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Dear reader,

Welcome to the September issue of the Queer Youth Assemble monthly zine! This month we focused on the feelings that come with the end of summer and going back to school. Sending love and support to all queer and trans students. Inside, you will find beautiful pieces of art, writing, and poetry created by Queer Youth Assemble members. We acknowledge the intersecting elements found within the content of this zine, and encourage you to read with both compassion and understanding.

Due to our strong belief in uncensored creativity, we decided to not put content limits on our creators for this publication. However, we understand that some of the content within this zine may be triggering to some readers. In this and future QYA zines, a list of specific triggers can be found at the top of each page, and any potentially triggering themes can be found at the beginning of each zine. There are no potentially triggering themes listed for this issue. If you find yourself struggling after reading, we encourage you to reach out for support.

We hope you enjoy this publication, and are inspired to create whatever your heart desires.

With love and care,

Esmée Silverman (she/they)  
Queer Youth Assemble Co-Founder

August Doherty Mead (they/them)  
Queer Youth Assemble Writing Team Lead



# What is QYA?

Queer Youth Assemble is a non-profit youth-led organization dedicated to serving queer youth across the United States and its territories. We are committed to nurturing the joy, interests, and talents of queer youth, and giving queer youth the resources and support to create positive change within their communities. We envision a day where all queer youth are happy, supported, and able to reach their fullest potential.



# More Harm Than Help

## My Experience with Accommodations

by Scarlet

As a neurodivergent student, I have often been treated differently, and not in a positive way. For as long as I can remember, I was constantly singled out from my classmates in school. Teachers would be overly 'understanding' or overly harsh, and the other students caught onto this odd treatment. It affected my friendships and social life at school. This was made worse by the accommodations the school provided for my ADHD, without my input or consent. While I was diagnosed at the very beginning of elementary school and can understand to some extent why I was not involved in these decisions at the time, this treatment continued until the end of middle school. The accommodations further singled me out from other students and made me dread coming to school, while not assisting at all with my ability to focus in class or other things they were apparently trying to help with.

Some of these accommodations included, at one point, being forced to use a different chair from the rest of my classmates; a ball chair. A few of my classmates always wanted to be able to use it and got upset when my teachers wouldn't allow them to, while others would take the chair with mean intent so I had nowhere to sit. Not only that, but I was required to bring the chair with me between classes and at some times to and from school, singling me out even in the hallways. I hated it, but my protests were ignored.

Another thing that stands out in my memory was the year the school administration decided I wasn't getting along with some of my classmates well enough, because they had chosen to harass me and say negative things to me. Instead of trying to resolve the issue through reprimanding them or 'talking it out', the students bothering me received no punishment at all, and I was forced to leave during class and miss valuable education time to attend a special speech class to *learn how to get along with others*. This solved nothing, and only made the harassment worse. My complaints continued to be ignored. I learned nothing from the speech class and in fact I believe it had a negative impact on my social interactions.

It was infuriatingly frustrating to have no say in these things, which were having an enormous impact on my education and social life. It was only when I became a high school student that I was finally allowed to control my own accommodations and remove the ones I didn't need, which was almost all of them. I am glad to no longer be trapped in that situation, but I worry that younger students may be experiencing the same thing, and I think that the system needs a lot of improvement. Accommodations are intended to be helpful to neurodivergent students, but in some cases they are doing the opposite. Since I'm planning on becoming a teacher in the future, I feel that this issue will definitely be one I want to help address.



# Our World

by Avery Barry (she/they)

In July, I went to a summer camp for a little under a week. During that time, there wasn't much access to technology, so we spent a fair amount of time outside. This week made me feel more connected than ever to the environment. The environment has always been the thing that fascinates and amazes me more than anything, but with how busy life can be, there aren't many chances for me to get out into it for a long time like this. While I didn't get any pictures of it, I climbed to the top of the hill in the second picture with a group, and honestly felt more amazed than I have in a very long time. Seeing just what's around us is a feeling that really can't be replicated, and one I hope that everyone can experience at least once. Something I don't see talked about enough is how the people and organizations that destroy the environment are the same ones that also are actively racist, homophobic, and transphobic. Environmental activism is deeply linked to racial justice and queer activism. There isn't enough time to go over everything in this one piece, so I highly suggest that you all take some time to look into this separately!

