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Trans: A Memoir



Synopsis

An extraordinary memoir of transition and transgender politics and culture—Six weeks before sex reassignment surgery (SRS), I am obliged to stop taking my hormones. I suddenly feel very differently about my forthcoming operation. • In July 2012, aged thirty, Juliet Jacques underwent sex reassignment surgery—a process she chronicled with unflinching honesty in a serialised national newspaper column. *Trans* tells of her life to the present moment: a story of growing up, of defining yourself, and of the rapidly changing world of gender politics. Fresh from university, eager to escape a dead-end job, she launches a career as a writer in a publishing culture dominated by London cliques and still figuring out the impact of the Internet. She navigates the treacherous waters of a world where, even in the liberal and feminist media, transgender identities go unacknowledged, misunderstood or worse. Yet through art, film, music, politics and football, Jacques starts to become the person she had only imagined, and begins the process of transition. Interweaving the personal with the political, her memoir is a powerful exploration of debates that comprise trans politics, issues which promise to redefine our understanding of what it means to be alive. Revealing, honest, humorous, and self-deprecating, *Trans* includes an epilogue with Sheila Heti, author of *How Should a Person Be?*, in which Jacques and Heti discuss the cruxes of writing and identity.

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Customer Reviews

If I had to write a one sentence review of Juliet Jacques's memoir TRANS, I would say that she is brutally honest. And her book is completely engaging. I have previously read five memoirs by other trans people: a woman who financed her reassignment surgery by driving an eighteen wheeler, the quickest way she could make money to support her family; a trans man born in Africa but who now lives in the U. S.; Jennifer Finney Boylan, who has written three books about her experience that should be read in sequence and Jan Morris, the travel writer from Great Britain. (I don't think I can count Christine Jorgenson whose story I read as a youngster in the East Tennessee newspaper in the 1950's when it was serialized. As I remember, Ms. Jorgenson was treated pretty much as a freak; I suppose we should not be surprised, given the place and time.) I was trying to recall what makes Mr. Jacques's experience different than the other trans-persons I have read. I think it has to be that she began her journey much younger and unlike four of the other five people, did not have the added task of dealing with spouses and with children in the case of two of these individuals. That is not to say that she does not have her own set of problems. She has had to deal with abuse from the people who hate her for who she is (I read articles often about trans women usually and often women of color who are victims of violence often leading to murder here in the U. S. --Ms. Jacques is from Great Britain--so her story is certainly, sad to say, relevant.) She also has the added burden, like so many people of her age, (she was born in 1982) of trying to make a living in this economy. Even though she has written a blog for the GUARDIAN, where I found out about her book, she would like to be known as someone who writes about a topic not just dealing with her transgender experience (I believe Ms. Boylan has expressed a similar view) although that is what most prospective employers want her to write about. Two things about Ms. Jacques that fascinate me to no end are her love for post-punk music--since I am of her father's generation and relate to his love of rock music (the Who) and wouldn't recognize post-punk if I heard it-- and her love for football, both as a player and spectator. I think we can say that she is smashing stereotypes. There are many touching events Ms. Jacques writes about: the support she gets from friends and her mom and dad, who ultimately come around. But the two that stood out most for me: while she is transitioning from male to female and pretty much wearing makeup and women's clothes, she agrees to dress as a young man to attend the wedding of her brother (although she does not agree to be a member of

the bridal party) and the account she gives of going with her mom to pick out a bra, an event that is supposed to be the initiation into womanhood for all young girls. Finally, Ms. Jacques is also quite political and gives a good summary of the books that have been written on trans-theory. A very good book indeed.

Extraordinary personal narrative of coming to terms with reclaiming your gender. Details the horrific UK bureaucracy that mandates fulfilling a archaic psychiatric notion that required living as a cartoonish approximation of a biological female without any medication in order to receive the eventual reward of SRS. In addition to being subjected to violence, gender discrimination and trying to "pass" Juliet still transcends every obstacle and lives to be herself.

Book is as in depth as I expected.

Really liked this book and it arrived in a timely manner!

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A really good honest and informative bio!

Have read several similar titles and this is the weakest, probably because it is rather impersonal. Jacques spends much time on the local punk music scene, clothing and theoretical topics. He seems to make a career of being a trans male. This book is of some interest given the U.K. background, but cannot compare to other engaging accounts on the same topic, such as the one by the man who drove a big truck to fund his transition. Lucky for Jacques, the U.K. Taxpayers picked up his tab. The prose is often silly and trite, rife with undergraduate pseudo intellectualism.

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