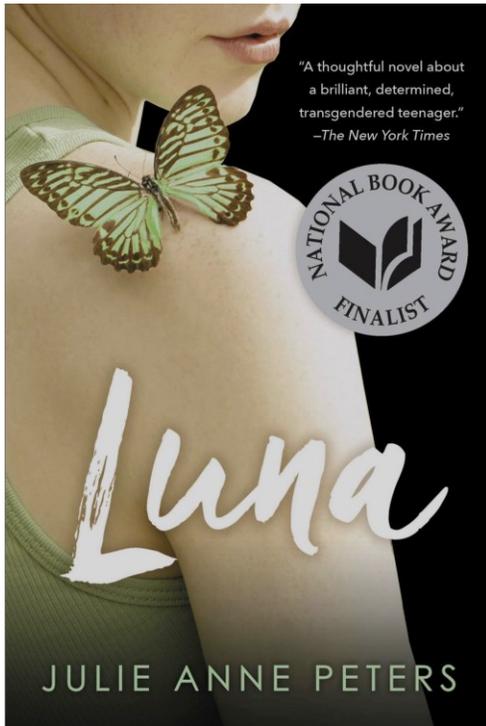


# LUNA



*Young Adult*

**By Julie Anne Peters**

ISBN: 978-0-316-03989-5

## **Book Summary:**

A teenage boy confides in his sister that he believes he's really a girl.

## **Summary of Concerns:**

This book contains explicit alternate gender ideologies; alternate sexualities; profanity; inexplicit sexual activities; references to drug and alcohol use; references to suicide; hate involving bigotry and bullying.

**2** /5

**Teen Guidance**  
BookLooks Review Rating

Page	Content
3	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.
5	In his head and heart he knew he was a girl? That he was transgender.
11	She was the junkie, not me. Her medicine cabinet was crammed with uppers and downers and equalizers and mood stabilizers. I think she was going through the change—mental pause. I just wish she'd lock up all her pills.
14	If Liam could wish for one thing in the world, one birthday present, he would ask to be born again. Born right, in the body of a girl.
15	He was just angry about his life, which I could understand. It must be horrible to be in the wrong body, to have this dual identity.
18	<p>"Not Dad," he says, merging into traffic. "Me. I want to kill me."</p> <p>I sighed wearily.</p> <p>I hated when he got this way—depressive, suicidal.</p>
22	I didn't mind buying him panties and bras, but handling the dirties... ew.
51	<p>The gender scales didn't extend equidistant in both directions. For example, if you were a girl you could be off-the-scale feminine and that'd be fine, but if you acted or felt just a little too masculine, you were a dyke.</p> <p>Same for guys. Mucho macho, fine. Soft and gentle, fag.</p> <p>What if you happened to be born off both scales, between scales, like Liam? Then you were just a freak.</p> <p>...He told me once there was no place for him in the world, that he didn't fit anywhere. He really was off the scale. Boy by day, girl by night. Except, he was a girl all the time, inside. It was hardwired into his brain, he said, the way intelligence or memory is. His body didn't reflect his inner image.</p>
54	<p>I exhaled a long breath. "Luna, if you were walking down the street in that outfit, no one would be able to tell. You look like a regular girl."</p> <p>Her smile warmed the room. She loved hearing that, that she could pass. Most girls spend hours and hours working on themselves so they'll be striking, eye-catching, desirable. Liam would give everything to live one day as a plain, ordinary girl.</p>
66	<p>First thing I see are the pill bottles. A row lined up neatly along the edge of his bookshelf. They're Mom's; they have to be. I'm thirteen and I already know my mom's a popper. But that's not what freaks me. The bottles are all empty.</p> <p>..."Come on." The panic registers in my voice. "You have to throw up."</p> <p>He goes limp. He doesn't budge. My first impulse is to kick him, so I do.</p> <p>..."You have to throw up, Liam. I won't let you die!" This comes out a screech, which makes him raise his head and look at me.</p> <p>His eyes are already dead.</p> <p>...His left hand reaches out and snags the football helmet beside him. He holds it up to me by the faceguard. Inside is a mound of pills. Blue, purple, orange, white.</p> <p>"I can't do it," Liam says. "I can't even do it. I can't do anything right. I'm wrong. All wrong."</p> <p>..."Please, Re." He clasps my wrists and pulls me away. "I wasn't meant to be born." He transfers the helmet to my right hand. "Help me die. Pour these down my throat, okay?"</p> <p>He pleads urgently, "Please?"</p>

