

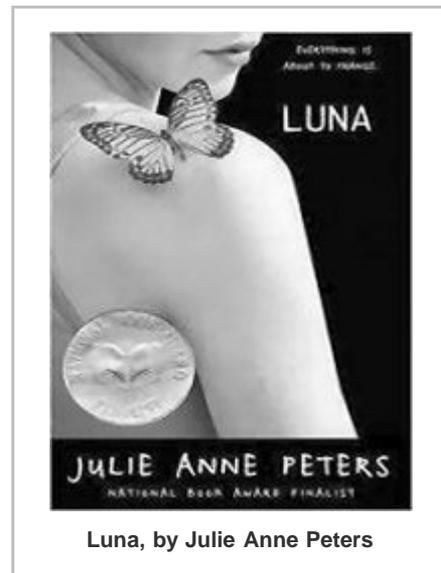
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Book Review: Luna

Everything is About to Change

Reviewed by Katherine Cummings

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Luna, by Julie Anne Peters

Luna: Everything is About to Change

by Julie Anne Peters
Published by Little Brown, New York
U.S.A. (2004)
I.S.B.N.-13 978 0316713695

Luna [sounds] like an obsessed monster ... and she is ... as all of us have been when driven to the brink of suicide by our need to fulfil our impossible dream.

This is the story of a transgender teenager in crisis, as seen through the eyes of her younger sister. At the outset we meet Luna, a woman by night, naming herself for the moon, but forced to be the academically brilliant but hopelessly unmasculine Liam by day. Some might think Liam a nerd, except for his popularity with his female high school contemporaries, popularity he shrugs off, since he knows through every waking moment that Liam is Luna, Luna is a woman and Luna is not a lesbian.

Liam's sister, Regan, younger than Liam/Luna, is the only confidante for Luna and the only sounding board for Luna's anguished need to be a full-time female. With their mother totally absorbed in her career and their father forever pushing Liam to be a jock, the responsibility for keeping Luna sane falls on Regan. When Luna needs to cross-dress in the still watches of the night and when her needs escalate into a compulsion to spread her wings and be Luna in the light of day, Regan is there for her.

Regan is just as much a victim of the situation as Luna. Regan hates her family life and sublimates her need for a supportive and loving family into her relationship with Elise and David, a young couple for whom she babysits ... a relationship which goes disastrously wrong when Regan, for once, depends on Luna for support.

Regan is turned in on herself by the terrible need to keep Luna's secret and she avoids involvement with boys who try to create a relationship, because she lacks self-confidence, thinks herself a klutz and is constantly at Luna's beck and call.

This makes Luna sound like an obsessed monster ... and she is ... as all of us have been when driven to the brink of suicide by our need to fulfil our impossible dream.

Regan's life is further complicated when she encounters Chris, who will not take "no" for an answer and pursues her, much to her confusion, discomfort and delight. Chris adds one more item to the array of elements Regan is juggling as she tries to be all things to Luna, keep her relationship with Chris afloat and cope with a demanding school schedule and a dopey teacher who wants her to live up to Liam/Luna's academic standards.

When crisis strikes and every part of Regan's life seems to be fragmenting and sinking without trace, Luna takes on her biggest challenge, to be herself among her contemporaries at school and in her family. Her determination to live her own life, as she must one day live it, is admirable on one level, but socially suicidal on another and Regan suffers some of the transition backlash.

Luna is remarkable in being able to make her decisions without seeking professional advice from doctors, school counsellors or even close friends. She is lucky to find an experienced and helpful transgender on the Internet by whom she can be inspired and from whom she can learn.

Julie Anne Peters is an award-winning author and Luna was a National Book Award finalist. She is an "out" lesbian and when it was suggested that she write a book about a teen transgender she interviewed many transgenders and put in the hard yards to achieve authenticity. The book is a brilliant exposition of the conflict, exaltation and terror involved in "coming-out" and I recommend it unreservedly.

Julie Anne Peters

From Julie's website:  Julie Anne Peters is the critically-acclaimed, award-winning author of more than a dozen books for young adults and children. Her book, *Luna*, was a National Book Award Finalist; *Keeping You a Secret* was named a Stonewall Honour Book; *Between Mom and Jo* won a Lambda Literary



Award; and *Define "Normal"* was voted by young readers as their favourite book of the year in California and Maryland. Julie's books have been published in numerous countries, including Korea, China, Croatia, Germany, France, Italy, Indonesia, Turkey, and Brazil. She is a member of The Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, PEN America, Colorado Authors League, and The Author's Guild. Julie loves writing because she gets to be her own boss and doesn't have to work in an office cubicle. It's hard to think outside the box when you work in a cube. She lives in Lakewood, Colorado, U.S.A. with her partner, Sherri, and far too many cats. The cats are under the impression that they're creative geniuses, since they spend a majority of their day walking back and forth across her computer keyboard. They probably generate more words per day than she does, but who can read cat gibberish?

[Read more about Julie and her other books at her website](#)



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From Amazon Books: Regan's brother Liam can't stand the person he is during the day. Like the moon from whom Liam has chosen his female namesake, his true self, Luna, only reveals herself at night. In the secrecy of his basement bedroom Liam transforms himself into the beautiful girl he longs to be, with help from his sister's clothes and makeup. Now, everything is about to change - Luna is preparing to emerge from her cocoon. But are Liam's family and friends ready to welcome

Luna into their lives? Compelling and provocative, this is an unforgettable novel about a transgender teen's struggle for self-identity and acceptance.

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The Gender Centre is committed to developing and providing services and activities, which enhance the ability of people with gender issues to make informed choices. We offer a wide range of services to people with gender issues, their partners, family members and friends in New South Wales. We are an accommodation service and also act as an education, support, training and referral resource centre to other organisations and service providers. The Gender Centre is committed to educating the public and service providers about the needs of people with gender issues. We specifically aim to provide a high quality service, which acknowledges human rights and ensures respect and confidentiality.