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SPEAKERS

Gaby Gomez, Megan Haught



Megan Haught 00:00

So welcome to the first event for UCF Celebrates Diversity at UCF Libraries for 2021. We always have a lot of fun with these events, and we've got them spread out over the month of October. Our fantastic Library Technical Assistant from Downtown Campus Gaby Gomez will be doing our presentation on diversity in comics today. Some additional housekeeping that if you have any questions, you can either put them in the chat or raise your hand and I'll ask you to unmute to ask the question. You can ask questions as you go or save them for the end of the presentation either is fine. And Gaby, are you ready to take it away?



Gaby Gomez 00:41

Okay, thank you. Hi, everyone. My name is Gaby. And as Megan say, I work as a Library Technical Assistant in Downtown campus. And today I'm going to present to you Diversity in Comics. So diversity, it's about all of us and about us having to figure out how to walk through this world together. These are quote for Jacqueline Woodson. And the reason that I chose this specific quote is because the comics that I'm about to show you, it's pretty much it, how to figure out how to live in this world. I'm going to start with a definition of diversity. It refers to the existence of variation of different characteristics in a group of people. So these characteristics could be everything that make us unique, such as our cognitive skills and personality traits, along with the things that shape our identity like race, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or cultural background in other examples, I'm going to start talking about through our first comic, first comic that I want to show you. So this is the examples of diversity. We're gonna I want to start with this one. This one is called the Cursed Princess Club. So I'm going to be showing you either electronic webtoons from the WEBTOONS page, and also physical books that you can find in UCF Libraries. This one as I said before, it's a webtoon and what I like about this one it's, I don't want to say they have disabilities because they've been cursed just like you know the tales that we hear when we were kids that for example Rapunzel or Sleeping Beauty that she got cursed sleeping, get the kiss from the prince she recovered and stuff like that. Well this one is something related to that. But it's going to be more more funny every time that I encountered, read this one I always laughing everybody looked at me like why are you laughing so hard because this one is super, super fun. So I'm gonna show you this this

is when Gwendolyn and you can read the description on the presentation but I'm going to tell you how I see this comic so again, if you see the picture Gwendolyn is going to be the one that is at the top of the people pyramid that you see there. So she have, she live in a castle like everything fairytale, she have two sisters and one brother and all of them have different I can say powers of maybe charming. For example they don't they doesn't show here but I invite you to click the resources you can see what I'm talking about. She has two sisters one of them Maria for example. She can sing and you know like very very funny way the birds come to her and animals and stuff like that and then the other sister she can fight, in she wanna be like, you know, they want the person who's going be in charge of the army in her pastel kingdom, because they live in different kingdoms that we're going to find here the passive kingdom on the play kingdom and they are friends and then it's a lot a lot of going on. But the thing is she is facing with the fact that all the brother, the brother and sisters are beautiful and they have charming stuff and she think for now she thinks she's cursed because the way she, for the way she looks. In all these self discovery she find out this group called Cursed Princess Club, which all of them as I say before their cursed, and they have different curses. For example, if you see that the top of the people pyramid, you will see the lady who have like blue hair that she looks very old. She's actually like 16 years old, but she was caused to be to look old. And then the other one next to her to have like a ribbon, every time that she got scared, she become [Crowl?]. The lady with very, very dark eyes, actually, she doesn't have eyes, but she can see because the witch take out the eyes from her. And then the lady with the crown in yellow dress. Every time that she say a lie, her nose began to grow like Pinocchio. And then the other lady, she, she basically cannot eat or anything because her mouth, it's, um, it's sewed. And then we have the press, which is Calpernia, the president of the Princess Club. And then every time that she has her period, she become like a biggest spider and she lose her conscience and then she will eat whatever. But it is sounds like really awful. But in the way they show you the story and how they got to that specific curse. It's heartbreaking, but at the same time, it's really funny. So that's why I'm very passionate about this one. And that's why I invite you to read it, I promise you, you won't regret. You will laugh a lot in your heart gonna be breaking a lot too. So I'm going to go to the next one. So this one, actually, you can find it at UCF Library in CMC. The name is I Was Their American Dream. I will show you here where you can find it. I Was Their American Dream, it's basically like a self memory from my Malaka. I still have problems pronounce the name. But basically, she, it's a daughter from a mother who is Filipino, and a father who come from Egypt. When they, I mean, the mother and the father come to America for different reasons, they met each other, and they have her and she basically have to leave in America with different ethnicals and culture difference between families in also, she has to deal with that at school when she was a child, during her teenager time, during also the adulthood. So I want to - I take some notes notes every time I read these stories and I want to share with you. So for for this one in a specific in the book, she have different minigames that you can make during the story also stuff like, stuff that you can read, cut and paste stuff like that, or something that you can write on the page that they give it to you to do so they have like many activities that you can do during the reading. So she has struggles about feeling with others. Again, because she feels like she wants to be very, very, very American very, very with white people in and every time that she wants to approach somebody, they reject her for how she you know for her identity. Even Filipino people kind of don't want to hang out with her because she doesn't look completely Filipino and then when she tried to hang out with other people do you know when it's cool, they have their own group of friends that she did, she didn't belong with any at the end. She when she is growing she will find out other encounters that are going to talk in a bit. But I encountered too that I, me as my personal experience. I have some familiar with her about being an immigrant, like missing your food or missing your people because at one point on the story, she moved to another state move to Washington, DC. And then now it's when she's gonna start feel around like, Oh, I miss

