



Boy2Girl

Terence Blacker

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Is he a girl? Is she a boy?

Matthew's American cousin, Sam, has come to London to live with the family. Sam is a charismatic, funny kid, but can he be trusted to be a reliable friend? Matthew and his "mates" decide that Sam must undertake a challenge in order to prove himself: he must start off his new year at their school posing as a girl. It turns out that Sam makes a great girl. He fools everyone and has an electrifying effect at Bradbury Hill School. And the longer the prank goes on, the more hilarious -- and serious -- the repercussions.

This brilliant novel shines a laser-sharp beam into the perilous territory of early-teen life, in an unforgettable story of chaos, confusion, and cross-dressing.

Boy2Girl Details

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From Reader Review Boy2Girl for online ebook

Lisa Chung says

this book was kinda extreme. the game just went out of control. it was fun when it first started but this prank hurt a lot of people in the end. i didnt like how the author splits the entire novel between so many character's perspective. it made it very confusing for some time. why did Sam even agree to dress up as a girl to play with his cousin and his friends? sam seemed like a fun person to hang out with. he made everything interesting for the boys.

Weasel says

A far read - but problematic in some ways -

-The men are shown in a more balanced way - the women were almost exclusively stereotypes

-No consideration of Transgender issues - even for a moment - just 'won't it be fun if the boy dresses as a girl for a joke/to hide' - it comes so close to having something, but then fails completely (Sam saying he feels free as a girl - his improved behaviour etc)

-Pretty much no positive on any LGBT issues (Matt's parents and 'the g word')- the whole date bit is just....painful

-Male teacher who favours the girls and sees nothing wrong in their near abusive treatment of boys? Where to start?

There were some tiny random things that threw me out of it (a united v city football game in london....umm? Which ones? It played it as a local team....)

It gets 3 stars instead of my leaning towards two because I didn't want to throw it away or stop reading, and the writing was good enough to allow the narrative choices to work (going between povs all the time). It's more that aspects of the characters and the situation were awkward or just furthered dangerous stereotypes and disregard of certain issues that made it very flawed as a book.

Sara says

I was recommended this book by a teen patron who loves John Green. I can see why kids would like it, but it must have just not been my thing, because it took me FOREVER to get through it (and it's not a hard book). It was funny, but not quite funny enough to make me laugh out loud -- clever, but not quite clever enough to make me think. I did like the way the author chose to tell the story, as if each of the characters in the book were being interviewed about Sam throughout the novel, but I thought that more could have been done with the conceit to bring across the point about how people's perception of a person really does affect their personality. Not bad, but not good enough to say I really liked it that much, either.

David Jordan says

Jaunty and fast-paced YA novel about a tough-talking 13-year-old California boy who moves to England to live with his aunt's family and winds up passing as a girl at his new school when a prank gets out of hand. Mild humor about gender differences, notable mainly for the author's point-of-view experimentation -- he tells the story in very short chapters through the eyes of 10 or 11 peripheral characters without ever entering the mind of his protagonist. The result is sort of a "Rashomon" or "As I Lay Dying" for the middle school set.

Eartha says

Very funny book about a boy discovering who he is, laughed out loud quite a couple times! I liked the way it was written from different people's perspectives but never in Sam's - the boy in question: I thought that was active touch.

Overall loved it, only reason I didn't put 5 stars was i was a bit young and some parts weren't very believable. Such as a 16 year old boy fancying a 12 year old girl, also a year 8 was expected to have boobs which is kind of funny because at that age you haven't really started puberty at all.

The humour is extremely funny, especially if you have embarrassing parents yourself.

Squirrel says

This book was full of funnines (if that's a word) and comical issues.

In this book, a rebellious Sam's (he's a boy) mother dies in their nice home in USA. He is moved to his aunt's house in London, England. Sadly, he's a stubborn, swearing, long haired maniac. His cousin, Matt, who is Sam's aunt's son, is not too happy about Sam's arrival. Immediately Sam wants to fit in with Matt's completely unpopular group, The Sheds. The Sheds aren't looking for new recruits, so they make a proposition for Sam to do if he wants to join the Sheds that they are sure he will never pass: Sam must "become" a girl and try to get on the arch enemies' of the Shed's secret: the b****es... you'll see what happens.

