

Luna

by Julie Ann Peters
Little, Brown & Company

Reviewed by Dave Parker

“Yeah, I loved her. I couldn’t help it. She was my brother!”

Here is a wonderful book for teens (targeted for 15 and older) who need a healthy introduction to transgender. It is fiction. It is also educational. The story is written for teens, blending a broad spectrum of general problems of teens with the stresses of coming out transgender. Hidden in the story is a pretty complete Transgender 101.

The story is written from the perspective of Regan, a female high school sophomore. Her brother Liam, a brilliant senior, can’t stand the person he is during the day. His true self, Luna, reveals herself only at night. For years, Liam has transformed himself into the beautiful girl he longs to be with help from his sister’s clothes and makeup in the secrecy of their basement bedrooms. Now everything is about to change. Luna is preparing to emerge from her cocoon.

Their father is stereotypically macho. He insists Liam play sports, including going out for the school baseball team – which Liam hates. Meanwhile, Mother just goes along. When Liam asked for Barbie dolls and a bra for his ninth birthday, Dad freaked out, while Mom passed it off as a joke.

Regan knew better. Liam/Luna has been playing with her Barbies and dressing in her clothes for several years. As they matured into their teens, Regan helped Luna in selecting clothes and applying makeup. Finally, Luna convinces Regan to go shopping with her at a nearby mall.

Liam/Luna’s history is told through a series of flashbacks, including attempts at self-castration and suicide – both unsuccessful. Regan’s story encompasses more than her relationship with her brother, who she claims always felt like her sister. She has a number of girl friends, one of whom really likes Liam.

She also has a developing interest in Chris, a student from her chemistry class. Regan is afraid that Chris will not associate with her if he finds out about Luna, which leads to several humorous incidents – and Regan’s normal teenage angst.