my parents, I miss my food, food that she hates before now she craves them because she basically changed everything and now again, she's missing a lot of stuff. Also, another thing that I figured out is like, she struggled with her accents, because her accent is very Filipino English. And also some stuff that myself, me personally struggled too. Eh. She has also issues trying to follow in two different religions, because her Filipino family is Christian and her father who is from Egypt, he's Muslim. So both families trying to force her to follow both religions with sometimes they have some difference. And then sometimes she doesn't know what to do with that. At the end of the day, she keeps the Christianity, but she respects a lot the Muslim. Also, her parents forced to live their dreams through her, or through their children's, that's what they say, was the American dream, because they, they want to basically anything that they didn't achieve. Being United States, they want her to do that, even when she had other plans. Also, a lot of struggling with money as an immigrant, they have to deal with a lot of money situation during her life. But at the end of this, I want to say that she embraces her uniqueness and at the end of the story. Enjoy herself as who, she is, even when I tell you all this, I'm pretty sure that if you read it, you're gonna, you're gonna find more stuff, though, in this story that you will like. And again, I really recommend the story. The story is very, very beautiful, is heartbreaking, but it's beautiful. So I'm going to go to the next one. This one is from the WEBTOONS, it's a again, webtoon comic, it's called Fluidum. And this one, I like it. And I want to show it here because it talks about a lot of diversity, I'm gonna tell you why. In this world, every person who is born with both bodies, male and female, and they have their bodies till the age of 21. At the age of 21, they have to choose which body they want to live with, if they want to be a male body or female body. And then in a good thing about this story is they show you a lot of diverse people, not only with skin color, or religion and stuff like that, but more like, for me, I encounter that these people are very unique, like they dress as a female in a male body, they dress like a man in a female body like is very ambiguous. And part of the story is, Jessie, she didn't want to change, she didn't want to choose none of her body after, after 21. She wants to keep both bodies, which society would like is not good. You know, we always gonna, I'm sorry. We're gonna always want to find stuff with society, not safe, not upsetting stuff. Well, in this one, they are trying to figure out how they can keep both bodies after 21. Another thing when I was reading this, and I thought it was very interesting. It's if you're in one of the body, because you can change as many times you want. If you see the story, when you are in your female body, your male body will follow you around like nah, transparent way, like an hologram way. And one of the people in the story, she had an accident and die. She basically didn't die because the other body die and she come back to the body that had left. So she have before 21, she had to stay in the female body because the other one died in a car accident. So they also tried to do this to get a longer life. So it's kind of right now it's only one season. I'm waiting for season two to come out, but right now I'm in the way to figure out how they can keep both bodies because they've been science and people studying it, but they destroy, you know, all that kind of stuff that happened in this story. So that's why I think this is one a very, very good story. I'm gonna go now with I am Alfonso Jones. This one, you can find it at UCF Library, there is the link to check it out, the book. This is very, very beautiful, and heartbreaking story. I'm gonna tell you a little bit how it's happening at the beginning had to reread two times, because the story it come back and forth, like a lot of flashback a little was happening reality. But when you get, you know, when you get the time and you when you get it, you do love it. So basically, this is Alfonso Jones, he saw her mother is Puerto Rican, her father is African American. So basically, when her mother was pregnant, he was charged for a crime that he didn't commit. Alfonso is 15 years old. When they figured out her father was the one could commit that crime. And he was about to get out of jail to finally meet his son in person, because they see each other through the window one or two times in Alfonso's life. And then when he invites her best friend to buy some suit, so he can see his father, he was shot by a police, everything happened, like oh, this story happened after he got