Jodie "Bookish" Cook says

Book Review

Title: Boy2Girl

Author: Terence Blacker

Genre: YA/Family/Social

Rating: ****

Review: In the beginning of Boy2Girl we meet Matthew Burton as his American cousin Sam arrives after the death of his mother; Matthew's aunt Galaxy. Sam is exactly what you'd expect a 13-year-old orphan to be angry, withdrawn and everything else. As he tries to adjust to a life in a London he struggles but seems to be trying at least. Even for a multiple P.O.V. novel there are loads of them. Also, I know we are meant to feel sorry for Sam, but I just don't like him, he is rude, cruel and violent and I am hoping that his character will change as the novel progresses. After the fight Sam does apologize to Matthew and he agrees to let him hang out with them if he can pass the initiation, but they plan to set him something that he will never be able to achieve. They ask him to dress a girl for a week and infiltrate their rival gang which he eventually agrees to

and he mellows out a little and they prepare for the start of school.

On the first day of school Sam manages to get everyone including the teachers to believe he is a girl and immediately makes an impression on Charley and Zia from the Shed's rival gang but makes an enemy in Gary. Although Charley comes to Sam's rescue the boys are concerned that this may come back to haunt him later. Sam makes a great impression as a girl even taking down the school bully, but he isn't catching on quick enough about girl things like using the correct bathroom. While Matt does save him a few times and give him direction it seems a little too lucky and convenient, you would have thought in the 2 months before school started they would have talked through these things are some point. Things become a little bit difficult when we learn that Sam's mother has left him a sizeable amount of money and his dad is now out of prison, although he dad has only just learned of Galaxy's death and is now trying to find Sam.

People soon start to notice that Sam seems to be more at home as a girl despite the fact he keeps many of his male mannerisms even getting a lot of the other girls to catch one although a few still see there is something suspicious about "her". In the first days of school Sam settles so easily into his role as a girl that it begins to unnerve Matthew but there are so invested in the game that they can't stop now even having to come up with an alibi to tell Matt's parents. This plan also starts to bring Matthew and Sam closer together although things are getting difficult as we know Crash is on his way to get Sam from the Burtons. Crash arrives in Britain and the police have been alerted to watch for an unsavoury American who is going to kidnap his own child for the money his mother left him, all the while it seems like Sam has absolutely no idea about what is going on and I am starting to get the sinking feeling that something bad is going to happen. Meanwhile, at school Mark is still trying to win Sam's attention despite blowing him off several times and it makes me wonder how these people will react if they find out that Sam is a boy but there are only three days left then everything can go back to normal, but I am not sure Sam would want to as he seems quite at home in his female skin.

Crash continues searching for Sam, but Sam sees him first, as things get more and more difficult in the Burton home Sam realizes that he doesn't want to go back to America because his new life feels more like home than it ever did before. The boys also come clean about Sam dressing as a girl and they take it well as supportive parents do. They agree as a family that Sam is going to stay with them and they will tell Crash should he ever come knocking. The family pull together when Crash comes calling and Sam is now a girl full time until his father disappears again, but Crash isn't so easily deterred and calls all the local school until he finds one where a Sam Lopez is registered, and I have a feeling that things are going to get very messy very soon. One thing Sam learns very quickly is that becoming a man is going to make being a girl a lot harder with the facial hair and the breaking voice.

Just when you think Sam's life couldn't get any more complicated it does when teenage relationships are thrown into the mix, Mark has his sights set on Sam but so does Zia although she is reluctant to admit it even to herself. Sam however, has remained very aloof to any romantic involvement but I have a feeling it is because he is questioning his sexuality rather than because he doesn't want to be with anyone. Sam seems to be making a huge impression on the school especially as the talent show approaches, she helps Jake with his family troubles, gets Tyrone's mother of his back and confesses what he is to Zia and may have even formed a relationship with her. All the while, Crash is planning to find Sam at the talent show and forcibly take him back to America even if he does want to.