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68	<p>“... and I found all kinds of history on TG’s. For instance, did you know in ancient Greece and Rome, Philo writes about men transforming into women?” TG’s. Transgenders.</p>
69	<p>“Lots of Native American tribes pass down stories about trans people,” Liam babbled on, “the Mohave, Navaho, Pueblo. They accept, even embrace, females who are men, and vice versa. ‘Two-spirit’ people, they call them. Did you know in the Yuman Indians there were groups of people called Elxa who actually underwent a ‘change of spirit’? Isn’t that cool?” ...“Mick Jagger says he cross-dresses at home.” I frowned at Liam. “Does that make him trans?” Liam shrugged. “You never know. It’s not either or. There are shades of gray to people’s gender.” ...“Ru Paul? I thought he was a drag queen.” ...“Is that what you want to be, a drag queen?” ...“I found these testimonials from TG’s who’re transitioning. What they’re going through. It’s me, exactly me, same as me.” ...His desired life. The girl clothes. The makeup. ...“There’s this one T-girl, Teri Lynn, who transitioned a couple of years ago. She calls it ‘remaking herself.’ She’s following the Harry Benjamin standards to the letter so she can have her SRS next year.” ...“Sorry. I should keep you filled in on the lingo. SRS: Sex Reassignment Surgery.” ...“You mean a sex change operation?” ...“Oh, Re. It’s all I’ve ever wanted my whole life. You know that.” ...Transition. Is that what it meant? An actual, physical transition? A sex change operation?</p>
76	<p>“Oh, Re,” Luna breathed audibly, holding my eyes. “I have to transition. I don’t care how much it costs. I have to transition now.” I dropped my arm behind her back. “How much does it cost?” She shook her head. “I don’t mean money.” What other costs were there? “You have to help me,” she said; pleaded. “Help? How?” Did she expect me to perform the surgery? I’m sure. “I’ll start slow, start presenting myself. Dress in public. How do you think I should go about it?”</p>
86	<p>“The T-girl I met online.” T-girl. Trans girl. Right. “She’s nice,” Liam said. “She told me all about her first time being out, trying to pass. She was seventeen, too, but she didn’t have a car. She had to ride the bus. So she takes this bus to the library because she knows there’s a unisex bathroom there where she can change. She lives in Seattle.” ...“So she walks across the park to a City Market and the first people she encounters are a mom and her two kids. Teri Lynn knows they’re looking at her. Staring. She almost chickens out. But she keeps on walking, holding her head high. She thinks she’s done it, that she’s past them, when one of the kids goes, ‘Mommy, why is that man wearing a dress?’” ...“Teri Lynn just about had a coronary. Before her electrolysis, her beard was really dark. All the foundation in the world wasn’t going to cover it.”</p>
88	<p>“You think anyone will read me?” Her eyes met mine in the mirror. “Tell me the truth.” The truth was, I thought she’d stand out. Not because she looked like a guy. She was tall, and more attractive than most GG’s our age. GG’s—Genetic Girls. That’s what Liam called</p>