shoot by the police. They feel they have a gun, but in reality have a hanger that he was taking when he was trying the, the suits. So we gonna encounter here like that of teenagers year and also in a part of the book they will talk about, but the way they explained it was kind of difficult for me to understand. But also they talk about a person who suicide they don't I don't know who was the person suicide, but they mentioned something like that. So Alfonso Jones, portrays the issue of police violence against people of color. And also, as I say, for he was shot while holding a coat hanger. A lady thought he had a gun. And they didn't ask they just shoot. This is not a real story. Just, just to let you know that is that not, didn't happen in real. Also, when all these things happen, Alfonso was a really good kid, he was in a nice school, he was playing a role in theater at his school, he play instruments, he was a really good boy, he worked to save enough money to see his pare..., his father in jail, he was in another state from where he live. The thing is, when all this happened when Alfonso got shot and everything, media, defame him like making, he was like in a kind of gang or he was somebody bad, which, who ever know obviously in the universe who are know, he will know that it's not like that. So you will see here, a lot of you know, a lot of fighting for people of color rights, and all that kind of stuff. And also he become a ghost. So he basically see everything that is happening after he died. Like what happened with in his funeral what happened with her mom, with his mom, what happened with, with his best friend who he also was in love with, he got in this train, which is a train of people who die by a police murder or any kind of unfair murder, and they didn't find justice. So I can figure it out that's kind of like a limbo where he live in right now. And they supposed to get out of the train at the moment they find justice when they're dead where you know, was solved or get any kind of sense of justice. So they call ancestors and he was able to talk with different people and you will see different stories about how they can kill. As a reader, you will have to see how his mom is suffering. She also, when I say before, he was in a really good school, because her mom did everything that she can change schools to prevent something like this. Also, in the in the story, you will see his grandfather talking to him about how he can add what a police approached him to prevent what happened to him, I'm not going to tell you what happened next. I invite you to read it. Also, you will see another thing where, like, they cover so many topics in this in this graphic novel that I don't know if we're gonna have time to cover all these but you will see reports of people fighting for rights, you will see even how police treat school shooter who is white, and you compare how they treat Alfonso who didn't have nothing, I'm gonna, again, invite you to read it. I know it's a lot. For me reading this book was a lot to handle, I but I definitely love it, and open my eyes for, in different, in different topics. I'm gonna go to the next one. So this one, it's called Language Barrier. That is also a webtoon that you can find. This is a story about two people. Her name is Dunia. And then basically she left her homeland in search of opportunity. So she she moved to UK. And now she met what they call at work Psyduck. And then the thing is, she's coming from a Latin American country, they never specify which countries, she have very little English, but they know each other, they know each other at work. Basically, they both like each other, but they don't know how to communicate. So they're using friends as translators, basically, it is a very funny story. And you will see a lot of diverse, diversity in this comic. As I say, it's very short, they upload a chapter like once a month, and it have like 15 chapters, but right now, basically is that they try to communicate each other. Again, the language barrier, might cause, that they think differently, like of what they feel in for example, Dunia thinks that Psyduck doesn't like, like her back, because the language stuff and he things to say about Dunia that she she doesn't like him because they can't communicate. So this is in progress comic. And I cannot give you more information about it. Because as I say they they upload chapters, every once a month or something like that, but it's a really nice, cute story. And then again, to let you know that language barrier, it's something that it's real. So that's why I want to show this one specifically. I'm going to go through the next one, which is called Are You Listening? Again, this one, you can find it at UCF Libraries. The trigger warning about this is we're going to talk about somebody who lose