In the final 20 pages of this novel, the night of the talent show arrives, and some truths are going to be revealed that will change the town forever. In the end all hell breaks loose and that's ok. The ending of this novel was perfect, it was chaotic, sorrowful and joyful all in the same moment and rounded off the story perfectly. Boy2Girl is highly recommended to all.

Danielle says

I often look for books that play with gender stereotypes. This book did just that. A young and very tough teen finds a sense of freedom and power when he decides to go to his new school dressed as a girl. I did like

this book, but the author just couldn't seem to let go of most of the stereotypes about boys and girls. The girls were backstabbing gossips and the boys were emotionally stunted. Even the main character who was crossdressing was still unable to break free from stereotypical boy behavior and in the end I think it just reinforced the idea that all boys are like this and all girls are like that. I would love to see a book that really breaks the stereotypes, but I have not found one yet.

Bee says

Ironically this is the first novel I've made it through this year. The irony part of it is that it pissed me off quite hard. I think the biggest factor behind that is that I found it on the 'rainbow shelf' at the library, a shelf meant for LGBTQ+ related books. And yeah, this book vaguely relates to cross-dressing, even if it's because of a dare, because at some points the character involved in that discusses the 'freedom' it allows him to behave differently than when he's dressed in his normal clothes. But the rest of the book is so offensive that it's hard to see the overall relevance to the theme.

It is in fact so offensive that it feels like it HAS to be intentional. I mean, how can you accidentally make almost every single character a sexism-spewing stereotype? Is this social commentary or am I just really wanting to see that and interpreting the story that way as a pure defense mechanism against stupidity? I guess I'll never know the truth. The problem for me is that nowhere in the story is it suggested that the characters aren't to be taken seriously. And since this is a book aimed towards young adults in the younger section, with characters around thirteen who are just hitting puberty, it feels like there has to be a lot less subtlety if this is to be used in an ironic or discussion provoking kind of way. Because as it is I'm left with the impression that the characters actually ARE to be taken seriously, and that is a big problem for me.

If the characters in fact ARE to be taken seriously that would mean that instead of exploring and dismissing gender binaries, this book actually promotes the idea of gender as something completely binary. I mean, this end page quote alone is a little alarming (I don't think it's spoilery, but if you will this is your chance to skip ahead!!) : *"They discovered what some folks take a lifetime to learn – that there is no point fighting the difference between guys and girls. In fact, maybe it's the difference that makes life kind of weird and interesting."* Now, this quote on its own would be nothing worrisome, but after having spent a whole book discussing 'girl things' and 'guy things' as something that never correlates, and 'girl behavior' and 'guy behavior' as two completely different things... it is. What's also alarming if the characters are to be taken seriously is the way the book paints women and girls... and also in a few places homosexuality. And at one point a shaken mother is talking about Sam, the cross-dressing guy and sort-of protagonist, as being "the G-word" and I actually don't know if it's worse if she's treating 'Girl' or 'Gay' as a cuss-word.

I don't have too much to say about the format of the story. It's quite easy to read and told in short choppy sections from 15+ different perspectives, everyone and their mother (literally) gets to tell a part of the story, except Sam, who the book is ostensibly about, and they all sound pretty much the same. A few of them are unreliable narrators, which again gives me some hope about the purpose of the story; but it's pretty faint at this point. The theme of the book really overrides the plot for me. I didn't find the plot too interesting, and because of the way the story is told it didn't really feel like the focus was on a linear plot as much as on how all these characters related to the "main character", Sam. I guess it had some kind of point to make, but I was too busy focusing on all the other things the story was saying, possibly without meaning to. This book made me confused and angry, but hey, at least I managed to read it!

