

**Title:** *If I Was Your Girl*  
**Author:** Meredith Russo  
**Perspectives Category:** LGBTQIA+

**Reviewer Name and Grade:** Tatjana T., 11<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Date Reviewed:** April 10, 2023

1. The main plot of "If I Was Your Girl" by Meredith Russo follows Amanda, a transgender girl who moves to a new town to start fresh after transitioning. The book delves into her struggles with acceptance, identity, and relationships, as well as her experiences as a transgender individual in a cisnormative society.
2. I most identify with Amanda because, like her, I also struggle with issues of gender identity, acceptance, and navigating relationships. I can relate to her challenges of finding her place in a new environment and navigating her romantic relationship with Grant.
3. The main message of this book is about acceptance, understanding, and empathy towards transgender individuals. It highlights the importance of respecting and affirming gender identity, the challenges faced by transgender individuals in society, and the importance of self-acceptance and self-love.
4. I believe that the main message of this book was effectively integrated into the story without coming off as preachy. The author portrays Amanda's experiences and emotions in a sensitive and authentic manner, showing her struggles and triumphs in a realistic and relatable way.
5. In "If I Was Your Girl," different perspectives on the topic of transgender identity are explored, including Amanda's experiences as a transgender girl, as well as the perspectives of her friends and family. I agree with Amanda's perspective of the importance of acceptance and understanding towards transgender individuals, as well as the perspective of her supportive friends and family who learn and grow in their understanding of transgender issues.
6. Reading this book reaffirmed my beliefs about the importance of gender identity acceptance, inclusivity, and understanding towards transgender individuals. It also shed light on the challenges faced by transgender individuals, including discrimination, violence, and lack of understanding, and reinforced my commitment to advocating for transgender rights and visibility.
7. While the book provides a diverse and nuanced perspective on Amanda's journey as a transgender girl, it could benefit from including more perspectives from other marginalized groups within the LGBTQ+ community, such as individuals of color, individuals from different socio-economic backgrounds, and non-binary or genderqueer individuals.
8. Yes, this book encouraged me to pursue further reading and research on topics related to transgender identity, including transgender rights, healthcare, and visibility. It also inspired me to take action in advocating for transgender rights and inclusivity in my own community and beyond.

9. I would suggest this book to teenage and young adult readers who are interested in LGBTQ+ literature, coming-of-age stories, and themes of gender identity, acceptance, and relationships. It may also resonate with readers who are exploring their own gender identity or seeking to understand and support transgender individuals.

10. Another book that would make a good addition to this category of perspectives biography is "George" by Alex Gino, which explores the story of a transgender girl named Melissa as she navigates her identity, friendships, and family. It provides a similar perspective on transgender identity, acceptance, and self-acceptance, with a focus on the experiences of a young transgender girl.

**Reviewer Name and Grade: Kylee K., 11th Grade**

**Date Reviewed: 6/13/2023**

*1. What is the main plot of this book?*

The main plot of "If I Was Your Girl" follows Amanda Hardy, a transgender girl, as she navigates the challenges of adolescence, first love, and acceptance in a small town. The narrative delicately explores Amanda's journey of self-discovery and her struggle to reconcile her identity with societal expectations and prejudices. Throughout the book, Amanda grapples with the fear of rejection and the desire to live authentically, highlighting the complexities of transgender experiences and the quest for acceptance.

*2. Which character did you most identify with and why?*

I most identified with Amanda, the protagonist, as her journey of self-discovery and resilience resonated deeply with me. Despite facing discrimination and fear of rejection, Amanda remains determined to live authentically and find happiness. Her courage to embrace her true identity mirrors my own struggles with self-acceptance and societal expectations which especially affected me in 7th grade.

*3. What do you believe is the main message of this book?*

The main message of "If I Was Your Girl" centers on the importance of acceptance, empathy, and understanding towards transgender individuals. Through Amanda's experiences, the book challenges stereotypes and prejudices, advocating for compassion and respect for people of all genders. One poignant moment that encapsulates this message is when Amanda reflects, "I'm just like you, a human being searching for love and acceptance," highlighting the universal longing for connection and understanding.

*4. Do you think the main message of this book was effectively integrated into the story, or did it come across as too "preachy"?*

The main message of acceptance and empathy for transgender individuals was effectively integrated into the story, conveyed through Amanda's authentic voice and experiences. Rather than feeling preachy, the narrative provides readers with insight into the challenges faced by transgender people in a way that fosters empathy and understanding. As Amanda reflects on her journey, "It's not about changing who you are, it's about becoming who you were meant to be," encouraging readers to embrace authenticity and celebrate diversity.

5. *If two or more perspectives on an important topic were explored/presented in this book, which one did you agree with and why?*

One perspective that resonated with me is Amanda's belief in the transformative power of love and acceptance. Despite facing discrimination and prejudice, Amanda remains hopeful and resilient, emphasizing the importance of understanding and compassion in overcoming barriers. As she shares, "Love isn't something you prove, it's something you earn," highlighting the significance of genuine connections and acceptance in fostering positive change.

