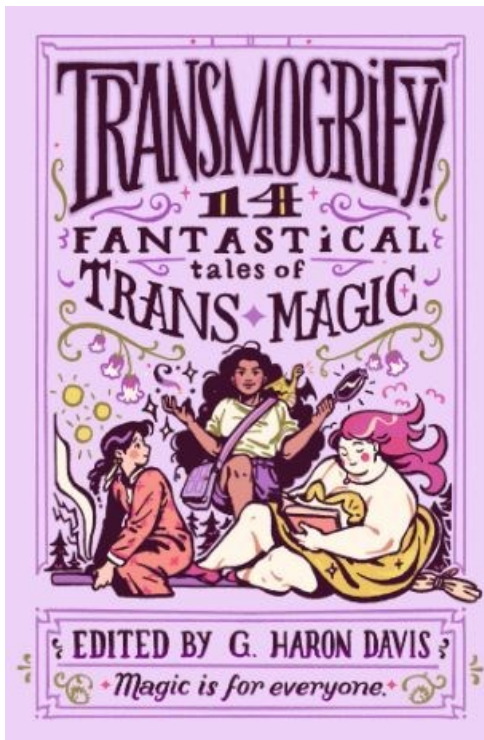


TRANSMOGRIFY!: 14 FANTASTICAL TALES OF TRANS MAGIC



Young Adult

Edited by G. Haron Davis

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Book Summary:

An anthology of short stories featuring characters with alternate gender ideologies.

Summary of Concerns:

This book contains explicit alternate gender ideologies; alternate sexualities; sexual activities; profanity; derogatory terms; horror; mild violence; reference to alcohol use by minor; suicidal ideation; and references to suicide.

2/**5**

Teen Guidance
BookLooks Review Rating

Page	Content
5	<p>I grew up during a time when being anything other than straight and cis (and neurotypical, and white, and . . .) opened you up to mockery, bullying, and worse. My own journey regarding my identity didn't begin until my late twenties. But it doesn't have to be like that for this generation, or generations to come. It warms my heart to see so many of y'all out and proud and loud and thriving.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the openness that y'all express yourselves with scares a lot of old folks—and not-so-old folks. They want nothing more than to silence us, to push us to the fringes, to erase us from history as if trans people only came into existence in the twenty-first century rather than being present for the entirety of human existence. And one tactic they use to ensure we don't gain "legitimacy" is by excluding us from media—movies, TV, songs, and, yes, even our beloved books.</p>
6	<p>Within this anthology, you may encounter brief mentions of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> misgendering transphobia body horror fantasy violence references to suicide/ suicidal ideation
7	<p>Because sure, they'll give a white trash queer kid like me a taste of three meals a day, AC all the time, and a bed in a frame.</p>
16	<p>My eyes drop to the pin on his lanyard. HE/ THEY, it reads in black enamel, a comic book pow around it to make it stand out. A thin thread, almost imperceptible, unwinds inside me. I don't normally offer up pronouns (it's a good way to get your ass beat around here), but he started it.</p> <p>Taking his hand, I say, "Rae Collins, pronouns whatever/ whatever."</p> <p>"Oh hey, it's nice to meet another in-between," he says, letting his hand slip back into his pocket.</p> <p>... "Thought I'd be the only enby."</p> <p>... Pretty much everybody I know and hang out with is queer: Trinity's bi and Lexie's aro-ace. There's some other people at school up and down the rainbow. But slipping out of the binary is still a little much in Indiana.</p> <p>Around here, a lot of people think trans women have beards and army boots and loom in public bathrooms; trans men are weird but more acceptable, because who wouldn't want to be a man? They just wanna know if they have a dick. Dick, yes? Seal of approval, stamped.</p> <p>Everything else is either "imaginary," "attack helicopter," "looking for attention," or a collection of exciting slurs we've all heard, along with some brand-new ones for flavor. My friends even slip from time to time. To them, I default to girl, and I don't argue. Even if it's not completely true, it's not untrue.</p> <p>I like the body I was born in. It just doesn't reflect who I am, all of the time. It's got nothing to do with my clothes, or my hair, or whether I wear makeup (mostly jeans and T-shirts; kinda short; only for special occasions).</p> <p>That's the problem with a binary for me: too easy to hang qualities under category one or category two.</p> <p>... But I'm category all of 'em or none of 'em, or sometimes some of 'em. I'm attracted to all kinds, and I feel like I'm all kinds.</p> <p>So, what's my gender? Whatever. What's my orientation? Whatever. But try to explain that</p>