Duane says

Sam is sent over to relatives in England after his mom is killed. Sam has a major attitude problem and soon his cousin decides to get even with him by challenging him to dress up as a girl for the first week of school. Sam quickly finds he can be someone new when he's dressed as Samantha. Things change though when it seems Sam is enjoying himself too much as Samantha. When Sam's long lost dad returns to get him, Sam has to decide who his true family really is. I really enjoyed the characters in the book, plus the plot was a great idea, but I felt that the author rushed the ending too much. After Sam comes clean to his girl-friends that's he's really a guy, it seems the story dashes to the end without really letting the characters seem finished. A nice read overall.

Kirsty Grant says

This book deserved a five star rating because it made me laugh out loud so often. It was a brilliant book and I loved Blacker's use of narrative voice. It is a multiple first person narrative which allows the reader a close and personal account of the characters feelings and emotions, this is particularly interesting as there is a mixture of both adult and child characters. The book gives the reader a wonderful insight into gender and demonstrates the way in which gender is socially constructed. It also shows how children can be attracted to other children regardless of gender. As a whole, children are influenced by other children, by characteristics, by confidence and by personality. Children are often put into boxes and treated differently because of gender, this book breaks the rules and it's genius. I would highly recommend this book to both adults and children as it may just demonstrate how alike we all are and how society is often too eager to put us into groups.

Pukingrainbows says

LOOOOOOOOOL this was HILARIOUS, entertaining and amazing!!!!!!!!!!!!loved it!!!!!!

Tyrone: That's him? Bit of a titch, isn't he?

Jake: And get a load of that hair

Matthew: It's like I told you. He's a hippy.

Jake: Looks more like a girl to me

Matthew: You wait

"Over the next few days, as we showed Sam around what he insisted on calling 'the hood', he talked about his life back home."

Jake: Crash. Bit of a weird name, that isn't it

Sam: Waddaya mean weird?

Jake: What's he got-a couple of brothers called Bang and Wallop?

Sam: trust you to have a sister without size gazungas

Tyrone: I know what we could do. I'll bring a couple of socks tomorrow. You can shove them down your front.

Sam: you know what, fat boy; you can shove them where the sun don't shine.

"We took our seats, Sam slumping down beside me with all feminine poise of a boxer taking a break between rounds."

Mathew: We've got to go

Sam: All right, I'm fixing my hair, ok?

Jake sighed: Women.

Old lady: Are you all right, love?

Matthew: Excuse me?

Old lady: I'm not talking to you boys. Are these boys bothering you, dear?

Sam: Nah

Old lady: That's all right then

Sam: Lady, I could whop their sorry asses any time

Jake: Oh, and there was something else. My sis uses one of these.

Same held the band between two fingers and gazed at it with a look of total, unbelieving disgust, and for a moment I thought jakes was on the way to getting his other eye blackened.

Sam: So what's the deal then? Apart from trying to make me look kind of dumb, that is

Matthew: We don't want to make you look dumb. We just need to get our own back on the Bitches. Show them up. Get to know some of their sad little secrets.

Sam: Hey, come on, guys, all this to put one over on a bunch of chicks?

Tyrone: They're not chicks. Just because we hate them it doesn't mean we have to be sexist about it.

Sam: Hey, who's wearing the skirt around here? From here on, I decide what's sexist, right?

Sam: And will you guys stop looking up my skirt

Elena:And frankly, I hadn't left a packet of Always in her locker for it to be used as an offensive weapon.

Sam: so when we going shopping?

Mum: Shopping?

Sam: And I don't want no low-class tat. Simone likes to accessorize, right?

Mum: I'll give you £100. That's quite enough for you boys to get a nice dress, a blouse and some shoes.

Sam: £150, I want a bag too. Maybe some make-up.

Mum: You're far too young for that

Sam: 150, please

Mum: I think I preferred you as a boy

Sam: Tyrone likes to pretend he's not serious about his ambitions and that he's just a party guy-a babe magnet who all the girls want to go out with-but once you get to know him, you realize there's more to him than just looks.

