Hi, my name is Boston.

...and this book may blow your mind. If you're like me, you probably grew up with some ideas about what it means to be a boy or a girl.

I remember being told which side of the department store I could buy my bathing suits in, which roles I could inhabit in make-believe games, and how, for some reason, the prince was always the hero in fairy tales.

As I grew up, I realized not everyone fits into these girl/boy boxes. My mom could be the breadwinner, my brother could be sensitive, and my interests might not match some of the things I am "supposed" to like, either.

So I set off to discover all I could about this thing called gender. My friends and I did countless interviews, over 200 surveys, many hours in the library, and a bunch of soul-searching of our own. I met some incredible people along the way whose stories I'll share.

I bet there's a lot you already know about gender, and we can start from there.

You probably have the idea that gender is somehow connected to your body parts or DNA, you might think of gender as having something to do with sexuality, you probably have heard of intersex people, and of course you are fluent in the gender roles of the culture you grew up in (they may be different from mine, unless you happened to be raised in Texas in the 1980's!). Additionally, you may know that not everyone fits these roles, and that surgeries exist to help those who feel very uncomfortable in the bodies they were born with. If you watch television, you may have heard of Chaz Bono or the man who was pregnant or seen beautiful women on daytime TV shows that "have a secret." You know on your government forms there are only two options for gender (unless you live in Nepal), and that even your doctor uses the words "gender" and "sex" interchangeably. You probably also know that bullying is a real problem for boys who are too feminine or other kids who don't fit traditional roles.

Whew! That's a lot there, that you already know.

On the next page, we'll investigate which of these are true and which may be (very) common misconceptions.

Exploring gender can be a challenge, but it's also a lot of fun. The benefits are totally worth it; you get this freedom to express yourself and a whole new way of looking at the world. Ready? Let's go!

www.thegenderbook.com