

## [Both Can Be True](#)

9780063053892

Ash is a middle schooler who loves music, is a synesthete who can see sounds, and is figuring out their gender identity after being bullied at their last school for being a “flip flop freak.” It doesn’t help that Ash’s dad is putting more and more pressure on them to just choose a gender and “stick with it.” Then Ash meets Daniel at their new school. Daniel is a photography fan, kind, in-tune with his emotions, scared his parents are going to get a divorce, and mourning the loss of his dog. When Daniel saves an older dog who is about to be euthanized because the owner doesn’t want to care for the elderly dog, their worlds collide and suddenly, Ash and Daniel are pinned together in this mission—save Chewbarka at all costs.

This unapologetic look at the real struggles and triumphs that are a part of middle school life is funny, poignant, and emotional in all the right ways. While the book contained a few missed opportunities of verbalizing and giving a direct challenge to transphobic behavior, overall it showcased a very realistic experience that a LGBTQ+ child might go through and can be a fantastic conversation starter on taking up the space you deserve and claiming your own identity.

Fans of the realistic fiction genre, Alex Gino’s *Melissa (George)*, or the *Sunny Series* by Jennifer L. Holm will find relatable moments in this book. Readers who are especially sensitive to the concept of animal euthanasia may want to proceed with caution. Suggested for ages 9-12+

Reviewed by Ginny H.

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