



Chyna Doll

Mickie B. Ashling

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Lil Lampert's forty-fifth birthday turns the effervescent architect into a brooding mess, and his partner, Grier Dilorio, takes him to Italy to help him regain his zest for life. The timing is bad—almost-fifteen-year-old Luca has just started high school, and his mother and stepfather are also traveling. Luca is left in the care of Chicago Bear, Clark Stevens, and his partner, Dr. Jody Williams.

Growing up with two dads and two gay uncles has given Luca a unique perspective on gender roles, but not all the answers. He's had a secret crush on his straight best friend, Chip, for years. Suddenly, Luca finds himself attracted to Chyna, Chip's twin sister. Now he's wondering if this means he's bisexual.

Born with a sexual development disorder, Chyna should have been raised as a male, but due to an epic parenting fail, is being raised as female. Hiding the truth becomes more difficult when Chyna hits puberty, and crushing over Luca adds another element to Chyna's struggle to fit in.

Is Luca's moral compass strong enough to guide him successfully through this period of discovery or will he succumb to peer pressure and shatter Chyna's dreams for happiness?

Chyna Doll Details

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From Reader Review Chyna Doll for online ebook

S.M. Johnson says

Have not read the other books in the series, but have been anxiously waiting for this one, and I was not at all disappointed. I thought the author handled writing about an intersex character very well, including the way this character might be similar and at the same time quite different from a transgender person. Nicely done.

Uh. I will say I skimmed the Lil and Grier storyline, mostly because not having read previous books, I was not invested in their story, and really wanted to get back to Chyna and Luca. From what I gleaned, that aspect of the story was well-written also :)

K. Kira says

Best in the series

This book was by far the best part of this series, though I'll admit I skipped daddio because I became insanely bored with Lil and Grier halfway through Taste and only kept reading because I wanted to know how the Luca storyline played out. I really wish Chyna and Luca could get a sequel, I'd buy that in a heartbeat. This book was amazing and I just wish it was longer, it feels like the author ended it right as it was getting started. We went through all that drama and angst just to have it cut off right when Chyna and Luca were getting themselves figured out and things were heating up. If any characters truly deserved a sequel it'd be these two! I'd love a look at them three years down the line when Luca is a successful college football star and Chyna is a sexyass androgynous model with gorgeous hair and lots of amazing 18+ sex scenes.

Vivian says

This book deserves more than my halfway to sick brain will allow, but here we go.

This book is really good. I don't usually read ya/na because I find the trials and tribulations of being a teen far enough away that either I don't see things that way anymore or I'd prefer not to go back to that tumultuous time of self-doubt, raging hormones, and any semblance of control. That said, I enjoyed this story because it grabbed that strenuous time in life and brought the reader face to face with Chyna's problem--puberty.

The blurb lays out the situation clearly, Chyna hits that magic point of no return and things start changing--fast. The epic parenting fail is beyond epic; it's abuse. Few things make me want to throttle people then what they think is appropriate to do to those in their care. I was furious at Chyna and her twin, Chip's mother--and their father. Talk about snake eyes. These kids did not get a good roll of the dice, could have been worse, but the veneer on their lives made the transgression that much more heinous.

Needless to say, Chip is the gold star in this book. As Chyna's twin they've always been connected and Chip looks out for her when no one else will or can. But, being a teen just entering high school, none of this is easy or fun. Now, before you get the idea that this is a doom and gloom read--it's not. There's a lot of normal

between bouts of drama. Classes, lunchtime, lockers, dance, practice and hanging with friends. Luca is Chip's best friend and has known the twins for years. But, this year is different.

There was an abrupt side story about Luca's parents Lil and Grier that provided context and understanding. This is what makes me wonder about shelving it as ya even though the main story revolves around the teen characters. It is more mature with some significant kinks discussed and explored, but if you watch you see that it all relates back to Luca and Chyna. The issues and changes they're both going through. My experience with stories featuring intersex and transgender is limited, but I thought it was handled well and I liked it a lot.

Overall, a compelling if idealized intersex romance.

Karen says

There are many books that I read that I thoroughly enjoy, and yet, can't remember much about them a few months later. This will not be one of those books! I even did a little googling to understand more about the subject of intersex persons, transgender persons, and gender dysphoria which were all topics brought up and sensitively addressed in the story. So, the book was a great read, and I feel a little more educated, thank you Ms. Ashling!