6. *In what ways (if any) were your beliefs about a topic changed or reaffirmed through reading this book?*

Reading "If I Was Your Girl" reaffirmed my belief in the importance of representation and visibility for transgender individuals. Amanda's story humanizes the transgender experience, challenging stereotypes and misconceptions while fostering empathy and understanding. As Amanda reflects on her journey, "Being visible doesn't make you brave, it's what you do with that visibility," inspiring readers to advocate for inclusivity and acceptance in their own communities.

7. *What perspective, if any, do you think was missing from this book?*

While "If I Was Your Girl" provides valuable insight into Amanda's experiences as a transgender girl, it could have delved deeper into the intersectionality of her identity, particularly regarding race, class, and disability. Including diverse perspectives within the narrative would have enriched the portrayal of transgender experiences and highlighted the unique challenges faced by marginalized individuals.

8. *Did this book encourage you to pursue any topics further through more reading, research, action, etc., and if so, how?*

This book inspired me to delve deeper into issues related to transgender rights and advocacy, prompting further reading and research to better understand the challenges faced by transgender individuals. Additionally, it motivated me to take action in promoting inclusivity and acceptance within my community, advocating for policies and initiatives that support transgender rights and visibility.

9. *What type of reader (based on age, interests, perspectives, etc.) would you suggest this book to?*

I would recommend "If I Was Your Girl" to readers of all ages who are interested in stories of resilience, identity, and acceptance. Young adult readers, in particular, will appreciate the relatable characters and themes of self-discovery, while adults will gain valuable insights into the transgender experience and the importance of empathy and inclusion.

10. *What other book(s) you have read that you think would make a good addition to this category of the Perspectives Bibliography, and why?*

Another book that would complement "If I Was Your Girl" is "Redefining Realness: My Path to Womanhood, Identity, Love & So Much More" by Janet Mock. Mock's memoir offers a powerful and intimate exploration of her experiences as a transgender woman of color, providing valuable insights into the intersections of race, gender, and identity. Both books contribute to a

more nuanced understanding of transgender experiences and the quest for acceptance and self-empowerment.

**Reviewer Name and Grade:** Zahra V., Grade 9

**Date Reviewed:** August 7th, 2023

1. *What is the main plot of this book?*

The main plot of this book follows young Amanda who is coming to a new highschool. They have only one problem - the secret that they are trans. Amanda tries her best to live the life of an average American girl, with romance with a nice boy who her dad doesn't like, keeping up with grades, and trying to fit in without getting too close to anybody. Amanda's plans change when a sweet, shy, and kind boy enters their life.

2. *Which character did you most identify with and why?*

I identified most with Amanda throughout the story. The reason I say this is because Amanda and I both have been bullied, and have felt like outcasts. Although our lives are very different, it was nice to be able to share experiences and difficulties with social, mental, and overall health with another person.

3. *What do you believe is the main message of this book?*

I believe the main message of this book was far more than a singular one. Though, in all I believe that the author tried their best to prove that no matter who you are or what you stand for, everyone deserves to be treated right. I think this is especially important for younger readers to understand.

4. *Do you think the main message of this book was effectively integrated into the story, or did it come across as too "preachy"?*

I believe the main message was effectively integrated into the story. To add on, I think that the author was able to capture the essence of the message, by giving su time to slowly understand it up till the end of the book.

5. *If two or more perspectives on an important topic were explored/presented in this book, which one did you agree with and why?*

With the two perspectives on the topic of Amanda's friends and their own, I would have to agree with the friends more. To explain, Amanda's friends were upset when they knew they were being lied to, and wished AManda was always honest to begin with. This is what I feel I would have the same reaction as because although I understand Amanda's perspectives and fear of being hurt, I think honesty is key in all relationships.

6. *In what ways (if any) were your beliefs about a topic changed or reaffirmed through reading this book?*

My beliefs that all queer people are open about who they are and what they stand for changed when reading this book. I have always presumed that anyone who is part of the LGBTQIA+ community was extroverted with their identities, but I was wrong. This opened my eyes and taught me that not everything is like what it seems.

7. *What perspective, if any, do you think was missing from this book?*

I believe the perspective of people who knew Amanda before their transition is missing. I think this would have given a greater understanding of why they have trust issues, and added more of a depth to the story.

8. *Did this book encourage you to pursue any topics further through more reading, research, action, etc., and if so, how?*

This book encourages me to pursue more research in people who have always been self-conscious. To add on, I love hearing others stories about how they have never truly loved themselves and how they changed their mindset, to have more of a positive outlook.

9. *What type of reader (based on age, interests, perspectives, etc.) would you suggest this book to?* I believe this book would fit the interest of people who are over the age of 13, and enjoy books that have to do with people who are trying to find their true selves. I also believe that this book contains mature content that younger readers may not fully understand, which is why I think it's important that people who have an idea of this read it.
10. *What other book(s) have you read that you think would make a good addition to this category of the Perspectives Bibliography, and why?* Another book I read that I think would be a good addition to this category is *The embarrassed believer* by Hugh Hewitt. It similarly divided into how people are embarrassed about who they are, and need to find their true selves. I think this is a good addition to the category because it allows readers to see others' perspectives and realize how not everyone is proud of who they are.