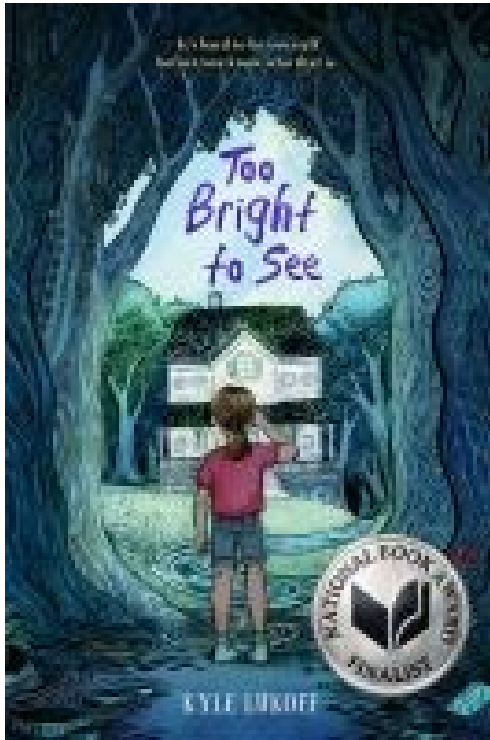


TOO BRIGHT TO SEE



Juvenile

By Kyle Lukoff

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Summary of Concerns:

This book contains sexuality; and alternate gender ideologies.

2 /5

Teen Guidance
BookLooks Review Rating

Page	Content
36	I hate the name on my birth certificate and never use it. I imagine starting school, introducing myself as-
40	"You have your own style, of course, but I don't know if it's a good idea to keep dressing like a boy."
43	<p>A memory rises, sharp as glass, the two of us hanging out in Uncle Roderick's room as he painted his face. He worked as a drag queen when he lived in New York City, and often said he didn't want to lose those skills. We both loved watching him, like it was a TV show. I once asked if I could be a drag queen too. Moira explained that was only for boys but Uncle Roderick said I could grow lup to be whatever I wanted.</p> <p>...Maybe if I thought of myself as a drag queen I wouldn't have washed off that makeup so fast.</p>
45	I don't know who I'll be when I cross over.
136	There's a big folder with the letters PFLAG blazing across the front. Written in curly type underneath are the words "Parents, Family, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays."
137	<p>The first piece of paper is bright yellow, with the words "Transgender 101" written across the top. The one beneath it is green, titled "Local Resources for LGBTQ Youth." The one underneath is called "Our Stories," and it's a few pages stapled together. I skim through it, and it looks like stories of gay and lesbian and trans teenagers talking about themselves.</p> <p>The rest of the box is filled with papers like this. Lots of newspaper and magazine articles, some about gay and lesbian people, but mostly about transgender people. There's an entire Time magazine, with an actress named Laverne Cox on the cover. And an issue of National Geographic with another trans person, this one a kid, on the front.</p> <p>...I know what "transgender" means. It means that someone is born one way, a girl or a boy, but that doesn't feel right to them, so they change. Maybe they take medicine or get different surgeries.</p>
138	But people being LGBTQ was something I always knew about.
139	She knows that Uncle Roderick was gay, of course.
145	<p>For some reason I thought that being trans was all about your...you know, private parts. Like, knowing that you're wrong, and that you should have the other kind.</p> <p>...A lot of trans people telling their stories talked more about a general feeling of not-rightness. Like</p> <p>...But that just sounds normal to me.</p> <p>...I'm not trans, but I always feel like people are looking at me and seeing something wrong with me, I mean.</p> <p>...I look okay on the outside, but every piece of me just adds up to something not quite right.</p> <p>And sure, that could mean that I'm trans too, but I know that it doesn't. Another thing all those articles were clear on is that trans people really are the genders they identify with. That arguments saying otherwise are transphobic, pure and simple. Like, a phrase I kept seeing repeated over and over again was "trans men</p>