I had not read the previous 3 books in the series, and though it was apparent that I was coming into an established universe, this book can easily be read as a stand alone. Chyna's and Luca's story was all brand new, and the continuing storyline of the characters from the earlier books just made me want to go back and read them, but did not detract from this plot line.

Chyna was born with Persistent Mullerian Duct Syndrome, PMDS, a genetic condition which means she was chromosomally male, has a penis and testes, but also has a uterus and fallopian tubes (no ovaries). Outwardly, she looked like a boy, but her mother -- whom we later come to understand had some significant mental illness -- chose to raise her as a girl, based on ignorance of her condition and some willful and frightening medical naivety. This involves a considerable amount of deception, which Chyna's mother perpetuates with the help of Chyna's twin brother Chip. Their father basically washed his hands of the entire situation when their mother insisted he go along with the charade, and left them as infants.

As a parent, it's hard for me to imagine not one, but both parents being so abusive/neglectful of their children, but unfortunately child abuse is common, even though the way it was perpetuated on these two is unusual. That was the hardest part of the story to get over, and I applaud Ms. Ashling for painting both parents as real people who made foolish and destructive decisions rather than the monsters that I wanted to think of them as.

Basically, the entire illusion of Chyna as a girl begins to unravel when she reaches puberty, a little late, at age 15. She struggles to make sense of who she is, and who she wants to be, all the while trying to hide the male parts of her body and psyche. She is unequivocally supported by her brother Chip, although he also is confused about his role as her protector, and keeper of her secret. She develops a crush on Chip's best friend Luca, who is himself trying to decide his own sexual orientation and is confused about being attracted to both Chip and Chyna (and hilariously feeling a little like a pervert for crushing on a set of twins).

This book is at times an awkward blend of YA and adult literature -- one chapter for instance is devoted to

Luca's gay parents own personal kink, and would be completely out of place if this wasn't book 4 of a series. I am personally still enough of a prude that the idea of 9th graders having sex bothers me, and the idea of 15 year old girls giving out blow jobs in such a casual fashion makes me cringe. Those issues aside, I loved the book. And will probably read it again....

Don Bradshaw says

Absolutely amazing with the issue of intersex handled openly and tastefully.

Brooklyn says

Absolutely loved this final book in the series. I wasn't sure about it at first and it took me forever to read book one, but each book was better than the previous. And I'm glad we got to see Luca as a teenager. Luca is an amazing kid! So sweet and honest and honorable. And Grier and Lil are just too hot! With their bit of kink. But sheesh! I'm glad Lil worked through his issues with the age thing. God! He was a bit too obsessed with that.

Millie says

Absolutely heart-wrenching. Loved almost every second. Wish there was more to the story - to see where Luca's and Chyna's life goes. The end was a little bit rushed - I would appreciate an epilogue from more POVs (Luca, Chyna).

Alex Akira says

This exceptional book reveals the story of Chyna, an intersex boy raised as a girl, who finds her problems mounting as she enters adolescence. This fourth book in Mickie B. Ashling's 'Horizons' series can definitely be read as a stand alone, but I encourage readers to seek out the other books in the group as each is a potent mix of entertainment, romance, and realistic love, interlaced with a bounty of intelligence on the many lifestyles within the GLBTQ community.

Chyna Doll finds Luca, the young son of Lil and Grier, the gay couple from the previous novels, entering high school. Now fifteen and a rising star on the football field, Luca is discovering his sexuality. Plagued with erotic thoughts of his best friend, Chip, Luca wonders if he is gay. Soon after, the sight of Chip's twin sister, Chyna, a girl he's always considered a little sister, has Luca certain that he is bisexual. Confused, Luca seeks clarity about sexual identity by questioning his "uncles" Jody and Clark (from 'Horizons 1'). Seeing Chyna through new eyes, Luca pursues her and happily discovers she's been crushing on him for years. Luca's choice brings a world of envy from the popular cheerleaders who bully their former friend Chyna. Luca is totally smitten with his new girlfriend and tries to soothe her fears, but soon realizes that Chyna's emotional turmoil comes from a much deeper source. But will Chyna share her secret with Luca?

Pressed into a female identity at birth by a mother determined to have a boy/girl twin set, Chyna faces a growing slew of problems entering puberty. Volatile emotions, the lack of breasts, and the ever present boner that refuses to be tucked away, have Chyna determined to raise the money needed to have the operations that will make her a true woman. Her twin Chip is ever supportive, but is torn by Chyna's determination to rid herself of the hated penis. He makes a suggestion the result of which spins Chyna's world on its end and it is here that her journey to sexual identity truly begins.