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	<p>us, as opposed to TG's or T-girls. "You look gorgeous, Luna," I told her, repositioning the collar on the blouse to mask her Adam's apple.</p> <p>"Teri Lynn had hers shaved." Luna stretched her neck in the mirror. "She says you can hardly see it now."</p>
94	<p>Liam shakes his head, looking straight at me. "I'm not gay. I'm trans."</p> <p>..."I'm not gay." Liam spins away. "It's not the same. I'm a girl."</p> <p>"Whoo hoo. Faggy boy."</p>
97	<p>I didn't know what to do for him. Step up the suicide watch? I did, actually. I cleared the room of all sharp objects, which was dumb. If Liam was determined to do it, he'd find a way.</p> <p>...Hopefully he was over this whole transition phase.</p>
101	<p>I think I preferred him as a sexist pig.</p>
122	<p>He's not into girls, okay? He likes guys. We both do. That doesn't make him gay. It makes him as straight as me because inside he's a girl, Dad. Just like me. You have two daughters, okay?</p>
125	<p>"It's not all makeup. She's had surgery. A chin implant and nose reduction. But she says the hormones made the difference."</p> <p>"So take the hormones." I handed him the boy picture so I could get back to work.</p> <p>"I am." He scooted off the bed, leaving the boy picture behind.</p> <p>...Liam's taking hormones? What hormones? Those were serious drugs. Where was he getting them? Off the Internet? That had to be illegal.</p> <p>...It was too late to get into a deep discussion about hormones and surgery and transitioning.</p> <p>...It wasn't the difference between the male and female that struck me so much as the change in demeanor, the attitude, the confidence. Teri Lynn, the male, seemed to be another person altogether. A dead person, the way Liam appeared sometimes. Sad, vacant. The other Teri Lynn, the real one, had blossomed and sprung to life. The way Liam broke free when he morphed into Luna.</p>
129	<p>I heard Mom on the wall phone in the kitchen. "Will you please have Dr. Rosell call me?" she said. "I need an early refill on my estrogen."</p>
159	<p>A few people were dancing, but most just milled around, smoking, drinking, getting high.</p>
185	<p>Yeah, I considered telling them, Liam wants to be a girl. Can you arrange a small reception for his sex reassignment surgery? Maybe a little Post-op Party by Patrice? And Dad, you could redecorate the basement. She's partial to pink.</p>
189	<p>"No, it's nothing like that. I'm not sick. I'm... a girl."</p> <p>...He set it down and said, "What you see on the outside? This," he swept a hand down his body, "isn't me. The real me is on the inside."</p> <p>..."What he means is he's not really a guy." I said the words so fast they all ran together.</p> <p>"He's a girl. He's trans. Get it?"</p> <p>Aly frowned a little. "Trans what?"</p> <p>Right. She didn't know the lingo. "Transgender," I told her. "He's a girl in a boy's body."</p> <p>..."I'm a trans girl. A T-girl. The way you're a genetic girl, a G-girl."</p> <p>"G-girl, T-girl. What the hell are you talking about?" Aly gulped her Sprite.</p> <p>Liam held my gaze. "Maybe I should just show her."</p> <p>"No—"</p>

