



Luna

Julie Anne Peters

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A groundbreaking novel about a transgender teen, selected as a National Book Award Finalist!

Regan's brother Liam can't stand the person he is during the day. Like the moon from whom Liam has chosen his female name, his true self, Luna, only reveals herself at night. In the secrecy of his basement bedroom Liam transforms himself into the beautiful girl he longs to be, with help from his sister's clothes and makeup. Now, everything is about to change: Luna is preparing to emerge from her cocoon. But are Liam's family and friends ready to welcome Luna into their lives?

Compelling and provocative, this is an unforgettable novel about a transgender teen's struggle for self-identity and acceptance.

Luna Details

Date : Published February 1st 2006 by Little, Brown Books for Young Readers (first published 2004)

ISBN : 9780316011273

Author : Julie Anne Peters

Format : Paperback 248 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Lgbt, Fiction, Glbt, Queer

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From Reader Review Luna for online ebook

Sarah says

Overall I did really like this book. There were a few things that could have been better but it was good.

Firstly, I thought this book was interesting and it kept my attention throughout. This book is really simple in terms of language, story and writing style and that simplicity had its pros and cons. A pro was the fact that it was so simple that it was really easy to understand and I think that is good because younger readers can grasp everything very easily. Another pro to the simplicity was that it was a quick book to read and the last pro is that because the story was so simple, it is easy to just focus on Regan and Liam/ Regan and Luna. The biggest con for me, was the fact that the simplicity took away from deep emotional insights from Luna. I got the emotion behind why she wanted to transition but I feel like I needed more emotion and more heartbreak.

I liked the fact that it was from Regan's POV. A book from Luna's POV would have been very different (could have been worse or better). I think a perfect book would have been one with multiple POV's. I didn't particularly like Regan that much. She seemed really selfish to me but her insight gave us a view into that of a person with a transgendered sibling.

I didn't mind the representation of Luna. I know a lot of people say that it's a bad representation because not all transgender girls are like Luna but it's important to note that Peters was just giving one example of a transgender girl. If she had numerous transgendered females and they were all the same then I would have a problem with it.

The ending was a bit abrupt. I would have liked it to have been more fleshed out or something else like a prologue about what happened to Luna and Regan. A little closure would have been nice.

I would recommend this book and I would read another book by Julie Anne Peters.

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“Out of sight, out of mind. My philosophy of life in a test tube.”

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### **Alex Farrand says**

So, I bought this book when I was in college for, I believe, a book report. Yes, a book report about inequality. I think it was for a science/medical ethics class. I choose a different book and left this on my shelf to read eventually.

Well this week is the week I finally read it. Luna is about Liam, 17/18 year old male, transitioning into Luna. The book was narrated by her sister, Regan.

Well, I think this book would be perfect for 6th graders who are just really learning about their sexuality, gender roles, and who they really are. There was a lot of great vocabulary in this book, like sexism, trans/cis gender, gender roles, sexuality, and etc. The novel gave a few perfect, blatant examples that could be easily

be spotted in the real world. There were a few good concepts that were included, like how men are restrained and pressured into a box of masculinity, gender roles, and bullying and accepting people for who they, are a few.

There were some things that I just couldn't stand and bothered me. Some of the novel seemed really unrealistic for being teenagers. I know I was unpopular in high school, but raves? Super genius, but still in high school? Sketchy. I was really expecting this book to be narrated by Luna, which was a disappointment. Re, could tell that her teacher and father were being sexist, but not from the crush. Joking about sexism is still being sexist. Someone joking about it is making light of the real situation, that there are still sexist people out in the world. Sorry to be a party pooper. There was only so much I can take. I really wish Re noticed it. Going back from he to she was weird. I think the story should have been fluent with the gender preference. Maybe, the author was showing that Re wasn't completely accepting of Luna. Or the author was showing the transition. Also, someone who is transexual doesn't mean they like the opposite sex. She could have liked men or women. I would have been happier if the author brought the concept of this continual line of sexuality. I really, truly believe that there is not just gay and straight, but a whole entire middle area of I like girls a little, men a lot and so forth.