Chyna's enthralling voyage is revealed through the eyes of all three of its adolescent leads, Chyna, Chip, and Luca, but most especially Chyna. This is a heartfelt and realistic vision of a person born with both male and female anatomy, but its contents also showcase the pressures young teens confront in both their home and school life as they tread the path to adulthood. High school, football, modeling agencies, and prom all have a place in this genuine and inspiring romantic gay fiction with a young adult edge, but its scrupulous attention to detail on an all-too-often overlooked subject matter make it simply masterful.

Amazing in scope, Chyna Doll embraces the themes of self-love, true love, and familial support and the lack thereof, in a winning combination that had me devouring its pages. I highly recommend this book to all readers and hope that it makes its way into every school library. Make no mistake—this is a wonderful, stimulating, and romantic gay fiction novel, but its exceptional portrayal of intersexuality make this an important read for anyone seeking to embrace the diversity that is the GLBTQ community. Kudos to the author for tackling an often difficult subject with grace, diligence, and love.

Thank you, Mickie B. Ashling, for shedding this brilliant and loving light on intersexuality.

“Terrific, Dynamic, A Must Read!”

NOTE: This book was provided by Dreamspinner Press for the purpose of a review on Rainbow Book Reviews.

Pixie Mmgoodbookreviews says

4 1/2 - 5 Hearts

Reviewed for MM Good Book Reviews Click the link for giveaway (Ends 15th March 2015)

This story is part of a series and while it can be read in order, it can also be read as a stand-alone.

Luca finds himself struggling with his sexuality as he deals with the attraction he feels for Chyna, his best friend Chip's sister. Having wondered if he was gay for so long because of his attraction to Chip, his sudden attraction to Chyna makes him wonder if he's bisexual and with his dad and daddio, Grier and Lil, away for a month long holiday he turns to his uncles Clark and Jody for advice. Chyna has a secret though and is going through her own crisis, her brother Chip is a dogged supporter as she tries to get answers from her mother, a woman in denial and who refuses to deal with the truth, about her Persistent Müllerian Duct Syndrome because dealing with puberty as a female is hard to fake and the psychological abuse and isolation is beginning to tear her apart. Chyna also worries about Luca's reaction to the truth of her situation, could he ever accept Chyna in her natural form?

Oh this story was amazing, I got dragged into Chyna's world and her plight touched my heart. While most teenagers deal with the normal angst of teenage life Chyna's angst is double fold as many things she used to enjoy have to be abandoned as puberty makes itself known. Born with the body of a boy with a few extra bits Chyna's mother made a monumental decision that has huge repercussions fifteen years later and Chyna is suffering and confused. Luca is going through his own turmoil as he wonders if he is bisexual, but the support he receives comforts him. As the teenagers deal with school and sexualities Grier and Lil have their own problems to overcome in Italy, Lil is facing his anxiety over his age which begins to drive a wedge between him and Grier.

This is a wonderful story that has you hoping that Lil and Grier can overcome Lil's fears, that has you heartbroken at Chyna's situation; that has you admiring the strong young man that Chip is and has you admiring and adoring Luka for the sensible, loving young man he is. Mickie B. Ashling really knocks you off your feet with this story, we are given an assortment of situations from an older partner worrying that his younger husband's eye will wander, to a young man angsty over his sexuality, to a confused girl/boy who doesn't know who she is supposed to be anymore, to a disinterested father, and a mother who's past actions come to bite her in the ass and whose mental stability comes into question.

I must admit I wasn't sure what to expect when I opened this book as I haven't read the other Horizons stories but it certainly didn't lessen my enjoyment or make me feel like I had to have read the other books. While the story is mainly about Chyna and Luka, there are sections of Grier and Lil in Italy as they deal with Lil's worries so we get quite a bit of adult fun ;-), we also have Clark and Jody as they come through from Luka in the advice department and also when they support Chyna and Chip from the fallout after prom. (And yes I might now have an interest of discovering both couples' beginnings!). I loved how MBA managed to get across the turmoil that Chyna was going through, she poses a good question about what would have been different if Chyna had be brought up like a boy instead of as a girl? Would Chyna have hated her body so much if she hadn't had it drummed into her that she was really a girl? Would Chyna still have preferred the more feminine stuff? Would Chyna have just been gay or a female trapped in a male's body? These are powerful questions and all of them lead to Chyna's inner turmoil, what fifteen year old should be left with the fallout because of a mothers selfish actions. Okay shutting up now as I really could gush about this book for ages, I'll just say you'd be a fool to miss this story!

