

Weird Girl and What's His Name

Meaghan Brothers

Three Rooms Press, 2015

Reviews

- [Kirkus](#) (13 Oct 2015. Starred Review): “In a small town in North Carolina, a close friendship between two eccentric high schoolers breaks apart, leaving a rift. Lula and Rory have always had two things in common: their outcast status and their love of the 1990s paranormal TV series The X-Files. Rory is generally overlooked by his classmates. Lula’s “weird girl” moniker comes from her being both bookish and outspoken and taking after her equally headstrong grandfather. Rory, who is out to Lula as gay, nevertheless keeps secret his illicit relationship with his middle-aged boss, Andy, an equivocal divorcé who continually deflects Rory’s questions about their future. One night, after one of Rory and Andy’s many fights, Lula discovers the relationship and confronts Rory. Later that night, she disappears. The void left by Lula’s disappearance is palpable and leads both estranged friends down surprising paths. Rory narrates the first half of the book and Lula, the second, and both voices are crisply and intimately drawn. Minor characters are equally vibrant, particularly Walter, Lula’s rugged but kind stepfather, and Seth, the school’s unexpectedly wholesome and gentle quarterback. The X-Files, the details of which both Lula and Rory lovingly recount, provides a strong common language and set of symbols throughout. Carefully and subtly imagined.”
- [Booklist](#) (Aug 2015): “They are called *Weird Girl and What’s His Name*—Lula because she is from L.A. (an oddity in their small North Carolina town), and Rory because he is a self-described big fat guy who is easily made-fun-of-able. They are also obsessed with The X-Files. And did I mention they are best friends and that Rory is gay? The two are each other’s only friend, in fact, and they tell each other everything. Or so Lula thinks until she discovers that Rory hasn’t told her about his affair with Andy, his 40-something boss. Devastated, Lula runs away from home and toward, she hopes, a long-absent mother who abandoned her when she was 3. Will she find her mother? Will she return home? Will she and Rory reconcile? Answers are found in the book’s two halves: Rory tells the first half and Lula the second. Lula’s half drags, and the book is generally overlong, but the characters are wonderfully likable, the story is smartly written, and—what’s this?—there’s a possibility for a happy ending? Read and find out.”
- [School Library Journal](#) (Oct. 2015): “Rory and Lulu share an affinity for all things geek: The X-Files, Buffy, and conspiracy theories. When Lulu discovers that underage Rory had an explicit relationship with his divorced boss and hid it from Lulu because of her crush on him, she begins to question her own sexual orientation. After she is rebuffed by her favorite teacher, Lulu decides to hunt down the skeletons in her family’s closet. This buddy/misanthrope novel explores the difficulties in LGBTQ relationships, as well as teen angst in general. While the narrative is uplifting, some readers may have a hard time with the slow burn pace and minimal plot movement. The overuse of The X-Files as a metaphor for character complexity may keep some of the core audience at arm’s length. However, Brothers’s pitch-perfect dialogue and well-polished prose make her an author to watch. VERDICT Recommended for fans of realistic fiction with relationship drama and an LGBTQ focus.”
- [Publishers Weekly](#) (27 July 2015): “As the title suggests, Rory, who narrates the first half of this book, is overlooked by his classmates, while his best friend and fellow X-Files obsessive Lula,

who narrates the second half, can't stay under the radar. Rory may be overweight, nerdy, and gay—something only Lula and the older lover Rory hasn't told her about know—but the whole junior class knows Lula, her all-black outfits, and her out-of-date slang learned from the grandparents who raised her. Lula's grandparents won't talk about their daughter, and when Lula finds out that Rory has been keeping things from her, too, she runs away. Lula's story begins after she returns home, and *Brothers* (Supergirl Mixtapes) effectively mixes past and present as Lula copes with the fallout of her actions and describes her journey, which included minor humiliations, efforts to figure out her sexuality, and a mother who doesn't measure up to fantasy. Happily, by book's end, the title no longer applies: both Lula and Rory have people in their lives—friends and romantic interests—who know not just their names but their real, evolving selves.”

Awards

- [Foreword INDIES Book of the Year Award for Young Adult Fiction](#) , 2015

Lists

- Kirkus Best Teen Books of 2015
- [Kirkus Best Teen Romance Novels of 2015](#)
- IndieFab Young Adult Fiction Book of the Year

Response to challenges

- [Loudoun County, VA](#): Title was mentioned in a list of titles in Loudoun County in school board meeting. This title and others were added to classroom libraries as part of the Diverse Classroom Library Initiative. The argument over the books has sparked a recall election. At this time, the title has not been removed from the library.

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