Tyrone's mum: babe magnet? Isn't he a bit.....big for that?

Sam: fat's the new thin, Mrs. Sherman. Flesh is hot, hot, hot. I have to fight the other girl off Tyrone. They call him T-bone because there's just so much of him.

LOOOL XD

WillowBe says

i loved this story! Listen, this book examines feelings and motive of teens, the whole spectrum, and what they will do to get what they need and what they do when they don't get it. The gender switch is a clever way to explore that as well as what we expect from kids. i loved the emotional bravery of the main character and how he gained insight about himself, was able to actually share it and then spoke fearlessly for all to see his pain, his anger, his admission of who he was. I admit, I kinda had a crush on that little boy by book's end! Encouraged me to be a little more patient and wait to see the kid beneath the obnoxious teen boys I meet. Good work, Mr. Blacker!

F says

I was sent this book and i read it in 1 day.
Cute story. Good for kids aged 9-12 i would say.

Erin says

I went in to this book thinking it was going to engage all kinds of important issues with gender, which was exciting, especially in a book aimed towards a younger audience. Maybe my expectations were a bit high, but this book was nothing but disappointing.

Reading it, it feels like an effort to engage topics of gender made by somebody who doesn't know what they're talking about. When a character refers to a group of girls as "chicks" another character tells him not to be sexist, despite the entire book reducing characters (male and female) to one dimensional stereotypes for their given gender. The same character later complains about how women HAVE to share their thoughts with each other as soon as or even before a thought comes into their heads, and says "If I were a sexist (which, thank goodness, I'm not) I might say this makes them more superficial than us." Good thing SAYING you're not a sexist MAKES you not a sexist. At another point our crossdresser, Sam, (upon being referred to as a "little lady") says "We don't talk about little ladies anymore...it's what we call sexism." This leads me to believe Terence Blacker does not actually know what sexism is.

Even from their own POV's the girls are shallow and gossipy. We have a bully who, even from his own POV, is slow and stupid, and a hotshot who (in his own POV!!!) thinks he's so cool he refers to himself in third person, but is ultimately empty headed ("I groped in my mind for a killer comeback but, unusually, there was nothing there"). Almost none of the characters have depth, and seem to exist only to perpetuate stereotypes. They seem more like caricatures of real people written by someone who didn't really like them than real people.

Some more fun parts of the book are when a (male) character says "If you ever need any evidence about how pathetic girls can be, there it is" in reference to girls following fashion trends, a (male) character tells Sam his fake nails are "slutty" (as if they sleep around?), a (male) character (referring to his wife!!!) says both "Like all women, Ottoleen gets these crazy ideas in her head. I guess that simply by law of averages one of them had to be OK" and "You know, for a broad you can be pretty smart sometimes" As long as it's "smart for a girl" right?

The book ends with the line "It was no time for girl stuff" after the protagonist (? maybe, it's so hard to tell

with over 20 POVs throughout the book) chokes back his tears. Because crying is for girls right? And he is a MANLY fourteen year old.

The plot is fragmented, with different conflicts for our 6(?) different protagonists, which threatens any coherence this book may have had. Sam's reason for crossdressing have nothing to do with exploring gender, and is about a prank in order to make it back into the good graces of the boys. Except instead of trying to blend in as a girl, Sam spends his time convincing them to act "masculine" by telling them it's cool, and 'American' to grab their crotches and glare at people. Despite this, his aunt and uncle think "Somehow it (his crossdressing) seemed wrong" and worry he is "...enjoying being a girl entirely too much for [it] to be entirely straightforward." They worry about him being "The G word", I guess I never got the memo that "gay" was a bad word now. Of course, they say "Not that we had anything against G-word people but, all the same, it was a bit of a worry." Again, saying you are something or you aren't something obviously makes it not true. I am not poor! I am not a student! I am actually a wizard with amazing powers!

Overall this book is a poorly written, poorly executed book about a boy who dresses as a girl. Seriously not worth the time it takes to read.