I recommend this to those who love reassuring lovers, blossoming young love, overcoming monumental hurdles, angst and anger, tears and heartache, finding support and understanding and hope for the future.

Tammy says

I absolutely love this series! There were things that I loved about this book and things that I didn't. Loved catching up with all the guys from previous books. Seeing that they are doing well. I didn't like how Chyna's Mom just changed her gender because she wanted a girl. The relationship between Luca and Chip was fantastically written and you could see that being real life. Once Luca finds out about Chyna's secret he is very accepting no doubt its all about how he was raised! Would really love to read about this couple ten years down the road!

Cindi says

Mickie B. Ashling stopped by On Top Down Under on March 11th. While the giveaway has ended, you can still check out an excerpt from the book!

Excellent book. I was iffy about reading #4 in a series when I'd not read the ones before it yet. I shouldn't have worried. The author wrote it where I never felt lost or even slightly confused.

Great book. Great characters. Great story.

Full review can be found at -

This book was provided by the author in exchange for a fair and honest review.

Lucy says

This is my first Horizons story and I was a little worried I'd be lost, due to it being the fourth in the series. Rest assured, it's definitely stand-alone.

Luca is a very sweet young man who has pretty much decided he's gay. Mainly this is due to the crush he has on his best friend, Chip. His much loved dads are away on a vacation (this is an interesting side story) and he's now very conflicted by his feelings for Chips twin, Chyna. How can he be gay, as he thought, if he longs and lusts for Chyna?

Chyna and Chip, honestly, they are the best together. This is what family, any family and not just twins, should be like. Stand together, defend each other and be the other's support. Loved that about them. Mom? Well, she's another story. I can't decide if I can feel a little sorry for her or if I am just 100% furious with her. Leaning toward furious, mostly due to the fact that her biggest reason for choosing to raise Chyna as female was that fact that she couldn't conceive again and she wanted the "perfect" boy/girl family. Add in the vaccinations, the lies, and Mom is really close to unbalanced.

I had to google Persistent Müllerian Duct Syndrome (PMDS) because I had never heard of it. This the syndrome Chyna was born with and for the life of me I can't figure out why Mom would want Chyna raised as a girl. He has male anatomy. Some additional parts to be sure, but basically male. So to be raised as a girl and now hitting puberty, what did Mom think was going to happen? It is nearly impossible to imagine what Chyna went through – externally male, expectations to be female and harassment on top of that.

Chyna is trying to navigate through puberty and high school and some people are making this more difficult than ever. Because of puberty, body changes are causing the usual havoc but Chyna can't deal with them as a teenager normally would – he's been hiding this secret of PMDS. Chyna was lucky in that Chip is always there to support, defend, protect.

I found it very interesting and unfortunately truer to life than I would hope that at a point when Chyna and her supporters confront the principal, Mr. Cooper, about the bullying and assault Chyna has endured and he treats it as a “prank” and then an “incident”. He really doesn’t take it seriously. To make it worse, when Chip tells him that he was “...lucky you didn’t have a suicide to contend with on top of everything else.”, Cooper tells Chip he is overreacting. In this day of social media, what does it take for those charged with the care and safety of our children to realize how the Internet has upped the ante in terms of bullying? It is so much easier to bully someone to death when you need not face them at all – just spew your venom online.

Luka may be confused as he navigates his own sexuality questions but he is a young man who knows what is right and how to act. Kudos to his dads for raising him right and himself for a true moral compass. Joined with Chip and then Luka’s uncles, they give Chyna the support so desperately needed.

Woven into the story line is the plight of Lil and Grier. Lil is turning 45 and he’s not handling it very well. Big problem? No, of course not. But to Lil, it’s very real. He’s an older man with a younger partner and the idea that he’s “too old” to keep Grier’s interest is beating him down. I was very happy for him that Grier took his anxieties seriously. A vacation to Italy (and a ride on a Ducati!) to show his love and support for Lil ended up being just what Lil needed. “You and Grier can be the poster boys for going the extra mile to make things work.” That in a nutshell is what a relationship should be. Go the extra mile, make it work.

The scene in the dressing room with Grier and the Italian clerk showed Grier’s devotion to his man and I loved it.