The one thing I did relate too, is what the mother was going through about being a stay at home mother, in one of Re's memories. I choose to be a stay at home mother, by the way. My daughter had some medical issues and had to go to physical therapy. It felt like my responsibility, no one else, to fix it. So, I quit. But I had the choice. You do feel trapped, and you feel like you should be doing more. Living to the American dream. Living the feminist dream. I know I am still a feminist sitting at home teaching my daughter, but it is hard knowing I am living the traditional gender role. It is kind of suffocating and sometimes you do not get that wanted appreciation like you would sometimes get at work. You don't get that good job, you did it satisfaction, instead I get NO WAY MOMMA. haha. BUT! I don't think that was a good example how transexuals feel about their gender identity. It is definitely more than that.

I like how she still followed her dream. She is heroic. There should be acceptance for being you, but sadly that isn't our world. I am glad there has been few changes in the world that are getting the spot light. Still there needs to be more. If anyone has any recommendations of any LBGTQ novels please send them my way. I would like to read more. THANKS! If some of my terminology was incorrect, please send me a message. I know things change, and I am more than willing to change words around. Also, don't hate, but accept/appreciate everyone and their ideas.

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### **Jess says**

I cried and cried while I read this book. But don't read it unless you are ready to think hard about some tough issues and stereotypes.

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### **yt\_rhi says**

THIS BOOK WAS GREAT. SUPERB, WARMING, CRY WORTHY. NOT A WASTE OF PRECIOUS TEAR DROPPING IN THIS STORY. OKAY? OKAY! So this transgender transition book was so SO just, everything. I read it over the weekend and I want to marry it and take it to Vegas. I don't even want to marry people, that's how great this book is. There better be another book, If not I will kill someone.

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### **saadia k says**

This book got under my skin in a big way.

For starters, all characters in this novel felt flat to me -- all stereotype and caricature; no real depth. In short, they were unlikable because there was nothing earnestly human about them -- their imperfections were forced rather than fluid (Regan's self-deprecation, for example) and their conflicts were heavy-handed.

Liam/Luna is portrayed as an object in this novel, nothing more, and is extreeeeeemely underdeveloped. Regan is supposed to be Luna's closest confidante and deeply connected to her in all ways -- and yet her narrative allows us little to no insight into Luna's traumas, therefore rendering said traumas to feel completely shallow and insincere. It really frustrated me to read yet another text about gender and sex (see: "What Happened to Lani Garver") that creates an inside/outside dichotomy, always placing the LGBTQ character on the outside, alienated from the narrator and therefore the reader. The reader is placed in the position of observer, totally removed from the experience of the character who is at the center of the plot, positioned in the head of the narrator who is watching as though on the other side of a glass wall. I get it, narrator -- having a transgender brother/sister/friend is SOOOOOOOOOOO hard for you and let's just all wade through how hard it is for you and why can't your brother/sister/friend just be normal and who is s/he anyways and oh my gosh why does she have to get bullied and take over my life and blah blah blah. How about a text that renders the transgender character as more than just a plot point for the crappy development of an obnoxious "oh my gosh I'm so ugly and stupid but oh wow this gorgeous boy is talking to me which means I must actually be beautiful and awesome and oh wow this sexist teacher thinks I have potential so I'm secretly really awesome at school and oh by the way my brother/sister/friend is just making all of that soooooo much more complicated!" protagonist. Gag.

And yes, I get it, Peters wanted to explore the difficulties of loving someone whose identity is not easy -- the tension between being for yourself and being for someone else -- the burden of carrying your own trauma as well as the traumas of someone you love -- and those intentions are great and honorable and all that. The problem is just that this book lacked all nuance and subtlety and just read like trashy, predictable teen lit.

I was left feeling as though this book posed itself as an insightful text into a sister -- and by extension, a family -- grappling with her brother's grappling with his sex, but the way Peters developed her characters only alienated me from their experiences. Plus, I thought the narration was overwrought and convenient, as was the resolution. Sigh. Maybe my expectations were too high, but this read like a book for people who don't really want to know what it's like to be trans, but to know what it's like to know someone who is. People who want to get close -- but not too close -- to understanding.

I don't want to think about why/how this became a finalist for a national book award.

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### **Caidyn (SEMI-HIATUS; BW Reviews; he/him/his) says**

*This review can also be found here!*

**DNF at 20%**

TW: transphobia, misgendering, deadnaming, and others since I DNFed it

Wow was this reread problematic.

But let's backtrack.

