

THE PASSING PLAYBOOK



Young Adult

By Isaac Fitzsimons

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Book Summary:

A fifteen-year-old girl transfers to another school after beginning hormone treatment therapy and begins dating a homosexual male.

Summary of Concerns:

This book contains explicit alternate gender ideologies; alternate sexualities; inexplicit sexual activities; mild/infrequent profanity/derogatory terms; controversial religious and political commentary.

2 / 5

Teen Guidance
BookLooks Review Rating

Page	Content
8	Nobody at Oakley knew he was transgender.
9	He tugged on his T-shirt, grateful, not for the first time, that he hadn't needed top surgery or to suffer through wearing a binder. Starting hormone blockers at thirteen prevented too much growth and almost one year on testosterone replaced whatever fat there was with smooth muscle.
19	"Hey, this is a safe space. You can use whatever pronouns you want here." He gave the kid a reassuring smile. "They, I guess." Riley uncrossed their arms and sat up straighter.
20	The first time he came out was in a Kroger parking lot when he was thirteen. He had endured awkward puberty talks from his parents and his health teacher, and intellectually he knew that one day he'd grow boobs, and hips, and look like the women he saw on TV. But there was part of him that thought, What if I didn't. Before he went to bed each night, Spencer would pray that he would wake up as a boy.
22	"I don't want to quit soccer." Spencer's voice came out raspy. "I just don't want to play on that team. I want to play on a boys' team." Mom drew in a breath. "I have to say, I'm disappointed. You know that girls play just as hard as boys." ..."I don't think I'm supposed to be a girl." ...Then she said, "Thank you for telling me. I want you to know that I'll always love you, whether you feel like you're a girl or a boy or whatever."
23	"I went to a support group for parents of transgender and gender non-conforming kids. That's what you are, right?"
38	His parents might support his transition, but they would never truly see him as a boy.
40	"I know what you want me to say. You want me to tell you that you should disobey your parents and go to prove to them that a trans guy can keep up with a bunch of cis boys. That way, when they find out, which they will because no offense, dude, you've got all the stealth of a drunk rhinoceros, you won't feel as guilty because I gave you permission."
41	"That's not true. Number one, my mom's an atheist and I'm pretty sure you need to believe in Christ to believe in an anti-Christ."
50	It was Saturday afternoon and he was at an end-of-summer barbecue for Family and Friends of Transgender Kids and Teens of Northeast Ohio.
51	"Have you thought about inviting them to our next meetup? It might be good for them to meet other trans kids."
53	"Okay, let's hear some ideas for what we can bring to the administration to make Oakley a better place for queer students. Last year, we petitioned for all-gender couples' tickets at school dances, which ended up being a huge success. What do you think we should do this year?" Riley raised their hand tentatively. "What about gender-neutral bathrooms?" ..."What about cis kids who want privacy while using the bathroom," asked Riley.
55	He could let Riley assume he was cis, or . . . "None taken. I'm not exactly cis."
66	Apart from the physical changes, like a deeper voice, broader shoulders, and the need to shave every two to four weeks, he gained a sense of calm and balance that wasn't there before going on hormones.

Page	Content
81	<p>“If you and this boy are engaging in certain behaviors, we’ll need to talk about protec—” “Ew, Mom. No. We’re just working on a project.” “Right, I know all about projects.” She put air quotes around the word.</p>
113	<p>“All right,” said Grayson, “I’ve gone over our ideas from our last meeting and I think we should go for creating a proposal for gender-neutral bathrooms.” ...“Besides, trans kids have enough to worry about. We shouldn’t have to worry about where we pee.” ...“Also, think how good it will look on college applications if you can say that you successfully fought for gender-neutral bathrooms in a conservative town.”</p>
115	<p>“Listen, I just want to warn you. His family isn’t all that accepting of queer stuff. It was his dad who fought against the dance petition last year. Gender-neutral bathrooms might give his dad a coronary. Just . . . be careful around him, okay?” ...The thing was, being perfectly nice didn’t mean he wasn’t homophobic or transphobic.</p>
119	<p>He wasn’t exactly out to the team as queer.</p>
122	<p>But he couldn’t ignore the jerk below his navel every time he thought about Justice. ...“Can I ask you something?” asked Spencer, putting his “is Justice actually a homophobe” plan in motion.</p>
123	<p>“My family has traditional values that don’t always match up with Oakley’s progressive views.”</p>
156	<p>“Did your dad teach you how to tie a tie?” asked Spencer. “He did, just before I went to college. He thought it’d help me fit in better with all the white boys. ...In reality it was late nights out and going to class with a hangover.</p>
162	<p>He enjoyed the press of bodies around him, and Grayson’s hands hot on his waist, running up his sides. He turned around so he was grinding on Grayson. He felt someone’s eyes on him and looked up to find Justice, glaring at them from across the room.</p>
177	<p>“Children are already being used by the enemy, even on our own soil. Take schools for example. You can’t imagine the filth that our children are exposed to there. They’re giving special privileges to homosexuals; they’re allowing males to share bathrooms with females. It’s disgu—”</p>
180	<p>Spencer’s parents had different methods of handling his transition. When they settled on a name, Mom bought a label maker and sewed new labels in all his clothes. Dad, on the other hand, would call him by everybody else’s name, including Luna, the cat, until he reached the right one. Spencer tried to be patient but soon Dad’s excuse of “it’s only been two weeks” turned into “it’s only been six months.” By that point, Spencer had been seeing his therapist and had been referred to an endocrinologist who put him on Lupron, a hormone blocker that was injected once a month. Everybody he met saw him as a boy, so when Dad called him “she” or used his old name in public, it made for extremely awkward encounters.</p>
189	<p>They thought they were keeping their voices down, but Spencer heard the arguments, like how Dad wanted him to wait longer before starting hormones and Mom talking to well-meaning friends and relatives who had heard outdated information about the dangers of hormone blockers.</p>

