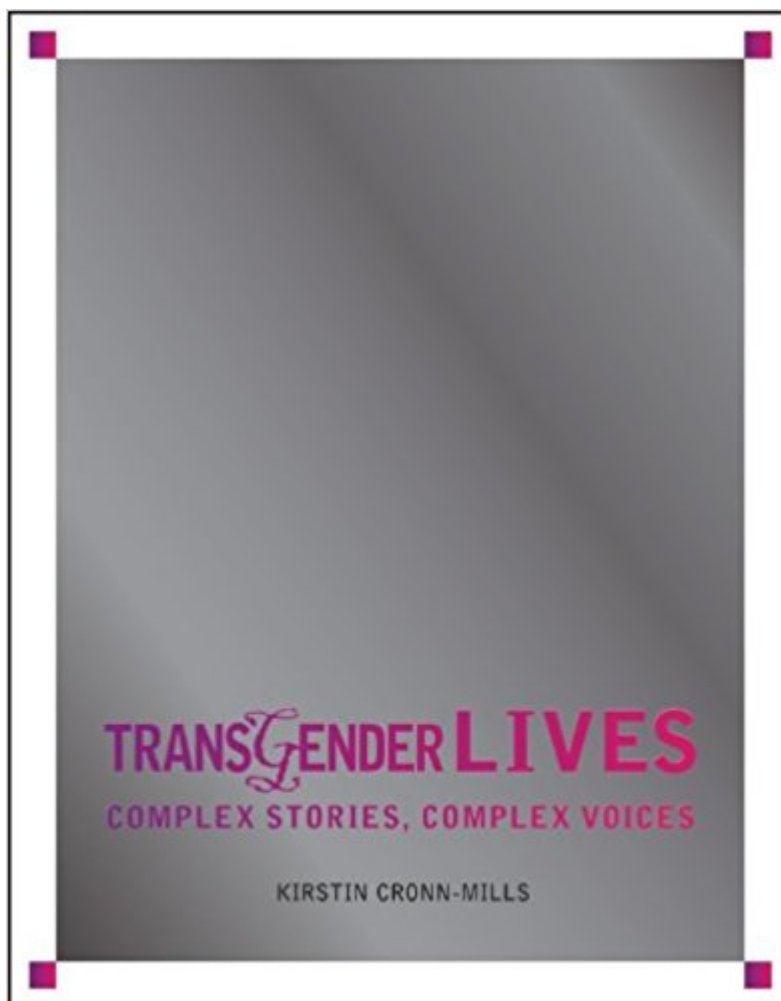


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# Transgender Lives: Complex Stories, Complex Voices



## Synopsis

"I didn't hear the word transgender until I was eighteen, when a person I was dating came out as trans. My boyfriend came out as my girlfriend, and I thought, 'What . . . is that?' She said, 'I just don't think I'm a man.' And I said, 'Guess what? Neither do I.' And then the skies parted, and I understood who I was. Katie Burgess, nonprofit director and community activist/organizer Meet Katie, Hayden, Dean, Brooke, David, Julia, and Natasha. Each is transgender, and in this book, they share their personal stories. Through their narratives, you'll get to know and love each person for their humor, intelligence, perseverance, and passion. You'll learn how they each came to better understand, accept, and express their gender identities, and you'll follow them through the sorrows and successes of their personal journeys. Transgender Lives helps you understand what it means to be transgender in America while learning more about transgender history, the broad spectrum of transgender identities, and the transition process. You'll explore the challenges transgender Americans face, including discrimination, prejudice, bullying and violence, unequal access to medical care, and limited legal protections. For transgender readers, these stories offer support and encouragement. Transgender Lives is a space for trans\* voices to be heard and to express the complexities of gender while focusing on what it means to be human.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Perhaps you've heard about Jazz and watch her tell her story on YouTube. She knew who she was from the time she was a little child and so did her parents. Jazz is a trans\* kid, but perhaps you are as well. Not everyone has the support she has, but you may be facing some of the same

issues she is. Do people walk away from you? Does the teasing and bullying get to you? Do you not really know who you are? If so, reading about many kids and their lives will help you learn to accept yourself ... just the way you are. There are many difference faces on the trans\* spectrum and you might recognize yours in this book. Hayden once went by the name Haylee, but that really didn't fit who he was inside. When he was in preschool it was time for everyone to line up to go to the bathroom. No big deal, Haylee was supposed to go with the girls, but he lined up with the boys. Wrong on the outside, but right on the inside.