When I was a young transman, still figuring out what the fuck that meant for me, I read this book. Along with a few others. But this one really stood out for me because I remember enjoying it. And it helped me ground myself in basic details.

But rereading it?

Nope. Just... nope.

First of all, it's told from the perspective of Liam/Lia Marie/Luna's (I'll get to her later) cisgender sister, Regan. While I like that a cis author didn't try tackling this book by writing as a transwoman, I also don't think that Regan was the right way to get the message across. More to that later, though.

Liam/Lia Marie/Luna was just... ugh. I don't know how to say it, really. Regan saw her as other. As weird. As different. And I don't think that was the right way to do it. It really made Liam/Lia Marie/Luna set in stereotypes without trying to confront them. This book was published in 2004, back when we weren't thinking about this as much as we are now. It wasn't a publicly talked about thing while it is now. It's becoming socially acceptable in the eyes of cisgender people. We're discovering more.

### **But this book did not age well. It came across as offensive.**

You have Regan, who has known that Liam/Lia Marie/Luna (and yes, she's referred to all those names because Regan couldn't get that correct) is trans for ages. And she didn't care enough to do any research to find out about this. So it leaves LLL (I'm too tired to write that out now) to explain it all.

And it's just infodumping about what some transpeople do with gender confirmation surgeries, called sex reassignment in this book. Not all transpeople go on hormones. Not all have surgeries. Not all have every surgery possible. Hell, I don't want to have all the surgeries. One was enough thank you very much.

Then, you have the subplot of Regan trying to find herself and live up to her brother/sister (because, again, LLL is called both). And what was the point of it? Why not focus on a sibling relationship with Regan actually caring about her sibling, caring enough to find out more information about this very important thing her sibling is going through? Why not show her progression to understanding and actually using the write language to talk to her with?

It was just... it worked for me when I was navigating this and it helped me prepare for telling my family, along with expecting them to not get it correct 100% of the time because it's a process even for the most accepting families. And I was lucky to have an accepting family.

But this is not the right book to tell the story of a transwoman coming into her own. Telling it from an outside perspective made LLL feel even more like a freak. This book could have been incredibly empowering but it wasn't on a reread. It wasn't even worth my time.

So, do I recommend this? Fuck no. It got to me. It made me cringe. It made me wince. It made me feel bad for this character who is a stereotype of what cispeople think of transpeople. LLL became a walking stereotype written by an author who didn't seem to understand or have researched what she was writing.

There are better books out there than this offensive piece of crap. And yes, I said it. It was well-meaning, but it's offensive and plain bad at promoting old beliefs that were on the way out when it was written.

### **Original review where my thoughts on this were VERY different:**

This book has greatly impacted my life. Thanks to this book I figured out something about myself that I'll *never* let anyone take away. Before this book I had no idea what transgendered was, so it taught me quite a lot through someone's watching eyes, and when I heard it it connected home. A bit after reading this and numerous other books about the topic I began to identify myself as a FtM (Female to Male) trans. That was a year ago and I'm happier than I've ever been in my whole life, out to my parents and some friends. This book will always hold a special place for me in my heart.

But onto the actual book now.

The way it was told from another's perspective was refreshing and one that I enjoy greatly. Peters grasped the characters completely, never wavering once from how they were set up. The support of the sister was what *truly* made me love the book. It was sweet and perfect for the story.

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### **Andrew says**

I think this review here sums up how I'm truly feeling.

But here's my "review":

Please do not call this a trans book.

This story is told from the view point of Luna's sister, a cisgender girl. Her thoughts, her feelings, all of her is what we really see, not Luna's and is therefore not about the trans person and is not a "trans story".

The constant misgendering from the summary alone makes me boil.

Reading through other people's reviews of this story, constantly misgendering Luna, makes me even more upset, and they obviously do not know how to respect a person's pronouns.

I don't care if the book is doing it, I don't care if the other characters or the author is doing it, you do not misgender a trans person, fiction or not, you don't do it.

This story doesn't even help on the side of how to be a good ally to trans people. Regan is the worst portrayal of an ally, you'd learn nothing from her.

Obviously books like these are important but this is not how it should be done.

And I'm not saying that cis people shouldn't be writing trans stories, I, as a trans person (ONLY SPEAKING FOR MYSELF, NOT ALL TRANS PEOPLE), actually don't mind who writes the story - on one condition - you have to do it right, you have to be respectful, you have to be mindful and you have to be willing to educate yourself on the topic and talk to a trans person in order to write your character instead of just assuming this is how it goes.