someone she love. And also we're going to talk about abuse. So So 18 years old, Bea runs away from home without a plan except for escaping. And then it's where she cross paths with Lou. Lou is a 27 years old. And she is running away for the time not running away, like never come back. But she's just trying to run away for a little too. You know, to clear her mind. She lost her mother. She missed her a lot. They were very very very loving to each other they were bond together. Bea start, you know, the life and how the story ends. They ended up traveling together. Lou wants to be treated, I think his grandmother, Bea as again, as I say she doesn't have any, any, any destination she just wants to run away. Both have really really really hard time trying to, you know, express and communicate to each other because since both had their own traumas. But they found this cafe called Diamond. And then after they found the cat, they have something to do they say we're going to return this cat where she live. So in that journey, they encountered these bad people trying to steal the cat. Which I think that will be like metaphorical, like the cat, maybe it represents the hope that they still have, in the bad police people that you will see it's like the demons and traumas are one try to take away the hope that they have. So obviously during the way, they will start knowing each other, and they both know that both are gay. This is not a love story just in case. But you will see a lot of stuff happening on the way in then there is a lot of magic involved. Like every time they try to run away, you will see the beautiful art in the book and the path to start taking weird shapes. To do this short, they can basically with their own feelings, they can control how the paths go, the paths what I'm talking about, basically, the paths were they driving, because we're going to see a lot of these bad police people chasing them to get the cat. Again, during these encounters. Lou talks about how she missed her mother, and how she's trying to cope with her loss. And then Bea opens to her in tell her how her cousin, it's been abusing her for years. And how the parents didn't do nothing about it. So that's why she decided to escape. At the end of the journey. I know that till the end, when they figured out what to do. It was for me a beautiful story. At least for me, put me in tears because I for everything that you have to see in the art, in the the story, it's very, very heartbreaking. I invite you to read that there is a goodreads.com they have the reviews over there in here, again, there is a link to go through the library website. So you can ask for the book. Or now the next one we're gonna talk, it's called Muted. This is also where a lot of magic and different families, you will see different ethnicities in this webtoon that you can find, again in the WEBTOON.com. So basically, here, it's like, let me try to put in a way that because it's a lot, I tried to summarize everything. So they have different families with different type of magic. She is in the family Severin with the kind of magic they use is blood. And they have other ones like people who use plants or use animals and stuff like that. They have similar every family, they look alike. For example, the Severin family, you will see their white with brown hair. And then you will see other families that I don't remember right now the last names but you will see family there. They look like red hair and white skin or maybe dark skinned with with red hair. You'll see like African American families who are in charge to the other families. And then the thing is, they never can be married to each other. So like Severin family only can marry with Severin families and stuff like that because they cannot combine magic. So what happened here in the reason that Camille have red hair instead of brown is her mother fell in love with other family members, like another family member that is not Severin. And they have two childrens with both magic combined. And that's the reason to be muted every time that they have like a child with two different families that have to be muted because they don't know how to control each magic because it's magic is so pure that they don't know how to deal with that. So this is the first time that they encounter that Camille has both magics and they're trying to figure right now they're trying to figure out a way that she can just control one of the magics because they don't want to be muted because she's already too old to be muted. They supposed to be muted were they are children. Also we're gonna see since I told you we're going to have find different ethnicities here. We're also going to encounter several sexual orientations for example, Camille is gay, and you also want to find