Here are some articles and resources that go a little more in-depth:

1. <https://utsvertigo.com.au/discover/the-intersection-of-queerness-and-environmental-activism>
2. <https://www.greenmatters.com/p/intersectional-environmental-activism>
3. <https://queerecology.org>

Image Description (right): A photograph of a large hill surrounded by trees and greenery. In the foreground is a cracked road with sand and grass to the right side. The sky is cloudless and birds can be seen flying and sitting on the telephone wire that sweeps through the image.



Image Description (left): A photograph of a sign that reads "area closed, threatened birds nesting", and other information regarding the off-limits conservation site. The background depicts tall, green grass and houses on a hill in the distance.

8:00 AM



EVERY  
MORNING,  
BEFORE I GO  
TO SCHOOL, I  
BREATHE.

I BREATHE  
BECAUSE EVERY  
MORNING I PULL  
MYSELF APART



EVERY MORNING  
I LEAVE HIM AT  
THE DOOR.



**...BUT PIECING MYSELF BACK TOGETHER  
AT THE END OF THE DAY IS HARD- AND  
AFTER DOING IT DAY AFTER DAY...  
SOMETIMES THE PIECES DON'T FIT  
TOGETHER ANYMORE.**



**ONLY TO WAKE UP TO ANOTHER  
8AM.**

Image Description: Panel one depicts a teenager breathing in and out, surrounded by a purple aura. Panel two depicts a silhouette of a person splitting themselves in two. The part of the silhouette that is whole has a purple aura, and the two halves that are splitting have pink and blue auras, respectively. Panel three depicts a version of the teenager, dressed in pink and wearing pigtails, walking into school, while another version of them, dressed in blue, watches from a distance. Panel four depicts the pink and blues silhouettes on their knees, embracing each other. Where their bodies meet, their auras turn purple.

There is a light pink heart between their chests.

# 8:00 AM

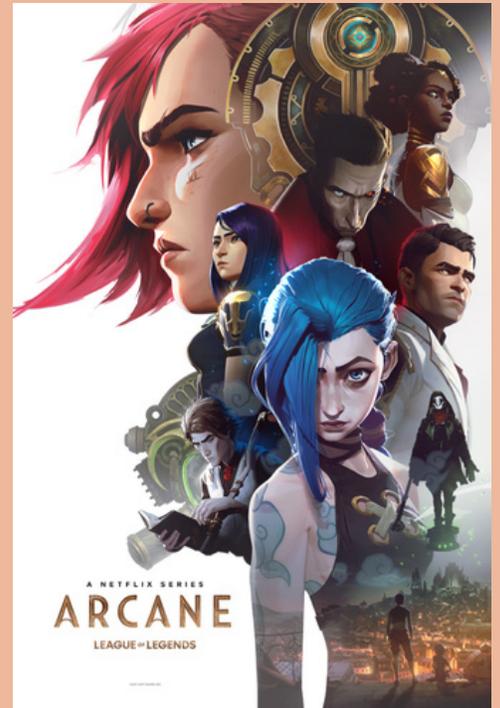
by Emma Hawthorne (they/them)

This comic is about being accepted at an all-girls school as a non-binary person, and being forced back into a binary; being constrained. *"You are welcome as a nonbinary person! We want you here just as you are!... as long as you're not too masculine. As long as we can still see you as a girl."* Because of my experience at this school, I no longer feel comfortable with the label "non-binary." I used that label to free myself of gender constraints. To let myself exist without expectations. But this school, this administration, has pushed the very expectations I fought so hard to leave behind back onto me. Even as a naturally feminine person, I am rapidly losing my comfort with my femininity. I have had to latch onto masculinity and define my transness through that. And yet, the more masculine my identity gets, something that has happened as a result of this school, the more and more trapped I have felt because of my inability to express myself as my true gender. I can't use my real name. I can't use my real pronouns. I can't dress too masculinely. I can't do voice therapy. I can't medically transition. I'm stuck. I'm trapped. And all because who I am makes cis people uncomfortable. The administration has told my family that if I transition to be more masculine in any way I won't belong here. Yet the administration also tells me that I'm making things up when I tell them I don't feel welcome as my full self. The problem isn't that they're stopping me from transitioning, it's that they're stopping me from existing as I am; picking and choosing which parts of me they want to welcome.