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	in Indiana, home of the latest bathroom bill. Nobody's gonna say, Oh, interesting, thanks for sharing that with me. I repeat: it's a good way to get your ass beat.
19	I point out his pin. "He/ they." ..."Hiiii, Sang Kim, he/ they. I'm Lexie Cash, she/ her, and isn't Rae the cutest human you've ever seen?"
30	I stare at myself in the mirror, pressing down my large breasts with my hands as if I could flatten them permanently. ...At my old school, where magic was the norm and I was the only one of my friends with colorless black hair, the clothes we wore weren't so gendered. Sure, we had dresses and suits and jewelry and makeup and everything in between. And while our clothes had a different vibe than the ones here, almost like our realms were from two different times, at least I could dress how I pleased and no one would bat an eye or call me "girl."
31	Worst of all, he never lets me forget that I'm seen as "girl" here.
32	I'm someone others call "girl," and she's a girl some wrongly call "boy." We're not the same, but we see each other, and that's what matters.
60	Ari realized something else too. They didn't know what their own truth was. A very large part of them was almost too afraid to ask. All they knew was that whatever the world told them about themselves had always felt wrong. Male. Female. Feminine. Masculine. Both? Neither? At first Ari had wondered if they were like Soran the magician, fluid between genders, ever changing. But that hadn't felt right either.
66	They called me the Majestic Queer Academy of Hermeneutical and Practical Magics, or MQAoHaPM. ...I met Jak and Wunit three years ago, during their move-in, the day they went from sparks of potential to full-fledged queer students of magic—magix.
67	He'd showed enough innate skill to get into the school for queer, trans, and gender-nonconforming magical youths (aka me)—and then stalled out.
79	Wunit turned a meaningful stare at Jak, who was still pretty naked in his boxers and sleeping binder.
93	"And isn't forbidding me to join the regatta because of stupid gender rules just as barbaric?"
95	"Ciano, we talked about this last year, and the year before. Navigators are to be female, Rowers are to be male. It's how the system works, it's how it has always worked. You can't just ask us to make exceptions to our traditions for you." "Why?" I blurt out. "Would it really be so awful to change something for the better?" Elder Oltremare waves his hand, dismissing my outburst—dismissing me. "It is just not done," he says.
98	"But I have to do it. I have to prove to the Elders that their precious traditions need to be changed. Made more inclusive." "Of you." A pang of annoyance makes me snort. "Yeah, of me! And all the people like me. As if wanting to be treated fairly because, you know, I have dreams, somehow makes my goal less noble."

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105	<p>“They won’t let me join,” I explain. “Because Navigators are girls and Rowers are boys and I’m . . . neither. I trained all my life for it . . . and now suddenly I can’t participate. Because of tradition.”</p>
115	<p>Teenu curls their lip. They’re only fourteen, but chakra mastery comes so easily to them, they’re already preparing for the sixth letter of their name.</p>
138	<p>Once caught in its hypnotic snare, a Wanting unzips you throat to navel. Pulls back the curtain of your skin and steps inside your chest. Cloaks itself with your rib cage—and wears you. Or worse.</p>
139	<p>It won’t be quick. Wantings are patient creatures, will root your feet into the sweet decay of earth to keep you. Then, bite by bite, year by year, a Wanting stretches a meal out of you. Until all that remains is a skeleton tree with glistening leaves of torn flesh. ...The creature thrashes its head with a silent scream. Its skin bubbles, turning Julien’s stomach. The illusion of Nan’s face begins to melt away, revealing the Wanting’s pearlescent scales. The prize Julien must claim before burning the Wanting down to ash. Julien wraps molten fingers around the Wanting’s throat. With their other hand, they press the knife into the Wanting’s cheek. Hears their own voice hiss, feeling the sharp kiss of the blade against their own. Nan and Enid never prepared Julien for this part, never told Julien the Wanting’s pain became theirs.</p>
156	<p>Neither of us has any kind of illusion that we’re seriously flirting, but Teeny has the unfortunate affliction of being too white to function. So any emotion she has is immediately visible on her skin.</p>
181	<p>Then just last year Ronan had come out at school, and everything had fallen apart. Mrs. Byron had laughed when he’d told her his new name and pronouns and given a lecture on the dangers of gender ideology. Coach Thicke had refused to let him join the boys’ cross-country team, which meant losing any hope he’d had for a shot at the state championship. And when someone had complained about Ronan using the boys’ bathroom, Principal Sass had taken that away from him, too. Now he had to walk all the way to the other side of campus just to pee.</p>
184	<p>Under his mask, Ronan smiled. How funny it was to be standing there with the same person who had humiliated him for weeks, telling him things like “You’re too young to know who you are yet” and “This is just a fad” and “You’ll thank me when you’re older.” She looked so small and ridiculous now. “I’m here to punish you,” he said. “But I haven’t done anything!” “You’ve been cruel to the children,” said Ronan. ...“Ronan Mayhew, Tara Lindt, Javi DaSilva . . .” All the trans kids at Putnam Academy. “But they’re—” “Protected!” Ronan shouted as the shower curtain shook with a terrible wind and the dolls’ eyes rolled back in their tiny heads.</p>
188	<p>“Remember Ronan Mayhew? How you said letting him join the boys’ cross-country team was a ‘slippery slope’? And Tara Lindt? You told her she didn’t belong in the girls’ locker room.” “Those queers?” He made a disgusted face.</p>