here people that it's asexual so that they know they don't have to have any interaction with other people, they are fine by themselves. And you're going to have different different people here that they're going to talk about. Even you're going to see demons, but they are not bad. They just another kind of race, but they don't necessarily bad here. And I invite you again to read it because it's something that you might like. And I'm going to go to the next one, which is Nancy Drew in The Palace of Wisdom. You can find it at UCF Libraries. It's the Nancy Drew. As I know, they have different Nancy Drews from the 50s. They have different story, but basically, she solve crimes. And she's very smart, she have a group of friends, I really try to read this one. But it doesn't click to me. So I'm just gonna talk about different reviews that I have, from this comic in particular, I like the beginning, I like that the beginning start like somebody is training her because for some reason they blaming her mother died because of her. But then it's just lost me, I couldn't go and I don't want to force myself to read something that I don't feel attracted. But I'm reading really excellent reviews about this comic specifically. One of the things I'm going to go my review, the thing that I like about this one, and the reason I want to show here is because obviously, all her friends are they have different, you know, characteristics, ethnicities, even sexual orientations, you will see queer people here. And then you will see people with different shape of body, color, hairstyle, etc. So that's one of the main reasons I invite you to read it. Also, this is basically a graphic novel adaptation for Nancy Drew, and people like the, the fact that I'm saying this is because a lot of the reviews I got from Nancy Drew was about how they put all these diverse characters in this comic book. So I invite you to read it, probably you will like it. I think they art, it's beautiful, and we're going to go to the next one. So this one is a webtoon called Suitor Armor. And the reason I put here, it's because, again, the diversity in characters. Here, we not only talk about humans, we also talk about fairies. So fairies and humans live in this universe. But for for some reason humans are afraid of the power of the fairies. So this is this war happening, or they think that's happening 100 years ago and still happening on the present. Sorry. So in one of these worlds, the king of the human part brought Lucia. And she is a fairy. But he may have hide what she was. During her entire life, she just serve as Lady in one, in waiting for the king's daughter. So everything started normal, like she just have a normal life, the human war. Again, she has to hide. That's why she have a lot of hair covering her ears. And then she had to use corset, so she can hide her wings and stuff like that. And then she found she met Modeus, which is the knight armor that you see there. Right now in the part of the story, we didn't know yet how he was created. But he was created from human magician. And basically he's an armor who have magic on it. And he can fight against fairies. But in a way you will figure it out that he have a personality that he can talk. And it's obviously that Lucia and Modeus are in love. But they have to deal with all that situation about like, Okay, you're a fairy and I'm designed to kill a fairy and how other humans treat fairies. So from the fairies, come the elf, the elf are people are fairies that they've been forced to cut their wings. When they cut the wings that power is gone. So they're just people without powers. So they've been forced to be slaves. And you will see a lot of stuff happening here. Also, you will see how she grow as a character, like how she wants to hide at the beginning, in the now she wants to do something for her people. So again, I invite you the first season is over. And we're waiting for the second season. It's a very, very beautiful story, not only art, but in the context of the story, characters, you will see also queer people here. Again, I invite you to read it i i, I know you will do like it. And I am going to talk the last book, which is called Meg Jo, Beth, and Amy. You can find it at UCF Library. And basically this is version of Little Women, but in a very, very modern version of it. To start saying that, well, the four sisters struggle with mother, with mothers situations. Meg is the oldest one and she's the biological daughter of Dad. I don't remember may be mentioned Mom and Dad names in this book. Also, Jo, it's the biological daughter of mom. And then we have Beth and Amy, both are biological daughters from both Mom and Dad. So basically, Dad was in the army. And then he was married with Meg's mom, she passed away. And then years later, she found mom, which is Jo's

