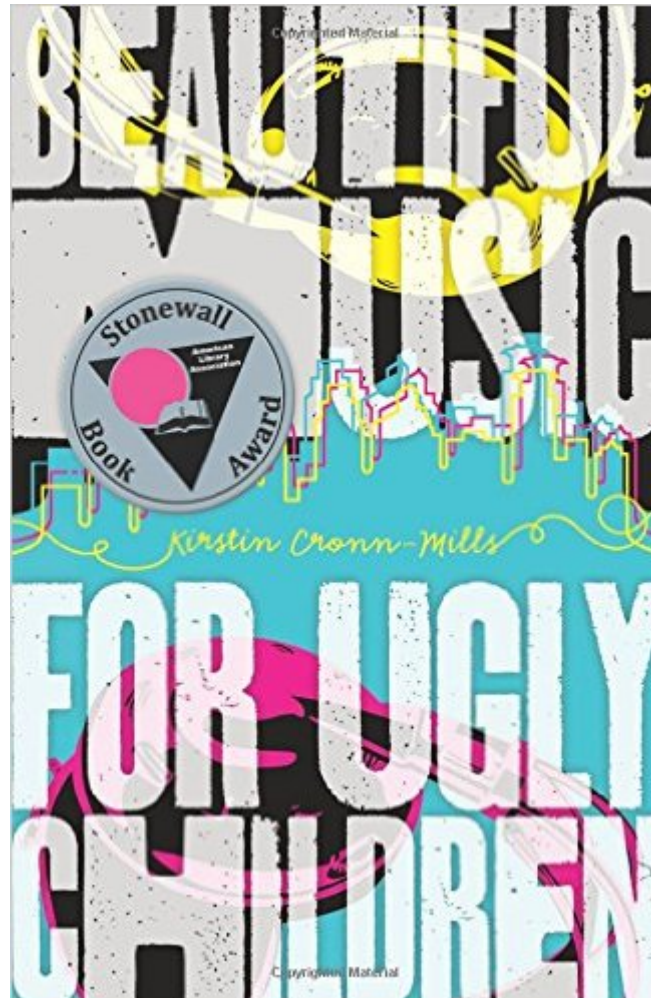


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Beautiful Music For Ugly Children



Synopsis

This is Beautiful Music for Ugly Children, on community radio 90.3, KZUK. Im Gabe. Welcome to my show." My birth name is Elizabeth, but Im a guy. Gabe. My parents think Ive gone crazy and the rest of the world is happy to agree with them, but I know Im right. Ive been a boy my whole life. When you think about it, Im like a record. Elizabeth is my A side, the song everybody knows, and Gabe is my B side not heard as often, but just as good. Its time to let my B side play. Winner of the 2014 Stonewall Book Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature. Praise: Every so often a book comes along that is so sharp, so moving, so real, and so good, you want to press it into everyones hands and say, Read this! READ THIS! Courtney Summers, author of Cracked Up to Be and This is Not a Test

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gabe is a memorable Midwest kid with dreams of getting out of dodge and moving on to the next big thing. He loves music more than anything, and it just so happens his sweet next-door-neighbor, an older man named John, has the in with public access radio. Gabe starts his own show, the late night, sometimes provocative Beautiful Music for Ugly Children. With the help of Gabe's best friend, his show gains popularity among the younger crowd. But Gabe's been worried from day one that the people from school will figure out who he is -- he takes the steps to start transitioning into life as Gabe just before the book starts. He came out to his family, and to his best friend, but the people at school either don't acknowledge he exists, or think of him as Elizabeth, "that dyke," and want to just pick on him. Gabe spends a lot of time in his head, figuring out how to relate to the people around

him, and figure them out, since he came out to them. When someone tips the listeners off that Gabe is "really" Elizabeth, things start getting a little darker. Gabe's caught between protecting himself, worrying about why his best friend is acting so squirrely, and the strange text messages he's getting from his long time crush. The only thing keeping him together are the remaining listeners, who call themselves the Ugly Children Brigade. Gabe asks them to do different things -- leave notes about their "A" Side and "B" side, decorate a well-known town statue, etc. Readers who enjoyed Vinyl Princess would definitely get into this sort of thing. The real strength in this book is Gabe's voice.

Beautiful Music for Ugly Children is full of musical references, has a main character that really stands out from the crowd and is a story about the difficulties of growing up and finding yourself when you are considered "different". Gabe is transgender and has always known he should have been born a boy. He's also incredibly comfortable in his own skin and identity as a boy -- something which I found really refreshing as a trans character. His parents and best friend know his "secret" but to everyone else, including all the kids at his school, he is still Liz. Gabe is also incredibly passionate about music, a passion he shares with his next-door neighbour John. Although BMfUG is at the core about Gabe's need to belong and feel like himself in a society that isn't particularly accepting of him, it also felt like a coming-of-age story that anyone could relate to. Gabe knows what his passions are and where he wants his life to lead, he's just not exactly sure how to get there. He deejays a late night radio slot, and through his music he finds a place to belong -- if only as a voice over the airwaves. Gabe also has a crush on his childhood best friend, Paige. And whilst in theory it sounded like a great idea, Gabe's a little flippy-floppy and alternates between crushing on Paige and crushing on other girls. Although that's probably far more common in teenage boys than I would have imagined at that age, it made him feel a little flighty and at certain stages I did lose a little respect for him as a character. There were also a few unresolved plot lines, both of which were key parts of Gabe's story and I found that really frustrating.

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