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195	<p>“What do you mean, like me?”</p> <p>“My father wanted a son. But he got a daughter instead. He couldn’t accept that. None of the Coven could.”</p> <p>“You mean the Coven tried to hang you?”</p> <p>She nodded. “They were afraid.”</p>
197	<p>She doesn’t actually call me by that name. She uses a name that hasn’t been mine for a good few years now. I’ve learned to tolerate it. Doesn’t make it any better, or mean it hurts any less every time I’m reminded that I’m not welcome in the house I grew up in.</p>
199	<p>Thank God Carter’s never realized how hot he is.</p> <p>And thank God I’m a lesbian.</p>
201	<p>He doesn’t understand how wearing a tuxedo feels like I’m suffocating, how even during Dad and Connie’s wedding, a day where I was thrilled to see Dad happy again, all I wanted to do was get home and rip off the suit and crawl into bed.</p> <p>I came out to Dad a week later. “Yeah,” I tell Carter. But it isn’t just that.</p> <p>I’ve lived peacefully for nearly eighteen years, barely getting by, shoving my dysphoria as deep down as it’ll go just so I can get by without making waves.</p>
205	<p>“I just want to prove a point, Ella.” And he uses “Ella” because Mrs. Jackson is one of the teachers that I trusted enough to come out to, enough to ask her to use my real name.</p>
206	<p>“I realize that I’m a middle-aged cis woman, so my experience here is going to be limited. I remember being your age and feeling like everything was the end of the world.”</p>
210	<p>“Whoa, Ella! You’re hot!” Carter cuts in, and I can’t stop myself from laughing. “I mean, you’ve always been hot, but . . . you know?”</p>
212	<p>“Ella . . . we discussed this.” Connie presses her fingers to her forehead. “This gender thing . . . this . . . transgenderism or whatever you call it. It’s not something you’re allowed to do in my house.”</p>
213	<p>“You’re a boy; you are your father’s son. And I’m not going to let this continue.”</p> <p>“Fuck you.”</p> <p>“What did you say to me?”</p> <p>“I said fuck you. You self-centered, abusive, transphobic, homophobic, entitled monster!”</p>
217	<p>Unluckily, he’s currently pinned in the corner, making out with Georgia like the world is about to end.</p>
218	<p>I apologize to Carter for cockblocking him and he promises that it isn’t a big deal.</p>
219	<p>“Oh, there she is.” I hear Connie say when I open the front door. Except she doesn’t use she.</p>
220	<p>She’s desperate, her panic fueled by every time she misgendered me or said something transphobic. Every single day she demanded that I clean this house she thought she owned, how I was forced to cook nearly every single day, how she forced me out of my bedroom, how she made me clean up after her and her children.</p>
223	<p>And she leans in, her soft lips pressing against mine. My brain wants to believe that this is a dream, that I’m still asleep, that there’s no possible way that life could change this drastically over twenty-four hours.</p>
231	<p>“Did you . . . forget . . . to mark your gender box, too?” I ask while looking down at my dripping cargo shorts and soaked boots.</p> <p>“No, but also yes,” they say, and I squint.</p>

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	...“Changing clothes?” “No, changing gender. My face. I use a shapeshifting charm.”
247	She has burnt-orange freckles in her sepia brown skin. Every time I brought them up, she denied their existence. That last time was also the last time I kissed— No. Think of something else, Ares.
253	I’ve been a mage in this body for seventeen years, but I also know for a fact that this is at least my seventh reincarnation, and the third consecutive time I’ve come back yelling, “Screw the gender binary!”
266	He is only sixteen, after all—but it’s more than that. He is soft, like a woman. He cannot break a horse or ride a bull. He cannot shoot a gun or skin an animal. He hates violence, and blood, and death, and shies away from the backbreaking work of the farm, head too full of daydreams to think of what needs doing. Angus has always preferred the work of the house.
270	One night, just after Papa died, Angus had drunk a whole tumbler of his father’s whiskey.
273	It is a quiet song about a lonely woman who drowns her children in a river. The song used to scare him, but now that he’s older he thinks he can understand why she did what she did. Sometimes, Angus thinks about drowning himself. Maybe he would, even, if the Crick hadn’t gone dry.
287	Slowly, their lips touch, and Angus’s whole body is hot. Angus has thought of kissing Coyote since the day he came to the farm. Who wouldn’t think of it? Coyote is more handsome than any man, more beautiful than any woman.
291	Coyote sits beside him, at his feet. He looks pretty in Mama’s dress and Papa’s coat. His hair is loose and free.
294	But as the only nonbinary Keeper, Aryn had given up hope of doing anything more than maintaining the phone lines.
304	“First of all,” Aryn said, “I’ve escorted countless spirits to The Door. If anyone would know whether or not death by suicide makes you incapable of opening The Door, it would be me. And second of all, you wouldn’t be here at all if you weren’t allowed to move on. Your call never would’ve come through.”
308	“You died by suicide, right?” Aryn said. “Why?” D. J. stepped into the elevator. “I guess I just felt like no one could ever accept me there.” “Because you don’t fit a binary?”
310	Even asking them to consider Aryn’s existence as a nonbinary Keeper had

Profanity/Derogatory Term	Count
Ass	22
Bitch	4
Cock	1
Dick	3
Fuck	15
Piss	3
Shit	32
Tit	6