

ROXANE GAY

BEST-SELLING AUTHOR

b. October 15, 1974

“If people cannot be flawed in fiction, there’s no place left for us to be human.”

She is a best-selling author and the first Black woman to write for Marvel Comics.

Roxane Gay is a cultural critic and a best-selling author and editor. She has served as a contributing opinion writer for The New York Times, The Guardian, Salon, and Rumpus, and her work has appeared in countless other periodicals. She was the first Black woman to write for Marvel Comics.

Gay was born in Omaha, Nebraska, and spent her childhood summers visiting family in Haiti. At age 12, she was raped by a gang of boys.

Gay attended Phillips Exeter Academy, one of the most prestigious boarding schools in the country. She went to Yale University but dropped out at age 19, when she could no longer suppress the trauma of her early sexual assault. Her emotions began to fray, and she abruptly moved to Arizona with a man 25 years her senior.

Her parents located her, and Gay returned to Nebraska, where she earned her master’s degree. She received her Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Technical Communication from Michigan Technological University in 2010 and began teaching English at Eastern Illinois University, while working as a magazine editor. She has since held professorships at Purdue and Yale Universities.

In 2011 Gay published “Ayiti,” her first short story collection. In 2014 she published her debut novel, “An Untamed State,” and an essay collection, “Bad Feminist,” which became a New York Times best seller. From 2015 to 2018, she was a columnist for The Guardian magazine.

In 2016, with help from Yona Harvey, Gay wrote the Marvel Comic series “World of Wakanda.” A spinoff of Black Panther, the series earned praise for its LGBTQ representation.

Gay released her second short story collection, “Difficult Women,” in January 2017. It became a national best seller. Six months later, she published “Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body.” Her second New York Times best seller, the book sparked debate over fatphobia and Gay’s obesity, which she says serves as her “fortress.” She edited the anthology, “Not That Bad: Dispatches from Rape Culture,” published in 2018, which includes essays from Gay and 29 other writers.

Gay collaborated with Medium magazine to create Gay Magazine, which debuted in 2019. The same year, TKO Studios published her heist thriller, “The Banks.”

In 2021 Gay launched “The Audacity,” a newsletter and book club featuring work by underrepresented American authors. She has earned numerous awards, including the Lambda Literary Award for Excellence in Literature and the PEN Center USA Freedom to Write Award.

Gay identifies as bisexual. She is married to Debbie Millman, an artist.



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