The amount of times I have read reviews that say that Peters has created an amazing story, full of respect and love for "transgendered" people, makes me so angry, because it's honestly, in no way, respectful.

As a side note, stop using the word 'trasngendered', it's not grammatically correct, you'll come across a lot of people, trans or cis, who will tell you not to use it.

And lastly, in my anger, if I see this goddamn book on one more "Greatest trans books everyone should read" list, I'm going to honestly throw my laptop at the wall.  
That is all.

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### **Jennifer Wardrip says**

Reviewed by Me for TeensReadToo.com

LUNA is the first book I've ever read that deals specifically with transgender issues. Although you get a feel for what the book is about by reading the back copy--in effect, that Regan's brother, Liam, is a woman trapped in a man's body--you don't get the full spectrum of what this actually means until you reach the end of chapter one.

"Rolling over, I muttered, 'You're such a freakshow.' Her hair splayed across my pillow, tickling my face. 'I know,' she murmured in my ear. 'But you love me, don't you?' Her lips grazed my cheek. I swatted her away. As I heard her slog across the floor toward my desk--where she'd unveiled her makeup caddy in all its glory--a sigh of resignation escaped my lips. Yeah, I loved her. I couldn't help it. She was my brother."

Liam is the type of boy who, even as a small child, wanted to be the Mommy when he and Regan played house. For his ninth birthday, he asked for a Prom Barbie and a bra. Now, as a senior in high school, Liam is consumed with letting out Luna, the name he's taken for his female self. His dad, of course, is adamant that his son will finally play baseball. His mother, lost in a world of uppers and downers, pretends not to notice when her son offers to fix dinner or do the laundry. And Regan, the only one who knows her brother for who he is--a sister named Luna--is losing sleep and a chance for her own life by hiding the secret.

Something has to change, and it finally does when Luna decides to go all the way, to actually become Luna, the woman he knows he is. But what will it mean for his family, especially Regan, who has spent so long loving her brother, protecting his secrets, being a part of his life? It might just be time for Regan to have a childhood of her own, and for Luna to come out of the darkness, out of the shadow of the moon, and into the light.

LUNA is an emotional, heartfelt read that deftly deals with the issue of transgenderism in a way that makes it believable and important. I had never really thought of what it must be like for someone who believes they were born with the wrong body, but after reading LUNA, my heart and support goes out to anyone who has ever suffered with this issue. This is a book not to be missed.

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### **Emma Getchell says**

I read this book back in sixth grade. But I still remember the impact it had on me. By the end of this book, all I wanted was another book continuing life for her. I hadn't really ever put much thought into people that were born feeling like they should be someone else. It just never really crossed my mind. This book opened my eyes up to a whole new world. I was able to get a better understanding, and I would definitely recommend this to anyone who is open minded toward this subject. Maybe, even to the people who are skeptical about people like Luna. It was nice to get a perspective on it. I just loved it. I don't exactly remember the style of writing it had. But when reading a book that heart felt and touching, you wouldn't care if it were good or bad.

Therefore, I give it 5 stars

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## Kristen says

3/5 stars

*“Like a butterfly emerging from a chrysalis, I thought. An exquisite and delicate creature, unfolding her wings and flying away. Except in Luna’s case, the butterfly is forced to rein in her wings and reinsert herself into the cocoon every day. Every single day, she has to become a shell of a person.”*

### **The Skinny:**

This is the story of a young man, Liam; a boy on the outside, yet a girl on the inside. By night, Liam is Luna, a girl who loves make-up and fashion. By day, Liam is an introverted boy who is only a shell of a person. Told in the voice of his younger sister Regan, we are privy to not only the trials and tribulations Liam must face in order to become Luna, but also the confusion Regan feels as she tries to simultaneously protect her brother and accept all of his changes.

### **The Review:**

As I was reading many of the other reviews for this book, a huge source of contention for other readers was Regan’s ‘selfishness.’ Apparently Regan was an unlikable narrator due to her self-centered nature, which impacted peoples’ enjoyment of the novel. I have to say that while Regan was selfish at times, I did not dislike her as a narrator because of this. In fact, I felt that Regan was a more reliable narrator because of this character trait; what young high school student is not egotistical? As a high school teacher, I can say virtually none (I say so lovingly, because I too was like this :D). Also, I feel that some of Regan’s decisions and feelings were warranted. For as long as she can remember, Regan has been protecting her brother’s secret – I think that this would take a toll on anyone.