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	<p>“Show me what?” Aly cut me off. “Your boobs? Your T-boobs?” She snorted and drank again.</p>
191	<p>“He’s not gay,” I said. “He’s trans. He’s not what he appears. He’ll show you. He’s going to change into her girl role. Except, it’s not really a role. It’s who he really is. Luna. Who she is.”</p> <p>...“I know this is hard to understand. It’s even harder to explain, but Liam feels like a girl. He is a girl, really. Problem is, she’s a girl who was born with a boy’s body. I don’t know how it happens, or why. Luna says it’s hard-wired into her brain to be female. It’s who she knows she is, same way you and I know. It’s instinctive. Natural.”</p> <p>...“What you’re telling me is, he’s in there,” she thumbed over her shoulder, “putting on girls’ clothes?” Her voice rose.</p> <p>“More than that. He’s transforming. She is. You’ll see.”</p> <p>“He’s a... a cross-dresser?”</p> <p>...“It’s not the same. Liam’s dressing because he wants you to see what he sees on the inside. His true identity. Hers, I mean. Luna’s. There’s all kinds of psychological mumbo jumbo and names for this stuff. Dysphoria, Gender Identity Disorder, I don’t know. She can explain it better than me.”</p> <p>“She?” Aly smiled sardonically.</p> <p>...“That’s another thing. When she’s dressed, she wants you to address her by her chosen name—Luna. And use ‘her’ and ‘she’ It won’t be hard. She really is a girl.”</p>
196	<p>His head tilts to the left and he rests his cheek on his arm, his elbow on his breast. His... breast?</p> <p>He’s wearing a bra.</p> <p>“I’m Lia.” He smiles shyly, dropping his eyes to the floor. “Lia Marie.”</p> <p>“Okaaay,” I say slowly.</p> <p>She lifts her eyes and adds, “I’m a girl.”</p>
213	<p>“I’m sorry if I hurt you,” she said quietly, “or humiliated you in front of Chris. I was only doing what needs to be done. This is life or death for me, Re. If I don’t transition, I don’t want to live.”</p>
221	<p>Clasping her hands in her lap, she said, “Dad, I’m a transsexual.”</p> <p>...It was always transgender. TG or trans. Transsexual. It took it to another level.</p> <p>...She added, “I’d like to change my name to Luna, with your blessing. And yours, Mom.”</p> <p>...“You lied to me! You told me he wasn’t gay.” He pointed an accusatory finger.</p> <p>...“Like I said, I’m a transsexual. TS, if you prefer. I was supposed to be a girl, and I am, but I was born in the wrong body. Think of it as a birth anomaly.”</p>
224	<p>“Why did you leave? Liam is transitioning. Do you understand what that means?” Of course she didn’t understand. “She’s changing her sex.”</p>
226	<p>Liam grabs his penis and starts to pull. “Take it off,” he says, almost in a whisper. He sloshes toward Katie and repeats, “Take it off.”</p> <p>...“Take it off,” Liam says to her.</p> <p>“Take what off? Where are your trunks?”</p> <p>“Mommy, take it off.” Liam pulls at himself again.</p> <p>...Liam backs away from her. “No,” he whines. “I want it off. Take it off, take it off, take it off.” He starts slapping at his penis and stamping his feet, throwing a fit.</p> <p>...“No!” Liam shouts. “No, I’m not a young man.”</p>

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228	<p>Why hadn't Mom acknowledged Liam's difference? She could've made his life so much easier. She could've raised him as a girl. Why didn't she?</p> <p>...After that time Liam stole Mom's pills to commit suicide and I'd flushed them down the toilet, why hadn't Mom interrogated us? Gone crazy? Asked where all her pills went? Unless she knew.</p> <p>Unless she left them out on purpose. She had a purpose. She gave Liam easy access. "Here, Liam," I could hear her thinking. "Help yourself. Something to help you sleep. Something to ease the pain."</p>
232	<p>Chris said, "I have an uncle who's gay."</p>
239	<p>"I want you to tell me what you think you're doing."</p> <p>Surveying the vicinity over my head, she replied, "I'm going to Seattle. Teri Lynn has an extra room where I can stay until I get settled. She's going to speak to her therapist on Monday to see if he can take me right away."</p> <p>"For what?" I fairly screeched.</p> <p>Luna finally looked at me. "For evaluation. To begin my change. To start the Harry Benjamin standards of care. Depending on how strictly this doctor adheres to the rules, I may be required to live as a woman for a year to complete my real-life experience. Then I'll need two letters from psychotherapists to recommend me for SRS. Which shouldn't be a problem."</p> <p>...As if thinking out loud, she said, "I need to get my own prescription for estrogen, too."</p> <p>"What?" Was that the hormone she was taking, estrogen? Luna rattled on about antiandrogens, laser hair removal, breast implants if she still needed them.</p> <p>If? I glanced at her chest. Was she growing breasts?</p> <p>Estrogen. It stuck in my head. Wasn't Mom taking estrogen? She'd said something about a prescription. "Are you stealing hormones from Mom's medicine cabinet?" I said. Or was Mom doing what she was so good at, pretending not to notice? Giving him the opportunity. "Is she trying to kill you again?"</p> <p>"What?" Liam made a face. "What are you talking about?"</p> <p>I turned away.</p> <p>"Mom never hurt me. She wouldn't—"</p> <p>"She knows about you." I whirled back. "She always has, hasn't she?"</p> <p>Luna closed her eyes and dropped her head. She let out a sigh. "Did I ever tell you about the time she caught me in her room?"</p>

Profanity/Derogatory Terms	Count
Ass	8
Bitch	2
Dick	3
Dyke	2
Fag	9
Fuck	2
Goddamn/Goddammit	1
Piss	1
Shit	15