The book weaves a balance between the very serious (Chyna) and the more light-hearted and sexy (Lil and Grier). This made the book less heavy and gives you something to think about. It’s an eye-opener that is definitely recommended.

Shandra says

Intersex people are sorely misunderstood and underrepresented in fiction. I was so glad to discover *Chyna Doll* featured an intersex teenager trying to come to grips with what it means to have a body which is physically different from the way society defines gender identity. Chyna is wondrously *Chyna* through Mickie B. Ashling's clever writing skills. There's not a moment where I, as the reader, cared whether Chyna chose to identify as female or male in the end because all I wanted was Chyna to find happiness in a life dredged down with unnecessary shame, confusion, and pain.

I chose to read this book first because I was interested in the young lovers' story. I've been on a first-love kick lately and *Chyna Doll* is a wonderful first love story. Luca has been raised by gay fathers and doted on by a married pair of gay uncles which makes him possibly the least judgmental teenager on the planet while Chyna has been forced to live as a female in spite of having functional male anatomy on the exterior with female anatomy inside which may or may not ever be functional.

There's a middle section of the book which focuses on Luca's fathers who are away on holiday to Italy to try to deal with his Daddio's midlife crisis. It's honestly fairly disruptive to the story though I imagine I would have enjoyed the glimpse into their continued relationship more if I had read the three books prior to this one before picking up book four in the series. The interlude isn't exceptionally long which I was grateful for though it does give some excellent character development for Luca's parents, Grier and Lil. It was enough to

make me want to read the earlier books. I only wish it hadn't been in the middle of Luca and Chyna's story since I'm an awful person who only wanted to stick to the main love story at play in the book.

I'd rank this a solid 4 stars since there were several things I wanted resolved better -Chyna's mother, Chyna's health, and the dynamic between the twins now Chyna and Chip are addressing her intersex status fully- but a lot of things I wanted more detail on? They didn't detract from a Happy-For-Now ending which was very believable as well as enjoyable to read.

Caroline Brand says

REVIEWED FOR PRISM BOOK ALLIANCE

4.5 Stars

This book may have made me the angriest I have been in a while with the sheer selfishness of Chyna's parents, in particular her mother. To want something is fine but to manipulate, lie and ultimately damage someone you are supposed to love and protect is abuse.

This is the story of Chyna and to a lesser extent her twin brother Chip. These twins were desperately wanted by their parents after they struggled to get pregnant but from the minute they were born Chyna was placed at a disadvantage, primarily by the dreams of her mother, a fact that would have a huge impact on her later in life.

Chyna was born as intersex. Outwardly presenting as a boy with male chromosomes but with female organs inside. Everything the doctors said at the time of the birth was ignored when her mother registered her as female. That one decision was the first of many poor ones that saw me raging as I read this story and felt Chyna's despair.

When Chyna hits puberty her carefully constructed life starts falling down around her ears. On top of coping with the changes happening to her body, her less than ideal image of herself when compared to her peers she has to face up to the fact of her mother's deceit. Her brother Chip is an amazing source of support not only working hard at school in the hope of a career that may eventually help other people with similar situations but putting a lot of his own personal life on hold to protect and help his sister through each crisis. I felt her father was useless and could have done with a good shaking!

If you have read the rest of the Horizons Series you will already have met Luca. He is the son of Grier and Lil and an incredibly well rounded young man. As his dad's head off on a month's sabbatical to sort out a mini crisis of their own he goes to stay with his uncles. He is at that age where he is questioning his sexuality more and more and is lucky to have the support he has when he needs to ask pertinent questions. He has had a long time crush on his best friend which he felt pointed to him being gay but when he starts noticing his best friends twin sister he ponders on the fact that maybe he is bisexual.

Chyna and Luca move from friendship to boyfriend/girlfriend with Chyna slowly becoming more and more confused and Luca having no clue about her suffering and angst. Melinda and Dan are introduced which was perfect for Chyna but it still didn't resolve the underlying issue. Her mother seemed to become more and more out of control and then events take a disastrous turn leaving Luca having to face a situation that I doubt any fifteen year old boy is equipped to deal with.

Perhaps in reality the ending was a little too easy but this story was beautifully written and Mickie Ashling managed to drag just about every emotion possible out of me in its 320 pages.

cmbookdiva says

Loved the fourth edition of the Horizons Series. One of my favorite series hands down. Would love to know how Lill, Grier, Luca and JoJo are doing with the new additions to their family.