What impacted my enjoyment of the novel, far more than Regan’s selfishness, is the cardboard quality of some of the characters and situations. In particular, I felt that the relationship between Regan and her parents was pretty cliché. Regan’s mom plays the aloof parent, while her dad plays the mans-man father. Sorry, but I’ve seen these types of parents far too often in books and movies. I also felt that the relationship and dialogue between Regan and Chris was cringe-worthy at times. Regan is the ‘clumsy girl’ always falling and breaking things (hello, Bella!), and Chris is the hot guy that goes for the misunderstood girl. There dialogue is frequently cheesy and awkward (yes, high-schoolers can be awkward, but this was a bit TOO much). I feel that Regan and Chris could have been very sweet, but instead I just felt that they were...blegh.

Despite the manufactured quality of some of the characters and happenings, I did like reading about Liam. I don’t know if ‘like’ is the right word. I felt for Liam, and I felt for his struggles. I found Liam’s story to be painful, but also interesting; this is the first book I’ve read about this subject matter. It saddened me to know that Liam felt like he had to keep his true self hidden. While this story was fictional, I know that there are people out there who have had to hide as well. I can’t imagine how painful of a thing that must be, and I wouldn’t wish it upon anyone.

### **Overall:**

I liked the subject matter of this novel because I haven’t really read anything else like it. I wasn’t totally sold on the story because of the cardboard quality of some of the characters and events. This being said, I loved Liam’s character. I felt that he was really eye-opening and made me think and consider things I hadn’t

before.

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### **Amy says**

This book is an amazing step forward in YA literature. Other reviewers have given you the premise of the plot, I just wanted to add that I thought it was BRILLIANT that it was told from the sister's point of view. Within the largely conservative area I live in, not a lot of people would be interested in this book had it been told from Liam/Luna's point of view. But as it comes from the sister, it's a safe vantage. It's the perfect vehicle for introducing a LOT of people to an issue they might not have understood, nor something they would have wanted to understand. I do think, looking at it analytically, that this book is more useful as an advocacy tool than one of the fictional self-help sorts. At any rate, it's a giant step forward in YA lit for transgender issues. And it's a well told, well written story to boot.

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### **Wendy Darling says**

Clearly, it's important that books like this are written, not only so that teens who are transgender have a voice in young adult literature, but also so that our society as a whole has a chance to better understand gender identity and gender expression.

Regan's older brother Liam has always felt as if he was different. Through the years, he's been closer to her female friends than any guy his own age, and he's always been interested in typically "feminine" toys and clothes. Eventually, Liam begins to transform his outward appearance for certain outings and lives a secret life as Luna, who is a reflection of his true female identity. Regan helps Luna hide this secret from their parents and everyone around them, but as social and family pressures start to build, Regan starts to resent how Liam/Luna's choices are affecting her own.

I'd read many glowing reviews of this book, and it was nominated for a number of awards when it came out in 2004. For me, however, this novel wasn't quite the reading experience I was hoping for. Firstly, Luna's story is so interesting that I really wish that the book had been told from her point of view--or even in third person omniscient. Luna's story is the reason I picked up the book, and it became a little frustrating to read everything filtered through her sister Regan's thoughts and emotions. Regan also behaves pretty selfishly and stupidly a number of times throughout the story, and while some of it might be understandable, I really didn't feel deep enough love and support from her for Liam/Luna to make up for it, other than some kneejerk defensive reactions.

I might have felt a little more lenient if this had been a middle grade book, as the level of complexity isn't very deep. The story line is so straightforward that I could probably have guessed its outline ahead of time (I could almost picture the checklist of acceptable terminology that had to be covered) and most of the characters do no more or less than what you really expect them to do. I don't feel as if I'm that well-versed in transgenderism, but none of the revelations or behaviors really surprised me all that much (from Luna or from her friends and family), and most of Luna's personality seems to be pretty stereotypical--she seemed so much more of a symbol to me than a real living, breathing, thinking, emotional human being. The way the story is told is also a little jumbled, and the flashbacks are rather awkwardly inserted into the story in no particular order.