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	are men" and "trans women are women." A sure, unshakable truth. But I don't think that I am a boy. I don't feel like a boy that everyone thinks is a girl. I
146	Uncle Roderick was transgender.
147	It's not hard to imagine the person my uncle was in a dress; he got dressed up sometimes and I loved to watch. He looked wonderful.
149	I know he missed his drag queen days, so Halloween was the perfect time to pull out his old tricks.
150	"What would you have said, though? If he came out to you as trans." ..."I would have had the most beautiful sister in the world. And I would have made sure that she got everything she needed to be herself."
161	Uncle Roderick, in drag, in a barbershop?
164	I see a boy in the mirror. I see myself in the mirror. Every other time I've looked in a mirror, I've seen a girl, and not seen myself. ...But there he is. There I am.
164	That I didn't have to try to be a girl. All I had to do was be myself- a boy.
166	I want to tell them to call me "he" now...
166	I'm a boy hugging a girl now, as friends, and it's the first time that hugging her doesn't make me feel awkward, or stiff, or gross.
168	I'm going to tell Mom that I'm a boy.
170	"Mom," I say. "I'm a boy." ..."You're telling me that you're transgender?" she asks. ..."My beautiful boy," she says.
173	"I'm a boy, " I tell her. ..."The word for that is 'transgender.' You can still call me Bug for now, but I'm going to choose a new name and might start going by that before the first day of school. Or I might wait till later, I'm not sure yet."
174	"About what it means to be transgender, or anything?..." ..."No, I'm good. I've seen some TV shows where it's a thing. And some magazine articles. I'm not an expert or anything, but it's not that confusing." ..."I mean, it's not really something I get to be 'okay with,' right? It's just, like, who you are. And honestly, this is probably going to make it so much easier to make friends! You make such a cute boy..."
175	I didn't think that me coming out as transgender would end our friendship.
176	I had expected to answer her questions about, like, transitioning, or pronouns.
177	"Boys can wear nail polish. And makeup. Maybe I'll want to be that kind of boy..." ..."...But I'm sorry for trying to turn you into someone you're not."
180	Last week Mom drove me to the school for a meeting with the principal. She had called a few different LGBTQ organizations for advice, and they suggested that she set up a meeting with the school administration, to make sure that I'd get any support I needed.
181	"This is my son, Bug," said Mom. ..."Yeah, that's right. Bug has recently come out as transgender. We want to make sure that the school is prepared to treat him like a boy, despite what his records

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	say. We also want to make sure that there is an anti-bullying policy, that he's permitted to use whichever restroom is most comfortable, and that his teachers will be asked to refer to him exclusively as 'Bug,' instead of his legal name, and with male pronouns."
182	"Second, as far as I know, Bug will be our first transgender student. But the administration and teaching staff operate under the assumption that any child could be transgender, or identify in some other way that they haven't shared with us. Some of our restrooms are gender-segregated, but we have five single-stall restrooms evenly spaced throughout the building. Bug can use whichever ones he thinks are best. I'll make sure the name 'Bug' appears on the attendance charts, and in case his legal name is also on there, I'll let his teachers know to keep that confidential."
183	"The boy couldn't wait to start school," I thought to myself for a second, but it didn't feel right.
184	"After you came out," she continues, "I got an idea for a whole new line of cards. Snarky ones for gay weddings and gay divorces, updated birth announcements, gender reveal parties for adults, et cetera. I've spent the past week talking on the phone with all of Roddy's and my old friends to come up with ideas for a whole line of queer celebrations."
187	The first day of the rest of my life as a boy, as a transgender. ...I haven't really imagined myself from the outside since coming out as trans. It's right to think of myself as a boy, but wrong to picture it like it's happening to someone else. I want to experience this day and every day as myself. Me, the real me, not some other boy.
189	"Transgender?" asks a girl named Sophie. "Like that girl on YouTube? Jazz?" "Yeah," I say. "I mean, I'm not exactly like her, because I'm a boy. But yeah." "Like my cousin!" exclaims another girl, Polly. "He's transgender. Like you. The boy kind, I mean." "You want us to call you 'he' and 'him' instead of 'she' and 'her,' right?" Moira asks.
189	"I'm gay and it's cool and everything, but I don't want people to know that until I want them to know that..."
191	"He wasn't much older than me when he came out as gay, right?" "Sixteen."
192	"...I'm not sure if I want the whole school to know I'm transgender, or if I want to keep it mostly private."
192	If I were one of the kids I read about in books- not only books about trans kids but all kinds of books about kids with something going on in their lives- I'd do something big, and rash.
193	I read about the different student organizations I could join, and check out the instructions for how to start a new one- there's no LGBTQ group yet, but there could be.