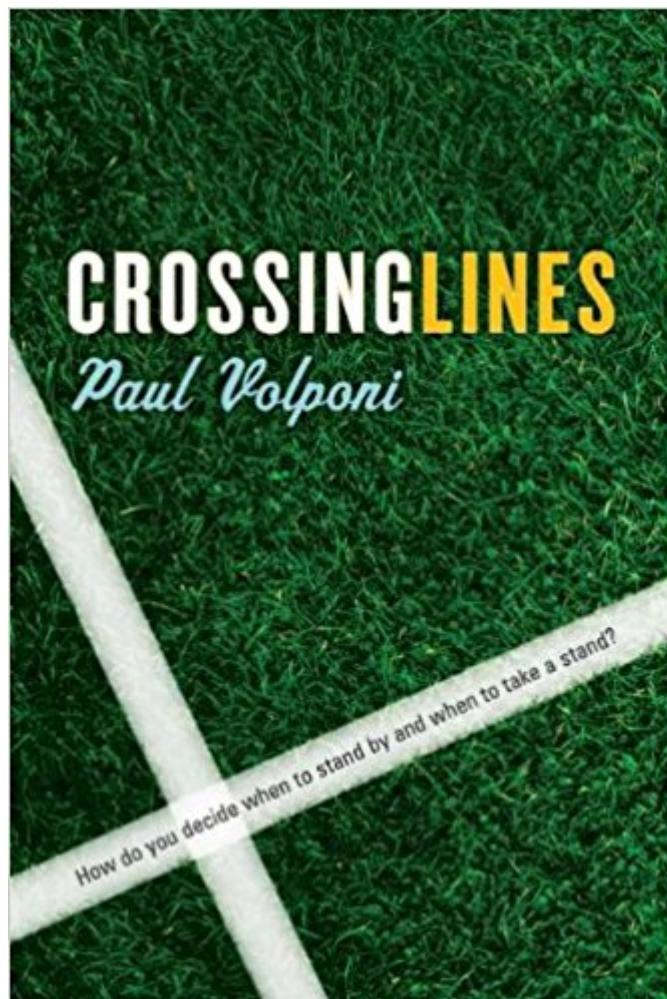


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## Crossing Lines



## **Synopsis**

Adonis is a jock. He's on the football team and he's dating one of the prettiest girls in school. Alan is the new kid. He wears lipstick and joins the Fashion Club. Soon enough the football team is out to get him. Adonis is glad to go along with his teammates . . . until they come up with a dangerous plan to humiliate Alan. Now Adonis must decide whether he wants to be a guy who follows the herd or a man who does what's right. From critically acclaimed author Paul Volponi comes this discussable and finely wrought story of bullies, victims, and the bystanders caught in between.

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 810L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 256 pages

Publisher: Viking Books for Young Readers (June 9, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0670012149

ISBN-13: 978-0670012145

Product Dimensions: 5.7 x 1 x 8.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #612,877 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #49 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > LGBT Issues #105 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Sports > Football #127 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Peer Pressure

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

Paul Volponi is the author of the critically acclaimed young adult novel *Black & White*. From 1992 to 1998, he taught adolescents on Rikers Island in New York City to read and write. Mr. Volponi worked at a day treatment center like Daytop teaching students and helping them prepare for the GED. Mr. Volponi lives in New York City.

In Paul Volponi's *Crossing Lines*, Adonis is a normal teenage guy: one who plays on the football team, wants to date the hot girl, and just wants to fit in. When new student Alan enrolls at his school and becomes the butt of everyone's homophobic jokes, Adonis has to decide where he stands.

Does he side with his sister and his potential girlfriend, both of whom support Alan's lipstick-wearing ways? Or does he does go along with the team and humiliate Alan at every opportunity, even when it becomes a threat to Alan's safety? *CROSSING LINES* excels most in its realistic portrayal of bullying, prejudice, and what it means for someone to go with the crowd or against it. Readers are given an honest depiction of the slurs and threats thrown at GLBTQ students through Adonis' first-person perspective, and Adonis' internal dialogue and insecurities about himself also felt authentic. As a character, Adonis shows believable growth as he changes throughout the book. Family also plays an important role in the novel, and the competing viewpoints of Adonis' parents provide another realistic representation of how people are or are not supportive of those who are different. Even though the book excelled in its honest depiction of bullying and intolerance, the novel itself didn't have the emotional impact I had hoped. The climax occurred too quickly and too near the end, and the closing scene felt trite and a bit hollow. The almost singular focus of the storyline was also very limited. While this may make the book useful as a teaching tool, it felt basic as a novel. Finally, while the writing worked style worked well as internal dialogue for Adonis, it didn't stand out. Due to the book's candid approach and easy plot, *CROSSING LINES* will be a great read for students struggling with acceptance of GLBTQ students, especially boys who should be able to identify with Adonis and the challenges he faces. However, for GLBTQ students looking for a story that resonates with them, I would recommend books by David Levithan or Nick Burd's *The Vast Fields of Ordinary* instead. Note: This review refers to an advance reader's copy.

*CrossingLines* is a little different than the usual Paul Volponi book. Normally, we read about the inner city and how life is hard and unforgiving. This time we head to the suburbs in his latest novel and deal with the prejudices faced by a gay student. Adonis is a football player. He's a jock. He's a great athlete and he has an image to uphold with his guy friends. Adonis is dating a girl (whose name I forgot and the book is at work!) who is also involved in the fashion club. Adonis is in love, but things get complicated when the new kid, Alan, joins the fashion club. Alan is a gender bending teen and Adonis' jock friends want nothing to do with him. The football team hates Alan, and Adnois is caught in the middle of their little war. Does he go along with his team to hurt Alan and also destroy his relationship with his girlfriend, or does he do the right thing? I enjoyed the book. It was something different than the usual stuff Mr. Volponi writes, though I am fond of his other books because they get my male students to read. I like the message, and think this is an important novel to read.

How do you respond when a clearly different student transfers to your school and makes friends

with your sister...when your own friends are prone to bully a ridicule the new kid? That is the question faced by high school football player Adonis when he meets Alan, a cross-dresser who becomes not only president of the fashion club but the target of unrelenting scorn from Adonis' teammates and father. Overall I found the book to be quite enjoyable, with a message the aches to be explored and expressed. Part of the way through I was starting to wonder how the absolutely necessary character development would be worked in, given Volponi's rather spare, almost Hemingway-esque treatment of character and plot, but as Adonis started to "come around" and move away from his friends' plan to attack Alan (really there's no better word), I gained more and more respect for Adonis and his fortitude, despite his later self-criticism of believing he should have done more sooner. Alan, I think, could have been portrayed a little more vividly. Perhaps it was Volponi's desire to present him in somewhat muted tones so as not to have him appear stereotypically flamboyant, but given his morph into dress-wearing Alana, I feel the story could have absorbed a bit more flash in his personality. He was delightfully dry and sardonic when such was called for; more needed to be done to make him truly notable. Some of Adonis' friends were a little too close to the familiar jock types from Central Casting, but considering the author's focus on Adonis' mind and heart I can forgive a little cardboard. Adonis' own self-image issues were a nice subplot, and the muffed play at the end of the football game was totally appropriate. Clearly this book was a step outside the comfort zone for the author, and one that is more than adequate to the task. After years of writing dialogue for Harlem toughs, creating an authentic gay character was a challenge, and he got a lot of things right. But ultimately the kickoff was not run back for a touchdown.

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