It's nice to see that this is not one of those melodramatic stories that ends on a tragic note, however. I'm glad that teens can find not only struggles to identify with in books like this and *Suicide Notes*, but that there are also feelings of resolve and hope. Still, I wish that these characters had more emotional depth and that they interacted on a deeper, more meaningful level, rather than just mingling in surface activities (dates, trips to the mall, playing video games) or conversations that center around this topic alone. It would have made for a much richer and much more rewarding reading experience...not to mention a much more realistic one.

I've seen many positive reactions to this story, and if other readers find it more insightful than I did or are moved by it more than I am, then I'm happy that that's the case. This book certainly offers the opportunity to open up a dialogue about some important topics, and there's plenty of value in that.

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### **Wart Hill says**

DNF at 47%.

When I first started this book, I thought I would like it. I was disappointed that the book wasn't from Luna's point of view, but I thought maybe it would be a good book to get my family members, maybe reading about Regan's journey of discovery with regards to her sister would help them.

Except then Regan turned out to be a brat.

She keeps talking about how she has no life because of Luna, but honestly all I see is a spoiled brat who can't step away from her own innane high school drama long enough to realize that what Luna is going through is a lot bigger than having to miss a date to babysit. Or losing your job because you *went on the date*.

When she determined it was entirely Luna's fault that she lost her job, I knew this book and I were done. Regan was the idiot. She needs some perspective.

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### **K says**

I am so glad this book exists! While working in a public library a few years back, I came across *Luna*, and have recommended it a hundred times over ever since. It is one of the few young adult books I have seen so far that addresses the reality/experience of transgender teens, which has been needed for years! (Before this book, it was the *Francesca Lia Block* books that I would love for addressing queer youth experience. They are classics and address issues of gender for sure, but I appreciate the clear and stated trans themes in *Luna* so much.)

Having worked within the trans and transyouth communities for a number of years, it made me so excited to see a book in which a trans character is depicted in a realistic and respectful way. Trans youth need to be able to see themselves reflected in the stories they read, and this book is one step in that direction. (One step because it is one, particular, transgirls experience...)

The book does a great job of integrating language and terms common in the community (FTM, MTF, pre-op, post-op, no-op, etc) and having Luna (the trans character in this book) explain them to her sibling and/or come across them in internet searches for connection.

I would recommend this book to anyone craving a tale that is packed with information as much as storyline. Go Luna!

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### Hannah Lozier says

**Although Luna is a well-written book on a topic that *demands* more wide-spread exploration, its narrative ultimately promotes the "wrongness" and/or "otherness" of trans characters by focusing on a cis hetero (and ultimately much less interesting) main character.**

Luna is one of those books I read a long time ago -- long enough that I can't, in good conscience, review the prose, because I don't remember it... though, perhaps that is telling in and of itself. I read Luna while I was in high school and coming to terms with being queer, myself, mostly because when you're queer and looking for representation, you generally have to settle for whatever you can get your hands on. This was before the Tumblr age, when LGBT sections in libraries were virtually nonexistent and this sort of book was viewed as being sort of taboo (though I suppose it still is), and I remember the subject matter in this book being treated in the exact same way: this is a "freaky and taboo" situation where a narrator's sibling doesn't happen to be cis. Crazy stuff, kids.

Maybe it's obvious from the way I wrote that, but I'm not particularly happy with the way trans issues are dealt with in this book, if only because the one thing that stuck with me from this book was the overall tone of it all. There were things in this book that I carried around with me for years, until I finally became more involved with real trans issues and finally shelved them.

The fact that the narrator of this book is a cis hetero one who refuses to use her sibling's preferred pronouns throughout most of the narrative and views her sibling's trans-ness as alien and unrelatable is something that stuck with me long after I put the book down. Luna is by far the more interesting character, and her struggles as she comes to term with her gender identity are very relatable and engaging. The fact that you, as a reader, are forced to hang out with Regan instead is almost as insulting as it is disappointing -- it means that you're by default forced into this unsavory position of siding with her as she misgenders Luna and feels ashamed of her.

What all of this really points to is a cis hetero author who thinks of Regan as automatically being more relatable than Luna; someone for whom trans issues can only be viewed through the lens of otherness, as something that occurs outside of them. And that's why I don't really think of this as an LGBT book -- **I think of it as a bare bones pamphlet for cis hetero folks, queer literature that isn't written for a queer audience.** I don't think I would read this book again, because I remember being mildly offended by it when I didn't know *shit* about trans issues, and didn't have a personal stake in trans representation in media. Now that I do, I worry that it would be bad enough to make me legitimately angry.

