 2 April, 2023](#): "US District Judge Robert Pitman said in his order, 'Although libraries are afforded great discretion for their selection and acquisition decisions, the First Amendment prohibits the removal of books from libraries based on either viewpoint or content discrimination.' 'This is a ringing victory for democracy,' said Ellen Leonida, an attorney representing the plaintiffs in the Texas case. 'The government cannot tell citizens what they can or can't read. Our nation was founded on the free exchange of ideas, and banning books you disagree with is a direct attack on our most basic liberties.' 'Whether or not the books in fact qualified for 'weeding' under the library's existing policies, there is no real question that the targeted review was directly prompted by complaints from patrons and county officials over the contents of these titles," the judge wrote in his order. 'And, notably, there is no evidence that any of the books were slated to be reviewed for weeding prior to the receipt of these complaints; to the contrary, many other books eligible for weeding based on the same factors appear to have remained on the shelves for many years,' he said."

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