Page	Content
205	Justice smiled down at him and Spencer responded by wrapping his arms around his neck and pulling his head down, crushing Justice's lips against his. ...Justice's mouth, tasting of powdered sugar from the funnel cake, moved gently against Spencer's own. Warmth spread from his lips throughout his entire body. ...Spencer rolled over so he was on top of Justice and kissed him again.
207	Aiden was two years older than him and he'd already had experience with things like dating and sex.
218	Justice crossed the floor in three steps, wrapped his arms around Spencer, and kissed him. ...Spencer threw his arms around Justice's neck and pulled his head back, kissing him hard. ..."So?" said Spencer, standing on tiptoe to kiss him again.
219	Walking in, the first thing you saw was a sign that said, No racism, no sexism, no homophobia, no transphobia, no xenophobia, only music. He wondered whether Justice had ever been in a majority queer space before.
222	Spencer looked around and saw that there were other couples of all genders there. Justice seemed to notice the same thing. His lips brushed the back of Spencer's neck and he said, "You know, this is the most gay people I've been around." ...Justice's lips moved against his neck and Spencer could tell he was smiling. "Sort of like being home."
223	"When did you know you were gay?" asked Spencer. Justice's chuckle shook Spencer's body. "When I realized that I really, really, really loved Jesus." ..."I was nine years old, and we had gone to a family summer camp and they had this statue of Jesus on the cross, and I'm sorry, but he had really nice abs." ..."It's not funny. I thought I was going to hell for thinking Jesus was hot. What about you?" ...Another complication of being both trans and queer.
224	He figured he'd avoid using pronouns at all and hope for the best when Justice said, "So, what are your pronouns?" ..."They, them, their," they responded.
225	He grabbed Spencer's waist and dipped his head, catching Spencer's lips in a bruising kiss. His hands trailed down Spencer's sides and he pressed their bodies together.
226	He could say, "I was born in the wrong body" or "I was assigned female at birth," but none of those felt right to him. "I'm a guy, but for a while I was the only one who knew that." "I'm not following," said Justice. "What I'm trying to say is that when I was born everybody thought I was a girl. Even I did for a few years, but then I realized that I couldn't live like a girl anymore so I transitioned. I'm transgender."
233	His lips worked over the tender skin where his jaw met his neck. "I've wanted to kiss you all day." Justice's gaze dipped to Spencer's lips. "Then kiss me." ..."Now she thinks I'm trying to deflower you."
236	Dad continued. "I'm not saying don't have sex. But if and when you do, make sure you're ready and take proper precautions." ...Justice rested with his back against the wall, Spencer tucked between his legs. He trailed kisses down Spencer's neck and nuzzled his nose against Spencer's cheek.