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### Arlene says

Luna, by Julie Ann Peters, is an exceptional book. I wish I could give it more than 5 stars as it pushes the boundaries of YA literature to uncharted territory and does it so flawlessly. This is like no other book I've ever read, and one that will stay on my mind for quite some time. It was beautifully written, with perfectly developed characters that were wrapped around a subject matter that got me to rethink how I feel about

topics not commonly discussed.

The focus of the book is extremely sensitive as it centers on a transgender teen. However, to be able to embrace the characters and understand their plight, you have to put aside your beliefs of gender expectations and what is considered acceptable in society.

The narrator of the story is a fifteen year old girl named Regan. Her brother Liam is undergoing a gender transformation. At night, in the privacy of their rooms, Liam transforms to his female form known as Luna. Regan loves her brother and accepts her brother who is slowly becoming her sister. Regan is the confidante and friend that Luna needs to be able to accept who she is and embrace her decision to live the life she was meant to have.

This book helped me understand the struggles transgender individuals encounter. I have a new awareness and sensitivity toward their struggle. Peters' novel should be praised for breaking ground on a topic not normally discussed or accepted. I also feel the book did a beautiful job of portraying a loving relationship between two siblings who hold each other near and dear regardless of their choices. It was emotional and well written. I would recommend this book without hesitation.

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### **Giovanna says**

Recommended *and* sent by Lys. And then she dares deny she's puccia.

Anyway, this was both cute and meaningful. And well, sad and frustrating and all the FEELS.

I do not know if I can write an english review in this case. I'll try my best.

Liam is a girl. He has always felt like a girl and he's been hiding the real him (or her, really) for all his life. The only one who knows about Luna, Liam's true self, is her sister, Regan.

I don't know how realistic Luna is, because I really can't imagine how difficult might be to find yourself in that situation, but it felt realistic to me. I'm not talking just about Liam's struggles, but also about Regan. Regan has to keep her sister's secret and being the only one who knows is difficult, because she is Liam/Luna's outlet for her problems. She wants to help and she tries to understand Liam's need to be Luna in her presence, but at the same time she has problems of her own.

The characters were quite interesting. I really liked that, in spite of loving her sister, Regan also felt like she was drowning in Liam's problems. As much as she loves her she can't help but feel embarrassed when Luna shows herself in public or when she sees her brother behaving like a girl in front of her friends. Liam's life is painful because he has to hide who he is, but Regan shares his burden, because he is blind to the fact that what he does affects his sister too.

This is the kind of book I want to see shelved among ya contemporaries. Meaningful, bittersweet, eye opening.

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## Caitlin says

This book sort of bothered me in many ways. It wasn't because it dealt with transgender issues; I was pretty excited to read a book about a trans\* teen especially since I haven't seen or read a lot of YA literature that dealt with that. It was more because of the way it was handled.

Peters is a believer of authentic voices, so she portrayed the narrator as the sister of Luna - a 16 year old boy, Liam, who is struggling with keeping her true identity a secret. Unfortunately, this placed most of the focus on the sister, Regan. It was all about Regan: how tough it was to keep the secret, the pressure it placed on her, how afraid she was when Liam experiments with revealing Luna in public. Although these pressures are very real, I had wanted to read about the experience of a trans\* teen, not that of a trans\* teen's sister. Many times I thought it took away the focus from Luna, which was slightly disappointing. It also made Liam/Luna seem selfish and needy, always asking much of Regan. Regan, of course, asked for barely anything in return except a "normal" life.

One major thing that bothered me (spoiler alert): Regan is asked to babysit on the weekend, and having no social life, she agrees. Of course, this is when the hot guy asks her out. As repayment for all that Regan has done for her, Liam offers to babysit so that Regan can go on her first date. Great. Except Regan doesn't tell the family about the new arrangement. She comes to the house, has the hot guy pick her up there, and Liam arrives after the parents leave. Regan's plan is to return before the parents get back. Obviously this does not work out, and she walks in the door right when the parents are interrogating Liam about trying on the wife's clothing.

