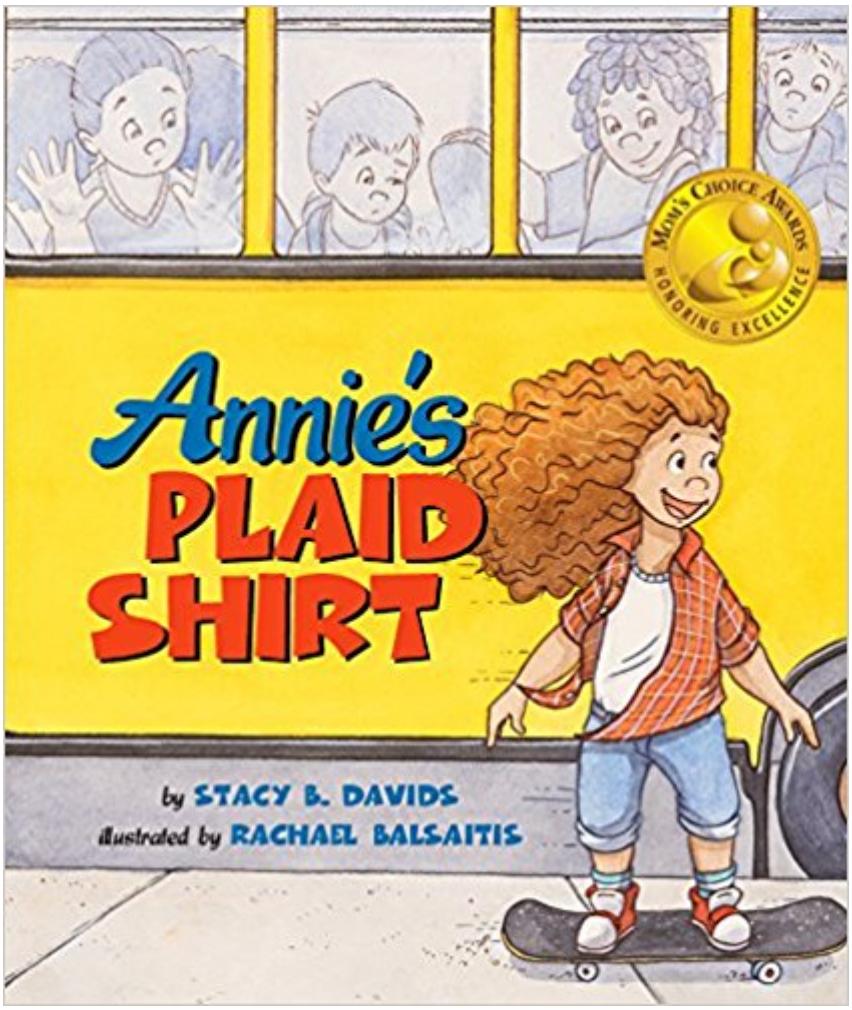
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Annie's Plaid Shirt



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Synopsis

ANNIE’S PLAID SHIRT is a Mom’s Choice AwardsÃ Â® GOLD Recipient!A Foreword Reviews INDIEFAB Book of the Year Awards Winner!A Next Generation Indie Book Awards Finalist! 5 STARS from San Francisco Book Review!Annie loves her plaid shirt and wears it everywhere. But one day her mom tells Annie that she must wear a dress to her uncle’s wedding. Annie protests, but her mom insists and buys her a fancy new dress anyway. Annie is miserable. She feels weird in dresses. Why can’t her mom understand?Then Annie has an idea. But will her mom agree?Annie’s Plaid Shirt will inspire readers to be themselves and will touch the hearts of those who love them.Themes of gender norms, identity, individuality, tolerance, and self-esteem.

Book Information

Age Range: 3 - 8 years

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: Upswing Press; 1st edition (November 7, 2015)

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Product Dimensions: 9.2 x 0.3 x 11.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars 31 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #86,569 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #12 inÃ Â Books > Children’s Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Tolerance #40 inÃ Â Books > Gay & Lesbian > Parenting & Families #52 inÃ Â Books > Children’s Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Peer Pressure

Customer Reviews

5/5 Stars. ...I LOVED this story! It’s a simple story, empowering, and Annie is endearing. While the story stands without the illustrations, artist Rachael Balsaitis...makes the story playful and shows Annie’s independence. --San Francisco Book ReviewBeginning with the cataloging and dedication pages where we see Annie getting her favorite shirt out of the laundry basket, she is never without it. She is an active school-aged child, fully confident in her ungirly self-expression. But then her mom succumbs to gender expectations when they are invited to Uncle Benny’s wedding. They go to the mall to get Annie’s brother Albert a new suit and Annie a dress...The story ends happily as Annie comes up with an ingenious solution.Visually, the pages are uncluttered with lots of white

space and just enough text. The watercolor illustrations by Rachael Balsaitis have a manga flavor that perfectly captures Annie’s put-upon face...On the final page, the photos show the author and the illustrator in their own favorite plaid shirts, and even the end papers are plaid.This picture book affirms Annie’s right to nonconformity in gender expression...It will appeal to all children and serve as a discussion starter about problem solving, social expectations and individuality. --Carolyn Caywood, American Library Association’s GLBTRTANNIE’S PLAID SHIRT is about individual choices and one girl’s struggle to be herself. The message, it is OK to be yourself, even if it’s different! Written by a clinical psychologist, ANNIE’S PLAID SHIRT deals with gender identification in a positive and creative way, teaching tolerance and celebration of differences. --Midwest Book Review