# Arcane Review

by Noah (they/he)

Medium	TV Series
Length	Avg. 40 min./9 ep.
Seasons	Season 2 expected 2023
Rating	TV-14 (check TWs!)
Where to watch	Netflix (\$10-20/month)
Genre	Animated/Sci-Fi Fantasy
Premiere date	November 6, 2021
Rotten Tomatoes	96-100% enjoyed
My Rating	★★★★★



*Arcane* dives into the lore introduced in *League of Legends* (LoL), a multiplayer fighting video game made by Riot Games. It features a colorful cast of characters, most notably Powder (AKA Jinx) and Jayce, two people from two opposing nations with wildly different upbringings. The show starts off with a flashback of Powder and her sister Vi as children, before returning to the present day and introducing the rest of the characters. The conflict between the lands of Zaun and Piltover are also introduced—Zaun, quite literally underneath Piltover, is smothered by the factories that create goods for the latter "city of enlightenment." Piltover wants Zaun to stay out of the way, while Zaun wants the same opportunities (and life expectancy) of those above.

The show features many high-paced pop songs including "Enemy" by Imagine Dragons & J.I.D. It meshes well with the many fight scenes throughout the show, but *Arcane* also has its quiet moments—scenes of calmness, grief, or reflection. Worldbuilding is prevalent throughout the show, which may

make it hard to get into at first—but it's highly worth it. Seeing your favorite characters going through various trials in a world out to get them makes *Arcane* all the more heart-wrenching and all the more enjoyable. On top of that, the art style of the show is exquisite. So much detail is expressed in each character's face, slightly exaggerated in a way that make their pain (and triumphs) realistic and almost personal.

*Arcane* does a great job of subverting tropes and expectations. Jinx, who can come across as another “manic pixie dream girl” in the *LoL* game, was given more depth and personality in the show—her character is fleshed out and actual reasoning is given for some of her design choices, rather than just making her appealing to a male audience. Contrast between the lower and upper class is one of the central themes of the show, and equality/the fight for fair treatment of those from Zaun is a recurring plot point. There is a canonically Sapphic relationship, a disabled main character, and WOC in positions of power. *Arcane* was a refreshing take on dystopian/utopian sci-fi and fantasy, tackling real social issues while also making marginalized characters leaders, pioneers, and visionaries.

I've given *Arcane* a 5/5 stars; as mentioned above, it is admittedly hard to get into at first, but I found the show picks up a lot starting in episode 2. After that, the show is a masterpiece. From character development, to the art style, to the worldbuilding and storyline, there is so much to love and I highly anticipate the arrival of season 2. I strongly recommend reading the trigger warnings below, and then giving the show a shot!

### **Trigger Warnings:**

Throughout the show, there are lots of scenes with blood/violence/death/intense situations—everything is animated and not that realistic, but if this does make you queasy, keep in mind that this is prevalent in every episode. There are also some sexual references and one sex scene (see chart for more detail) throughout the series, plus swears/foul language. The other main trigger warnings include trauma, addiction, abuse, and hopelessness; a more detailed list of warnings can be found in [this document](#).

by Jasper (they/them)



Image Description (left):  
A photograph of a puddle on the concrete, seeping onto the nearby grass and moss. Mud is starting to form. The blue sky and white clouds are reflected in the water.

Image Description (right):  
A photograph of a dark wood surface in dim light outdoors. The light (unseen) reflects off of the smooth wood. The foreground and background are out of focus.



Image Description (left):  
A photograph of a calico cat laying on what appears to be a window sill. The cat is looking to the left of the camera. Green leaves are seen out of focus in the foreground.

# Slouch

Cover art by Grey (they/them)



Image description: The digital drawing depicts an individual wearing a cyan t-shirt, khaki pants, indigo socks, cyan shoes, and an indigo backpack. They have dark skin and blond dreadlocks tied up in an indigo elastic. The individual is standing in profile, stepping forward with one foot raised.

# Thank you!

Stay tuned for next month's edition  
& QYA Zine announcements!

Visit us at:

Website: [queeryouthassemble.org](http://queeryouthassemble.org)

Instagram: @queeryouthassemble

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[QYA Zine Feedback Form](#)