mom. And then she was married, she didn't what she wasn't married, she was in love with the high school sweetheart. And then when she got pregnant, that Jo's dad left. So when they know each other, they knew they have daughters and then they get marry. They have Beth and Amy. So everything start just like Little Wom[e]n that is in war and starting Christmas. But now we figured out they have other things different other the first version, for example, Meg wanted to be like a fashionist, Vogue magazine internship. Jo wants to be a novelist. Beth wants to be a [unsure], she wants to be like a songwriter, because she was she was too shy, to sing in front of people. And then Amy was very creative. She was a artist, she she wants to be like an art. She wants to go to art school and all that kind of stuff. But are they struggling with money issues. So eventually, we're gonna see other characters. And we see Jo struggling with something. And when you keep reading about, you will see that she's struggling with something every time that she put something in her diary to try to do this short. They obviously struggled with money. So they had to have several jobs to keep it up. Mom taking different jobs. And in one moment, her, their dad got injury in war. He lost a leg. At the same time, Beth got leukemia, so they had to deal with all these as a family together. At the end, Jo came out as gay. But then you have to read it because they each so much happening in in one year. So basically what I want to say about this is, since everything happened, a lot of stuff happening here, what they wanted to be at the beginning. It's not the same thing that they wanted to be at the end. So basically we'll see how all these characters get more mature and get more used to their reality instead of the stuff that they think before. And again, I invite you to read it, I think is one of the fav, I basically this one, this was my favorite of all the books I read, but I have so much in my mind that I tried to explain but believe me, it's It's worth to read it. So thanks very much to hear all I have to say. And then now I think we have time for some questions and answers, if you have any.

M Megan Haught 40:15

And if you, for asking questions, you can either put the question in the chat or raise your hand and I'll ask you to unmute. Since we're a smaller group, actually, if you just want to unmute to ask questions, that would be perfectly fine with us. If you are unfamiliar with our Curriculum Materials Center, which we've mentioned a few times, it is another subsection of the UCF Libraries. It's in the Education Complex on the main campus here in Orlando, and it is next to the bus loop is probably the easiest way to find it when you're driving onto campus. So does anyone have any questions they might like to ask about some of the comics, we've discussed some of the offerings we have within the Libraries. Thank you, Robin. Robin says, Thanks, Gaby, that was interesting and informative.

G Gaby Gomez 41:05

Thank you. I'm glad you like it. So I think we don't have any more questions.

M Megan Haught 41:10

And Robin gives a thumbs up. Gaby, when you were searching for comics from the Libraries?

G Gaby Gomez 41:18

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M Megan Haught 41:18

What were you finding for like what we have on our collection? Do we have a broad range of topics and categories?

G Gaby Gomez 41:25

Yes.

M Megan Haught 41:25

Diverse representation for main characters?

G Gaby Gomez 41:29

Yes, you have tons. That means I want to keep showing the comic books I did last year. I want to integrate both. So there is more options for people to read. But yes, you have you have tons of you have very good collection of comic books. Yeah.

M Megan Haught 41:49

And if you're on campuses other than the main campus, you can always request to have the graphic novel sent to the campus location where you're at, if you're, for example, Downtown, on the Rosen campus, one of our State College partner campuses, such as Cocoa and Palm Bay, Valencia campuses, we have library partnerships there where you can have books sent to pick up as well. Are there any questions from the group? Any reading suggestions you might want to make if you have a favorite comic with diverse represented, representation of topics or characters? Alright, it looks like we don't have any comments or questions from the group. Gaby, do you want to move on to the next slide?

G Gaby Gomez 42:39

Yeah, that's all I have.

M Megan Haught 42:43

And then the slide we have after this has the information for our Diversity Week LibGuide where it has all the rest of the events for the month here. With UCF Libraries, we have four other events coming up, including Crochet with Gaby on Thursday. It's a virtual crochet lesson for a beginner project, it's still time to sign up for that. Next week, we have our Open Heart Open Mic and our Color Your Story bookend decorating where it's going to be both on the

Downtown campus and outside the John C. Hitt Library where students and community members will have the opportunity to decorate their own bookends with paint pens, permanent markers and doing decoupage using dust jackets. The week after that we have our Graphic Novel Book Club, which is being led by Gaby and participants will be discussing the graphic novel version of Octavia Butler's Kindred. And when you sign up for the session, the confirmation email has the link to a unlimited use ebook through UCF Libraries'. The link at the bottom is our STARS archives. So if you want to see, this is where all the videos from this year will be posted. And we have videos from previous years as well. Thank everyone for joining us today. This is fantastic, be able to see everyone and to be able to discuss these topics. Thank you Gaby for a great presentation.



Gaby Gomez 44:21

Thank you opportunity.