STACY B. DAVIDS, Ph.D. is a licensed clinical psychologist and works as a school psychologist. She’s also a former special education teacher. Her inspiration for writing Annie’s Plaid Shirt came from feeling pressure throughout her life to conform to society’s rules about gender. Even as a baby she reportedly yanked pink bows out of her hair. As an adult she says, does, and wears what she wants. Stacy lives in Miami, Florida. Just a few of her favorite things are cats, chocolate, and of course, plaid shirts. Learn more at stacybdavids.com.RACHAEL BALSAITIS is a professional plaid-wearer and illustrator, having illustrated the titles Annie’s Plaid Shirt and Love is Forever. When she’s not illustrating picture books she can be found reading the Sunday funnies, taking bike rides, and laughing at British comedies. Rachael lives in Minneapolis with her critters. Learn more at rachaelbalsaitis.com.

AnnieÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s Plaid Shirt, written by Stacy Davids, and beautifully illustrated by Rachael Balsaotos, is far more than the assertion of a young girl striving for individualism and self-expression. Yes, there is Annie, seeking independence, even if it is contrary to accepted social convention. But more than that, we see a small family communicating meaningfully and successfully mitigating a shared challenge. These are good values to impart on a young readership. Nicely done.

I am a Speech-Language Pathologist and I read this with some of my students. It kept the students engaged and it was short enough to finish in one session. No one could guess what would happen at the end, which made the ending more fun. We worked on prediction, reading comprehension, decoding, and inferencing. We even got to talk about our feelings on gender and social norms. I will definitely use this book again and even with the children in my life.

The main staple in AnnieÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s wardrobe is her plaid shirt. When her mother insists that she wears a dress to a relativeÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s wedding, will she do it? Annie is a headstrong tomboy. She knows what she likes and who she is. There are great themes about gender norms and individuality in this childrenÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s book. The illustrations are absolutely delightful with the colors and facial expressions.

Got this for my niece and she loves it. Now one of her favorite books

My books just arrived and they're gifts for Christmas but I had to open and read, what a charming story with beautiful illustrations. Strong characters with a brilliant message that is much needed in society today.

I collect books that teach tolerance towards diversity. This book really hit the spot! I love it and recommend it to anybody looking to instill decent values and acceptance towards others.

I liked it, but think the ending was a bit forced. Bought this for my 4 year old. Think it might have panned out better when he was 3.

There seem to be few books challenging the expectation that females wear skirts or dresses at least sometimes, so 'Annie's Plaid Shirt' is a welcome addition to our library. I appreciate that this book shows a loving, supportive, yet wholly believable family. Annie's a little girl with a realistic mix of strengths & limitations. Big brother Albert is little sister's friend and gentle ally. Mom likewise wants Annie to be herself, but it's understandable that she'd be wary of breaking societal dress code to this degree. People tend to be incredibly harsh in their judgements of others anyway, but VIP guests at a formal wedding attract extra scrutiny--and photos last a long time. If social stigma weren't so daunting, I'm sure we'd all make many more happy, healthy changes to our lives!The paper and print quality seem nice. The binding is glued rather than sewn, but unfortunately that's pretty common nowadays, even for first edition hardcovers. Mine came new from without a dust jacket; presumably, it was published sans jacket. I know nothing about Upswing Press, but in general I approve of supporting smaller publishers.Balsaitis' illustrations greatly enrich the story. I did find the other school kids' reactions to Annie's appearance a bit over the top. See the cover art? The bus riders' expressions are mild and tolerant compared to the kids a couple of pages into the book,