Haylee looked like a girl on the outside, but inside she was a boy. Later, with the sincere support of his family, Hayden began to express himself and eventually began his physical transition from female to male. With all the twists and turns, it's really quite simple: Hayden was Hayden all along even though biologically he was female, his gender identity was male. After you learn about the trans\* gender basics, it will become very clear to you what trans\* means. You'll also be able to understand who people like Jazz and Hayden are. Now if an individual's gender identity matches that person's biological anatomy, that person is said to be cisgender. If not, and their identities don't align with the biology of the sex assigned, they are transgender. Then there are individuals like Brooke Wilcoxson, who considers herself to be very unique, is an intersex person. Her reproductive anatomy is that of a male, but her biological and gender identity remain female. Brooke is also very cool and you'll read all about her in this book. Trans\* is really nothing new, but perhaps it's something new to you. You'll get to read about some very interesting and sometimes very famous trans\* individuals. Perhaps you've heard of Queen Christina of Sweden. Many researchers think that she could possibly have been an intersex individual. Then there was Jennie Hodgers who served as Albert Cashier during the American Civil War. Of course history is interesting, but perhaps you'll meet someone just like you in the pages of this book. There's Hayden, Katie, Dean, Dave, Brooke, Julia Natasha, and Nancy. Then again, you may not find someone just like you, but rather someone like them around you, someone who could be your friend! This is an excellent historical overview and portrait of several young trans\* individuals. This book will help many young people understand themselves as well as help their peers understand them. Acceptance of someone who is different is not an easy thing for people, however, the smiling faces in these portraits are totally cool. The stories are very down-to-earth and conversational. They will help young people discover that these individuals aren't different, but rather just themselves. The tough part is that they face discrimination, prejudice,

bullying and violence, unequal access to medical care, and limited legal protection. This is where the learning will start for all people, young and old who get a chance to meet the trans\* individuals in this book. In the back of the book is an index, a glossary, a selected timeline, a selected "Who's Who," source notes, and additional recommended book and website resources to explore. This book courtesy of the publisher.

This is a combination of information about trans\* issues, history, etc... and stories/experiences from trans\* individuals. I used the \* because that is what the author did. I really appreciated the content of the book, but would have loved to hear more from trans\* individuals. The information was helpful, but I got a bit bogged down in it sometimes. What I found more compelling were the personal stories. I could have read many more of those. One line that is sticking with me is something Dean Kotula, one of the contributors said, "My own experience always reminds me to assume and respect the complexity of others." This seems like a good way to live life in relation to those around us.

Transgender people have become more and more plentiful and important in my life over the past handful of years, but I have to admit that while this makes me happy, it also used to scare me. It scared me because I have seen a general lack of understanding, and poor treatment of, trans\* people both online and offline and I was terrified of inadvertently doing something to offend or hurt any one of them. Naturally, my first inclination would be to ask questions; I'm a curious and inquisitive person, so when I don't understand something (or want to make sure I do something right) I ask. But I've seen a large backlash online from various minority groups. They say "stop asking me to teach you about \_\_\_\_\_" go learn about it yourself, and that not only confused me, but it made me sad. I was terrified of asking any of the trans\* people I knew, for fear of either offending them with my ignorance, or annoying them with my questions because apparently I should be Googling it. When I saw this book, *Transgender Lives*, come up on NetGalley, I scooped it up as quickly as possible. Here was my chance to get a better education about trans\* individuals straight from the authorities on the topic! I always enjoy nonfiction memoirs and personal accounts, so this was especially of interest to me. I was so glad to finally hear directly from a variety of trans\* individuals about their lives, their bodies, their relationships, and how they deal with it all. THANK THE GOAT GODS and everyone involved for this book. Each personal account discussed various aspects of their lives that I was curious about, or that I didn't know about, in a comfortable space. The chapters were also broken up with general information about trans\* people and living as

a trans\* person. It detailed specific issues like healthcare, discrimination, public bathrooms, work environments, and more. I even learned about a plethora of transgender historical figures, which I loved! (And it included definitions of different terminologies surrounding the trans\* and LGBTQ community, which I found most helpful.) The most important piece of this book for me — aside from broadening my understanding — is that it was a safe place for me to confront and explore my own personal feelings and experiences about gender and sexual orientation. I might not be considered transgender or anything, but I’ve often felt very similar to a lot of the trans men I read about who always felt uncomfortable being raised as girls, and were stifled when they wanted to express more male characteristics, behaviors, and interests. I’m really glad I found this book, and I think it’s one that everyone could benefit from reading.

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