

Transgender Characters in Literature

Selected Titles from 2014–2017

► CJ BOTT

FICTION

Picture Books/Early Reader

Baldacchino, Christine. **Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress**. Illus. by Isabelle Malenfant. Groundwood, 2014. 32p. \$16.95. 978-1-55498-347-6.

When Morris's classmates refuse to allow him into their spaceship, Morris builds his own spaceship and takes his friends into outer space.

Curry, Tyler. **A Peacock Among Pigeons**. Illus. by Clarione Gutierrez. Mascot, 2015. 38p. \$14.95. 978-1-63177-325-9.

Peter is a peacock in a flock of pigeons that want Peter to change, but then Peter discovers a bigger world.

Hall, Michael. **Red: A Crayon's Story**. Greenwillow/HarperCollins, 2016. 40p. \$17.99. 978-0-06-225207-4.

Red crayon wears a bright red label, but is a blue crayon under the wrapper.

Herthel, Jessica, and Jazz Jennings. **I Am Jazz**. Illus. by Shelagh McNicholas. Dial/Penguin, 2014. 32p. \$17.99. 978-0-8037-4107-2.

Jazz knew she was a girl by the time she was two years old, and her story will help other children and families discuss gender identity questions.

Hoffman, Sarah, and Ian Hoffman. **Jacob's New Dress**. Illus. by Chris Case. Albert Whitman, 2014. 32p. \$16.99. 978-0-8075-6373-1.

Jacob loves to play dress up and wants to wear his pretty dresses to school.

Ismail, Yasmeen. **I'm a Girl!** Bloomsbury, 2016. 32p. \$16.99. 978-1-61963-975-1.

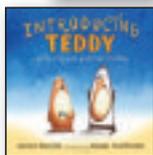
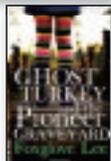
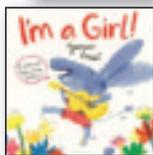
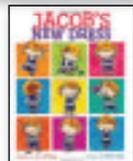
The main character, a blue bunny, is shouting to the world, "I am a girl!" even though others may disagree.

Lee, Foxglove. **Ghost Turkey and the Pioneer Graveyard**. CreateSpace, 2016. 80p. \$8.99 Trade pb. 978-1-5349-3684-3.

This is a light-hearted mystery for early grades featuring best girlfriends Madison and Sunita, one used to be a boy and the other loves her moustache.

Walton, Jessica. **Introducing Teddy: A Gentle Story about Gender and Friendship**. Illus. by Dougal MacPherson. Bloomsbury, 2016. 32p. \$16.99. 978-1-68119-210-9.

One day, Errol's teddy bear, Thomas, explains she wants to be called by her real name, Tilly.



Middle Grade, Middle School, High School

Brugman, Alyssa. **Alex as Well**. Henry Holt/Macmillan, 2015. 224p. \$16.95. 978-1-62779-014-7. Alex was born an intersex individual and labeled a girl, but at fourteen, Alex decides he needs to live his life as a boy.

Clark, Kristin Elizabeth. **Jess, Chunk, and the Road Trip to Infinity**. Farrar Straus Giroux, 2016. 272p. \$17.99. 978-0-374-38006-9.

Jeremy started transitioning slowly in his senior year; now Jess and Christophe—best friends since elementary school—are driving from California to Chicago for Jess's father's wedding to Jess's mother's former best friend.

_____. **Freakboy**. Farrar Straus Giroux, 2013. 448p. \$18.99. 978-0-374-32472-8.

Brandon likes being a wrestler, making love with his girlfriend, and dressing up as Larissa, but it takes Angel to help him understand gender fluid.

Clarke, Cat. **The Pants Project**. Sourcebooks Jabberwocky, 2017. 272p. \$16.99. 978-1-4926-3809-4.

Eleven-year-old Liv—no, not Olivia—has just started Bankridge Middle School, where the dress code demands girls wear black, pleated skirts, and Liv makes challenging that edict her mission, while losing her BBF to the popular girls, finding a new friend in Jacob, and being harassed for having two wonderful and amazing moms that Liv has to tell that per is transgender.

Garvin, Jeff. **Symptoms of Being Human**. Balzer + Bray/HarperCollins, 2016. 352p. \$17.99. 978-0-06-238286-3.

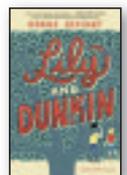
Gender fluid Riley Cavanaugh enters a new school, starts working with a therapist, gets targeted by some of the football players, and writes a blog about his feelings that draws an ever-growing crowd of readers.

Gephart, Donna. **Lily and Dunkin**. Delacort/Random House, 2016. 352p. \$16.99. 978-0-553-53674-4.

Eighth-grader Lily Jo McGrother, born Timothy, knows she is a girl and has just started dressing that way, while new neighbor Dunkin Dorfman, manic depressive, meets Lily and is enamored with her beautiful eyes.

Gino, Alex. **George**. Scholastic, 2015. 240p. \$16.99. 978-0-545-81254-2.

Third-grader George may look like a boy but knows she is a girl and wants to play Charlotte in



their class play of **Charlotte's Web**, which she just might be able to do with her best friend Kelly's help.

Girard, M-E. **Girl Mans Up**. Katherine Tegen/HarperCollins, 2016. 384p. \$17.99. 978-0-06-240417-6.

Pen accepts she is attracted to girls, but Pen cannot accept her parents' expectations for their daughter. But when Pen meets the right girl, everything becomes clearer.