when Annie arrives at school. There, a much larger number of students are nearly all staring, looking shocked or amused, pointing, even sharing whispered gossip as Annie skates blissfully up the school walkway. Yet taken as a single snapshot, Annie's outfit doesn't look that far from the norm in a modern, non-uniform school setting. I think it would work better if that two-page spread were switched with the following one, a back yard children's party scene. Not only does Annie look more out of place when the other girls are all dolled up, but it would help set up the school day scene--making it more obvious that these kids aren't merely reacting to Annie's slightly tomboy-grunge style, but also to her wearing the exact same shirt day after day, no matter what. Readers might better accept the kids' responses if we were also starting to wonder how tatty--or even dirty--Annie's beloved shirt must be, and why she can't at least alternate between a few favourite shirts. Honestly, I don't think the art would have seemed jarringly melodramatic if the page order were just swapped. The illustration style complements the book very well, and the details are delightful.Davids' writing is mostly good, too. The book doesn't spell out why Annie hates dresses or loves that shirt so much, which means readers are invited to apply their own feelings & reasoning to the story. (For anyone who's wondering, the wedding couple is never shown or named either; clothing is the only gender issue addressed in this book.) The overall message is incredibly empowering and heartwarming. But one fault really bothers me.SPOILER ALERT:Annie grabs her new dress the morning of the wedding, but she doesn't put it on. Instead, she drags it to Albert's room to see what he thinks of a scheme she's suddenly come up with. The kids' solution is to have Annie wear her plaid shirt under a suit--presumably an outgrown suit of her brother's. Obviously, this would not be an option for girl without access to a suit her size. But the bigger issue is this: the kids didn't get approval from their mom till the last minute. By that time, if Mom hadn't been so thrilled or gracious, they'd have been stuck going either late or inappropriately dressed to HER OWN BROTHER'S WEDDING!To me, that's unacceptable. It all 'happened' to work out in the book, largely because as Mom was wondering what was taking her children so long to get ready, she was already feeling regret (or at least doubt) over her decision not to allow Annie to wear her plaid shirt. But what if Mom had NOT been okay with the plaid shirt/boy's suit combo for whatever reason (the style, the fit, a stain, a hole, creases, filth...)?!I strongly believe that the storybook family is right--and society misogynistic--on this issue. I've always found dresses, skirts and their accessories (tights/nylons, women's dress shoes, etc.) cruelly impractical, uncomfortable, and demeaning. Still, kids should seek adults' guidance, especially when they're knowingly bucking social mores. This is a wedding--far more important than a public event or a ceremony for Annie herself. The whole extended family is invested in both featuring & honouring the bridal couple. If a wayward ring or

flower bearer upstages the adults by momentarily forgetting their instructions, everyone forgives the adorable young child for acting their age. But if older niece Annie is 'allowed' to 'deliberately' 'be a distraction' the whole time by 'refusing to comply' with 'proper standards of dress', she and her mother may both have to deal with lasting resentment from the people they love most dearly. Such changes are good for society. Yet right now, it's still controversial; it takes courage.And in this case, the kids were also disobeying their own parent's clear & direct standing orders about what to wear. That's a very big problem. The story would be much better if the idea weren't sprung at the last minute; Mom should have had a REAL choice (not to mention a chance to make minor tweaks even if she did approve). As it stands, I'll need to point that out to every child as often as possible. Without such discussion, each reading of the book could subtly undermine, rather than properly model & reinforce, the concept of getting true permission ahead of time.This book's plot turns on nothing but unlikely luck, yet the resolution is presented as the natural result of kids simply thinking outside the box and using what they already have. They guess perfectly which rules they can break and how; they haven't overlooked a thing. They don't need to convince anyone; they know their mom will support them despite evidence to the contrary. They don't need to clean, mend, alter, or add anything; everything just happens to work as-is.If only the author had allowed enough time for the conflict to be resolved credibly and responsibly! Non-fictional children trying similar last-minute ploys will probably be sorely disappointed and cause deep regret for everyone. That's too bad. Kids misjudge situations often enough without their books misleading them. This book didn't need an artificial time crunch to add to the suspense. The rush just undermines the storyline.I realize that this family may be generally more okay with the last-minute scrambles & gambles than I am. Unless I knew we already had backup outfits, I wouldn't have been comfortable waiting till the day before my brother's wedding to shop for my kids' new suit & dress. Even if the shopping trip went without a hitch (!), it's disgusting not to pre-wash clothes. Sometimes new items fall apart or just don't look right after laundering. Murphy's Law has a way of punishing me for not planning ahead. Maybe this mother is less prone to catastrophe than I am (and/or more resourceful in a pinch). Still, if the kids' mother hadn't just happened to agree that a suit was suitable, or if some aspect of the ensemble just hadn't been presentable in its current state, the whole family would have been stuck between a rock and a hard place.It would be easy to edit this very book to make it practically perfect! I hope an updated edition will be published someday. As is, if I could find something better, I'd replace it. However, we need something now! Plus it's such a key issue that I feel obligated to at least try to support others advocating for change. 'Annie's Plaid Shirt' is a step in the right direction. So long as it's always accompanied by well-articulated disclaimers, I think it will do more good than harm. But

while it does an excellent job of teaching its intended message, be aware that it accidentally slips in a dangerous lesson, too. I hope that soon, I'll find a 'skirt-free girls' book that I'd be unreservedly thrilled to find kids reading on their own! =)

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