My problem with this was that first of all, Regan was incredibly irresponsible. No wonder the parents flipped - even if you completely put aside the fact that Liam was wearing the wife's clothing, the parents basically walked in the house to find some kid they didn't know. As a parent, I would have been upset to find someone who wasn't the babysitter in my house, especially with no babysitter in sight, right? So, she loses her job but blames it on Liam, who the parents of course think has some sort of disease and tells their mother (she told them off - props). Anyway, I also don't think a 16 year old kid would risk his secret to try on the clothing of someone he was babysitting for. Is that just me? I just found that a somewhat unrealistic scenario in general, particularly because it is frequently mentioned that Liam has a secret stash of clothes & Regan allows him access to hers.

Liam's excuse for this is "I couldn't help myself". This is where I started getting frustrated. No you cannot help yourself for being who you are - but I felt that sent somewhat of a condescending message. It should be more along the lines of "This is who I am" not "I couldn't help myself". It makes it sound like Liam has a lack of self-control, some sort of drug that she just has to give into. It's the same excuse people make when they try to claim that homosexuals are pedophiles - "oh they just can't help themselves". It makes them sound like deviants. It's wrong. I thought that Peters should have done without that little passage, because it's not that she "can't help himself", it's that she was born in the wrong identity. This came up a few times in the story, and it really bothered me every time because I just felt it was the wrong language to use. I was also confused by what the preferred pronoun usage was since it goes back and forth (and if it does in this review, that is why).

Don't get me wrong - Peters did do some research. I was still compelled, curious as to what would happen. And Regan does learn in the end to truly accept and understand her brother. It's definitely pro-transgender, and maybe it would help some teens learn a little bit more about gender identity issues in general (even if I thought it was condescending & heavy-handed at times). Through Regan, the reader can learn a little bit

about transitioning and the concept of gender. Hopefully, readers will be inspired to do some research on their own. Even though I was not fond of the way the characters were portrayed (I found Regan whiny at times & my issues with Liam/Luna's portrayal I addressed above), they were still fleshed out and felt (for the most part) realistic. If you give this book to teens to read, be prepared to talk about gender with them.

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### **Emily Ann says**

My 5 star rating may be a little misleading.

In a [future?] world where hundreds of great lit (YA and otherwise) is written with trans characters, where trans people feel less silenced and less invisible, I think this is a really great book.

In the current reality, I have some problems with this book. They mostly are about silencing the trans voice by giving control of the narrative to the trans character's cis-gendered sister.

I think it made the story more palatable because we hear about the pain and confusion and hopelessness all second hand. We watch Regan deal with her own struggles while exploring feminism and experiencing discrimination all while one-removed. Luna's distress is painful to observe from the distance at which we see it, but we only get glimpses.

I came away with the impression that the story was told from Regan's perspective because for it to be told from Luna's (and for it to be authentic to the story/characters), it would be too dark.

While Regan's struggles are real, and I found myself identifying with her frequently, I also noted that this would not be a book that I would hand to a trans person. It is a book I would hand to someone who isn't at all aware of trans issues to help them start thinking about them.

That category of book is important to have, to be sure. And it certainly still pushes the envelope to have a trans character in the foreground at all. But I wanted more from the book. I wanted Luna to not be pushed back to the supporting character just because we might find her struggle to be too painful to handle.

Maybe, though, I just want more from all the books.

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### **Brooke says**

Hmm. Well, I'm glad this book was written because there certainly could be more books for and about the trans community. I did have some issues with this book, however. Some thoughts and some questions.

It was interesting how the mother and father had non-traditional roles (him not working, her working). I'm not sure if this was necessary though or really served the plot in any way.

There is this theme or at least a few scenes in which Liam is painted as someone who "can't help himself" from cross dressing, among other things, like at the neighbor's/babysitter's house and goes through their stuff. I think this is an unfortunate stereotype. Yes, Liam can't help that he is trans, but his character is painted as someone who in general doesn't have control impluse, which I found annoying and naive.

Also, just because Liam is trans and is really a girl, doesn't mean he has to be soooooo girly. Another false stereotype. There are plenty of transwoman who aren't super femme. Liam's character and obession with shopping seems unrealistic and is just perpetuating a stereotype.

The writing was not so hot. The back and forth between the use of "he" and "she" was interesting, but also seemed kind of random. I'm not sure how I feel about it.

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