Gregorio, I. W. **None of the Above**. Balzer & Bray/HarperCollins, 2015. 352p. \$17.99. 978-0-06-233531-9.

Kristin, a champion hurdler and homecoming queen, does not know she is intersex until a painful first sexual encounter and a visit to the doctor reveals she has male chromosomes and "parts."

Hennessey, M. G. **The Other Boy**. Illus. by Sfe R. Monster. HarperCollins, 2016. 240p. \$16.99. 978-0-06-242766-3.

Finally feeling comfortable presenting as a boy, Shane Woods is sixteen, a pitcher on the school baseball team, has a best friend Josh, and maybe a girlfriend—but then his past sneaks up on him.

Polonsky, Ami. **Gracefully Grayson**. Disney-Hyperion, 2014. 256p. \$16.99. 978-1-4231-8527-7. Sixth-grader Grayson is a sensitive young person who lives as a female inside a boy's body.

Schatz, Pat. **Lizard Radio**. Candlewick, 2015. \$16.99. 288p. 978-0-7636-7635-3.

In an alternate world where fifteen-year-old Kivali is sent to CropCamp to grow up, they work hard all day, sleep in huts, and even start to make friends, but when the pressure builds, Kivali escapes to Lizard Radio.

Spangler, Brie. **Beast**. Alfred Knopf/Random House, 2016. 330p. \$17.99. 978-1-101-93716-7.

After Dylan, labeled Beast at school due to his size and long hair, falls off the school roof and breaks his leg, he has to attend a support group where he becomes enamored with Jamie, who told the group she is transgender while Dylan was daydreaming.

Williamson, Lisa. **The Art of Being Normal**. Farrar Straus Giroux, 2016. 352p. \$17.99. 978-0-374-30237-5.

Told in two voices. David Piper has known for years that he is really a girl but only told her two best friends. Leo Denton is new to the school and trying to stay under everyone's radar until he sees someone harassing David.

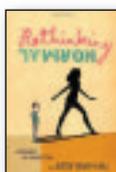
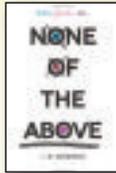
NONFICTION

Andrews, Arin. **Some Assembly Required: The Not-So-Secret Life of a Transgender Teen**. Simon & Schuster, 2014. 256p. \$17.99. 978-1-4814-1675-7.

With bravery and honesty, seventeen-year-old Arin Andrews tells his story of transitioning from a girl to a boy while in high school.

Hill, Katie Rain. **Rethinking Normal: A Memoir in Transition**. Simon & Schuster, 2014. 272p. \$17.99. 978-1-4814-1823-2.

After multiple suicide attempts, Hill realized the girl inside was her true identity and chose to undergo gender reassignment while in high school.



Kuklin, Susan. **Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out**. Candlewick, 2014. 192p. \$22.99. 978-0-7636-5611-9.

Kuklin interviews and photographs six gender-diverse teens, each telling a personal transition story.

Mock, Janet. **Redefining Realness: My Path to Womanhood, Identity, Love, and So Much More**. Atria, 2014. 288p. \$15. 978-1-4767-0913-0.

Blue: Janet Mock is a transgender activist who came out in an article in *Marie Claire*. Her book is incredible in the way that it deals with the idea of self and identity and the power that comes with choosing to be you.

Nutt, Amy Ellis. **Becoming Nicole: The Transformation of an American Family**. Random House, 2016. 320p. \$16. Trade pb. 978-0-8129-9543-5.

After adopting identical twin boys, Wayne and Kelly Maines realize one of their two sons was showing many signs of being a female in this family's journey.



RESOURCES

Erickson-Schroth, Laura, Ed. **Trans Bodies, Trans Selves: A Resource for the Transgender Community**. Oxford University Press, 2014. 672p. \$41.95 Trade pb. 978-0-19-932535-1.

Trans Bodies, Trans Selves follows the path of **Our Bodies, Our Selves**, which was first published in 1971 and has become a global success. **TBTS** is an amazingly comprehensive and accessible resource written by transgender and genderqueer authors.

Killermann, Sam. **The Social Justice Advocate's Handbook: A Guide to Gender**. Impetus, 2013. 250p. \$16.95 Trade pb. 978-0-9897602-0-1.

Written by a social justice advocate who is also a comedian, this book is filled with accessible information about gender, as well as amusing graphics and comics.

Solomon, Andrew. **Far from the Tree: Parents, Children, and the Search for Identity**. Scribner, 2013. 976p. \$21.50 Trade pb. 978-0-7432-3672-0.

Solomon has provided humanized research on ten variants and their effects in a family: deafness, dwarfism, Down syndrome, autism, schizophrenia, disability, prodigies, rape, crime, and transgender. This very readable resource relates the author's interactions with families.

Williams, Walter, and Yolanda Retters, Eds. **Gay and Lesbian Rights in the United States: A Documentary History (Primary Documents in American History and Contemporary Issues)**. Greenwood, 2003. 368p. O. P. 978-0-313-30696-9.

A chronologically organized compilation of primary sources from a variety of individuals and organizations, this book documents the evolution of the LGBT community in its struggles for equality.

Blue: I used this book when creating a project about the AIDS crisis last year. It's a brilliant resource for looking at the LGBT community in the twentieth century—starting before WWII. The book is a compilation of primary sources from a variety of individuals and organizations, organized chronologically, that document the evolution of the LGBT community and its struggle for equality. ■

