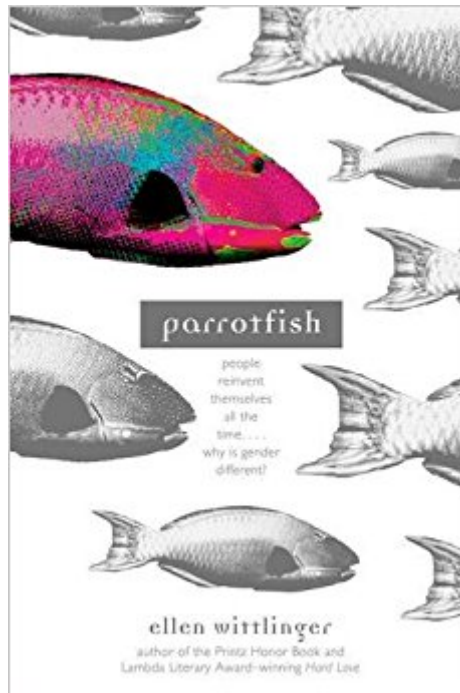




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Parrotfish



Synopsis

The groundbreaking novel from critically acclaimed author Ellen Wittlinger that tells the story of a transgender teen's search for identity and acceptance has now been updated to include current terminology and an updated list of resources. Angela Katz-McNair never felt quite right as a girl. So she cuts her hair short, purchases some men's clothes and chose a new name: Grady. While coming out as transgender feels right to Grady, he isn't prepared for the reactions of his friends and family. Why can't they accept that Grady is just being himself? Grady's life is miserable until he finds friends in unexpected places—the school geek, Sebastian, who tells Grady that there is a precedent for transgenders in the natural world, and Kita, a senior, who might just be Grady's first love. In a voice tinged with humor and sadness, Ellen Wittlinger explores Grady's struggles—universal struggles any teen can relate to.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 790 (What's this?)

Paperback: 304 pages

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Language: English

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 38 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #108,182 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #26 in Books > Teens >

Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Peer Pressure #57 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Peer Pressure #136 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Gay & Lesbian

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Grade 9 Up—As in *Hard Love* (S & S, 1999), Wittlinger tackles GLBT issues, introducing readers to Grady McNair, formerly known as Angela. This fast read follows Grady through the days between Thanksgiving and Christmas as he comes out as transgendered, faces issues of

acceptance and rejection at school and at home, and falls in love with the hottest girl in school. Funny and thought-provoking in turns, the book does suffer from a few structural problems. The narrator's voice is very feminine for somebody who has internally always felt like a boy, and with little effort on his part, Grady ends the book with family approval, new and old friends, a previously forbidden pet, and the end of an embarrassing family holiday tradition. Flaws aside, the book is an excellent resource for building awareness about, and serving the increasing number of, transgendered teens. Helpful resources include Web sites and further-reading material. The lack of similar titles available, except for Julie Ann Peters's *Luna* (Little, Brown, 2004), and Wittlinger's captivating storytelling ability combine to make this a book that most libraries should stock. Grady eventually decides that he will always straddle the 50 yard line of gender, and the book should help teens be comfortable with their own place on that football field. --Cara von Wrangel Kinsey, New York Public Library Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Angela McNair is a boy! Oh, to the rest of the world she's obviously a girl. But the transgendered high-school junior knows that she's a boy. And so, bravely, Angela cuts her hair short, buys boys' clothing, and announces that his name is now Grady and that he is beginning his true new life as a boy. Of course, it's not as simple as that; Grady encounters an array of reactions ranging from outright hostility to loving support. To her credit, Wittlinger has managed to avoid the operatic (no blood is shed, no lives are threatened) but some readers may wonder if--in so doing--she has made things a bit too easy for Grady. His initially bewildered family rallies around him; he finds a champion in a female gym teacher; he loses but then regains a best friend while falling in love with a beautiful, mixed-race girl. Wittlinger, who is exploring new, potentially off-putting ground here (only Julie Anne Peters' *Luna*, 2004, has dealt with this subject before in such detail), manages to create a story sufficiently nonthreatening to appeal to--and enlighten--a broad range of readers, including those at the lower end of the YA spectrum. She has also done a superb job of untangling the complexities of gender identity and showing the person behind labels like "gender dysphoria." Grady turns out to be a very normal boy who, like every teen, must deal with vexing issues of self-identity. To his credit, he does this with courage and grace, managing to discover not only the "him" in self but, also, the "my." Michael Cart Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

This was a really sweet read and that's probably why I didn't like it nearly as much as I was hoping

to. This is the story of Angela as she takes the first steps to becoming a boy named Grady. While this change was met by Grady's friends and family with variations on shock, dismay, confusion, disgust, empathy, kindness, understanding and even apathy, the whole story just seemed to skim the surface of many of a transgender teen's issues. The first few chapters broke my heart as Grady deals with generally negative reactions of family, teachers, friends and kids at school. I braced myself expecting a tumultuous emotional journey towards acceptance but *spoiler* even though some fairly awful things almost happened, nothing bad actually did happen and the entire story wraps up all very neat and nicely with a cutesie happy-ever-after kind of feel to it *end spoiler* I just didn't buy the ending and the ease with which the resolution was reached. This book almost seemed to make light of transgender issues. Where was the psychologist or at very least a counselor? Why didn't Grady's parents take him to see a physician? Fairly standard practices for someone considering changing their gender. The parents seemed oddly detached; the bigger, darker issues at hand skirted if not brushed off altogether, and this frustrated me. To be honest, I was more interested in Danya, what made her such a spiteful bully, why was she so afraid of her parents? The more intriguing story seemed to lie with her and yet she's painted as a pretty one dimensional antagonist. The prose is pleasant and there are a few metaphors such as the titular parrotfish comparison that manage to inject a little more substance into this story. Even so, reading parrotfish felt a bit like eating a carrot-cake cupcake by starting with the frosting: everything was nice and sweet if slightly tangy, but I couldn't wait to get to the rich, nutty, spicy substance - sadly, all I got was frosting when what I really wanted was the cake.

This is overall an excellent read. It's engaging, well written, with actual humor. Characters are well developed and their behavior is true to life even when their actions are ugly. I was pleased to see a transition from female to male to augment the more common male to female plot. The roles of the parents are particularly well portrayed. They need time to cope with losing a daughter and gaining a son, and their behavior during this time is described realistically. Naturally everyone's experience is different, but at least this story isn't completely told through rose glasses.

Although there are parts of the story that are a bit hard to believe, it's basically a good story of a young man who needs to follow his heart and become the person he knows he is. I have personal experience with a young transman who said this book was the catalyst in his own (successful) transition. Kudos to the author for the research on this subject, and for not being afraid to put it out there in hopes of opening hearts and minds.

This was a good story, filled with hope. I just feel like it was very short and that some things were quite disappointing, as they felt cut short too soon.

Simply written with a good message for anyone trying to understand changes in themselves.

Somewhat idealistic with a happy ending "for the moment."

I read this book for a college course and I really enjoyed it. It was very enlightening and gives good insight to the trials that a young adult might have in attempting to claim the gender they identify with.

This book is so realistic and makes you experience the feelings of a teenage girl making the switch to a teenage boy. It honestly captures what happens in reality. If you like realistic fiction, then you should definitely check this book out.

great read

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