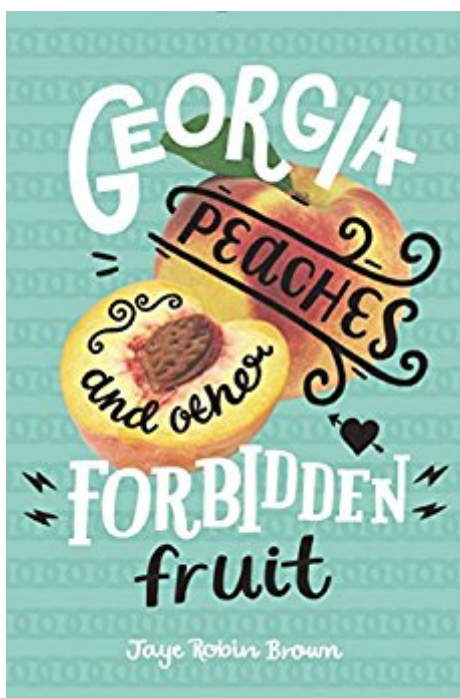


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# Georgia Peaches And Other Forbidden Fruit



## Synopsis

A Kirkus Best Book of the Year! A Chicago Public Library Best Book of the Year! A Bustle.com Best Young Adult Book of the Year! Joanna meets the perfect girl for her and must decide whether to break a promise that could change everything for her and her family or lose out on love in this charming young adult romance that's perfect for fans of Julie Murphy's Dumplin' and Becky Albertalli's Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda. Joanna Gordon has been out and proud for years, but when her popular radio evangelist father remarries and decides to move all three of them from Atlanta to the more conservative Rome, Georgia, he asks Jo to do the impossible: to lie low for the rest of her senior year. And Jo reluctantly agrees. Although it is (mostly) much easier for Jo to fit in as a straight girl, things get complicated when she meets Mary Carlson, the oh-so-tempting sister of her new friend at school. But Jo couldn't possibly think of breaking her promise to her dad. Even if she's starting to fall for the girl. Even if there's a chance Mary Carlson might be interested in her, too. Right?

## Book Information

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> Fiction

## Customer Reviews

I wanted to read this after reading a review earlier in the year & I finally got a chance. This is imo 1 of the best YA books of 2016 & certainly 1 of the most important. It hits on some hot button issues of sexuality, faith & acceptance. I cannot say enough good things about this book, there are just too many. Do yourself a favor & read this book. You will not regret it. The main characters romance is beautifully done between Jo & Mary Carlson. This book goes much deeper than young first love though. The writer captures the hardships of being gay in the south, especially Rome, GA. What had me captivated was Jo's moral compass & how she navigates new love, friendship, expectations, following her dreams, faith, family & often times, really screwing up while trying to do what is right. Jo makes some poor choices and she is flawed, real & absolutely wonderful. All the characters are wonderfully layered & unforgettable. And my goodness how beautifully strong Mary is! She's amazing as well. The author does a fabulous job of writing characters you love to pull for & a supporting cast that you will love to root for. You will fall in love with them all, especially BTB. You will understand once you read it too. What are you waiting for? I promise you will not regret it & will be mesmerized by these indelible characters.

Joanna is an out-and-proud lesbian, but when her father remarries, backlash from his new wife's family makes him ask Jo to hide her sexuality. It's only for the last year of high school, which she'll be spending at a new school in a tiny small town in Georgia. In return for her straight-girl makeover, Jo's dad agrees to let her take a gap year road trip, and let her broadcast a youth program on his evangelical radio station, where she can talk about the issues of religious youth (especially being queer and religious). However, Jo's cover backfires when she falls for the nicest, straightest good girl in the school - who happens to be a flaming closeted lesbian. This was...not what I expected. First of all, I expected Joanna's dad and stepmom to be bigoted, but they were extremely open minded and cool with her sexuality. Also, I found myself shouting at Jo a lot more than I thought I would. Closeted teenager in high school? Been there, done that, bought the tshirt. But Jo's continuous clinging to her cover story, even with her new girlfriend, causes a lot of pain to both of them that could easily have been avoided. I know that she has at least somewhat pure intentions part of the time, but often she's just being selfish and cruel. (Fair enough, says I. She's a teenager and her life is complicated. If she'd been perfect, this book would have been a lot shorter. Still, a lot of the angst seems unnecessary.) This is a very cute story, dealing with faith and queerness as well as high

school drama, homophobia, and parent-child relationships. I really liked it, and only lament the utter Christiancentrism of it, which was ultimately unavoidable.

This book is one of the dreamiest, most romantic YAs I've read in a long while. Anna and the French Kiss level of romantic. Jo is an unforgettable character who knows exactly who she is, even while wearing an awful bridesmaid dress at her preacher dad's latest wedding. She sacrifices that certainty for her father, family, and faith, all while falling in love with the magnetic girl-next-door. It's sweet, hot, sexy, and so funny. And it all wraps up with the most romantic movie HEA squee of YES. I loved it.

In 1998, I read Bruce Bawer's book, *A Place at the Table*. In it, he postulates a simple idea: being LGBT doesn't mean, or require, being a part of a perceived subculture that emphasized (at the time) promiscuity and a rejection of Christianity and its values. He proposed that being "gay" was not immoral, even for Christian believers. His postulate is now the way many people do think of LGBT : people who want committed relationships, a meaningful relationship with God, marriage, and family. LGBT people are fundamentally people who want mainly what "straight" people want. But - especially in the Bible belt of rural America - bigotry based on fundamentalist biblical interpretation is not a hypothetical problem for either LGBT kids or their parents. For those that are LGBT, there is tension between city and country, fundamentalist and main-stream theology, public life and home life. This isn't written as literary fiction. It's a romance. However, this book explores heavier themes of Lesbianism and faith with skill and compassion.

This book! You can just \*hear\* the lovely southern voice in your head as you read Jo's struggles to fit in with the idea of a new stepmom ("Three," Dad's third wife) and a move to a small town where Jo's got to fly under the radar and stay in the closet after her wild, free days as an out teen in Atlanta--especially once Jo starts to fall for a very off-limits girl. More than a love story (although it is awesome at that, too!), this is really a story about faith and acceptance and being true to yourself in spite of the huge pressures of family and society. It will really appeal to LGBTQ teens in the same boat, but it's as powerful a book for allies who want to support their friends.

Like Jaye Robin Brown's first book *NO PLACE TO FALL*, this new story is oozing with southern charm. The romance is sweet and spicy and so are the characters. I love how authentic the voices sound, as well as a premise that explores the struggle of an already out gay character feeling

pressured by her radio-minister father to hide her sexual orientation, just before she meets the girl of her dreams. Jo is a whip-smart main character, who values friendship, faith, family, and falling in love. You'll be rooting for her to attain all of the above, plus her own radio show.

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