Page	Content
	<p>...Spencer turned his head and let Justice kiss him. It was gentle at first. Then Justice brushed his tongue over Spencer's bottom lip.</p> <p>Spencer twisted around so he was kneeling and covered Justice's lips with his. Justice buried his fingers in Spencer's hair. Then he slid his hands underneath Spencer's shirt. Spencer opened his mouth to deepen the kiss, but Justice moved his head and Spencer ended up making out with his ear.</p>
238	<p>He kissed the back of Spencer's neck again, sending tingles down his spine.</p> <p>...He leaned forward and kissed Spencer softly.</p>
246	<p>Inside was another bed, but this time it was a young couple debating whether they were ready to have sex. In the end, the boy pressured the girl into agreeing. It was kind of funny because "having sex" meant that they held hands and got under the covers together. But then it turned out that the guy had an STD and the girl died.</p> <p>"Oh, so that's how you have sex," said Micah. A mother of two preteens who had also joined the tour shot him a dirty look.</p>
247	<p>The wall was covered with a backdrop to look like a locker room and two guys were sitting on a bench kissing. It was clear from the badly done makeup that one of the guys was actually a girl in drag.</p>
251	<p>"It's not Coach. The league won't let me play because my birth certificate says female."</p> <p>There, he'd said it.</p>
257	<p>"I had a thing with a striker on the team last year."</p> <p>"A sex thing?" blurted out Spencer.</p>
258	<p>"If you're gay—" began Spencer.</p> <p>"Actually, I'm bi."</p>
260	<p>Spencer ignored him. "Coach did bench me, but he had no choice. The league won't let me play because my birth certificate says I'm female."</p> <p>..."And the reason it says that is because I'm transgender."</p>
263	<p>"How's this for a pitch: 'Transgender teen denied the right to play soccer for progressive private school.'"</p>
265	<p>For a while, I cut myself off from all things trans. But I found that I missed it. There were things I couldn't talk about with my cis friends, and they would sometimes say something transphobic and I would laugh along, and I realized I was part of the problem.</p>
267	<p>"It would be so weird having to share a locker room with her."</p> <p>"Him, you mean."</p> <p>"Whatever. I'm pretty sure he doesn't have a dick."</p> <p>...The team was in position for kickoff and every player wore an armband in the light blue, pink, and white stripes of the transgender flag.</p>
271	<p>"But Spencer is different. Though he identifies as a boy, Spencer was born a girl."</p> <p>..."I was so excited to have a little girl to dress up, but by about two he refused to wear the dresses I put him in."</p> <p>..."From an early age it was clear that he wasn't comfortable doing what other girls were doing, but I never thought he was transgender. We all thought he was a tomboy. It wasn't until puberty that I truly understood how unhappy he was."</p> <p>...Screen Mom continued, "He went through a tough time and finally he was like, 'Mom, I can't do this. I can't be a girl. I'm a boy.'"</p>

Page	Content
	<p>...“A range of emotions. Scared, confused, guilty that I didn’t know this about my own child. Upset that he felt like he had to hide it from me. But I got support. That’s one thing I’ll say to parents of transgender or gender-nonconforming children. There’s tons of support out there.”</p> <p>...Spencer was on the screen again holding a copy of his birth certificate from his file in the Oakley office. Most of the information was blurred out but the FEMALE next to sex was visible.</p>
276	<p>Riley unfurled a banner that said It’s a boy!</p> <p>“What’s all this?” asked Spencer, between bursts of laughter.</p> <p>“We’re throwing you a coming out party,” said Riley. “I know you’re already out, but we wanted to do something nice for you. It’s not too cringey, is it?”</p> <p>“This is super extra, but thanks.” As he dug into a piece of blue cake, he thought more about his transition: coming out, his first therapy appointment, going on hormone blockers for the first time. He had treated each step as another obstacle to overcome.</p> <p>...“I’m not staying long. I wanted to share that we’ve received your message about gender-neutral bathrooms loud and clear, and we appreciate the amount of work and effort it took for you all to do this. I want to assure you that we will consider your proposal very seriously.</p> <p>“All I ask is for you to be patient. We’ll need to find the money to build them and have those funds approved by the board, not to mention getting past building regulations and dealing with concerns from parents. But I’ll do whatever I can to make Oakley more inclusive for students of all genders. Recent current events have shown me that being passive is going against progress.”</p>
278	<p>“Now, I’m an old-fashioned man. In my day, girls were girls and boys were boys. There wasn’t any of this gender business.” He waved his hand in a dismissive gesture, because obviously gender was something that had been made up in 2005. “However, I recognize that times have changed and you can either get with it or get left behind. Did you know that we were the first desegregated league in the state?” he said, as if he deserved a medal for not being racist.</p>
279	<p>“What about other trans kids?”</p> <p>“We’ve talked it through, and we’ve decided to use any government-issued ID to determine gender.”</p>
291	<p>Spencer shoved Justice roughly against the wall of the tree house. Justice’s eyes widened in surprise. His pulse fluttered beneath Spencer’s fingertips. Spencer kissed Justice so hard, their teeth clanged against each other.</p> <p>...In response, Spencer dove in for another kiss.</p> <p>When the cold had turned his lips too numb to feel Justice’s kisses, Spencer snuck him inside and up to his bedroom.</p>
295	<p>He continued, “I didn’t realize it then, but I do now. It isn’t about bathrooms, just like the civil rights movement wasn’t about water fountains or seats on a bus. Denying someone a basic human right is another way to dehumanize them. Unfortunately, transgender people experience injustices like this and worse every day, especially transgender women of color.”</p> <p>Spencer held up a thick stack of paper. “This is a list of every transgender person killed so far this year. In observance of Transgender Day of Remembrance tomorrow, we’re going to honor them and their lives.”</p>

Profanity/Derogatory Term	Count
Ass	6
Dick	3
Fuck	4
Goddamn	3
Piss	3
Queer	16
Shit	8