



Introducing Teddy: A Gentle Story About Gender and Friendship

Jess Walton , Dougal MacPherson (Illustrator)

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One sunny day, Errol finds that Thomas the Teddy is sad, and Errol can't figure out why. Then Thomas the Teddy finally tells Errol what Teddy has been afraid to say: *'In my heart, I've always known that I'm a girl Teddy, not a boy Teddy. I wish my name was Tilly.'* And Errol says, *'I don't care if you're a girl teddy or a boy teddy! What matters is that you are my friend.'*

Introducing Teddy: A Gentle Story About Gender and Friendship Details

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Author : Jess Walton , Dougal MacPherson (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Introducing Teddy: A Gentle Story About Gender and Friendship for online ebook

Earl says

At first, I didn't like this book because it seemed to oversimplify things. But then I remembered this was meant for kids- and really for the adults who need to explain a complicated matter to kids. I'm glad a conversation can be had if the situation arises.

Virginie (chouettblog) says

No book as ever given me so much trouble as a reviewer before this one.

Not because of the subject matter, but because it is less than 30 pages with just a few sentences and beautiful drawings:).

I just did not know if I would have enough to say about it! That was until I realised that it was not about the plot but about the message.

I realised I needed to review it, because it was, and is a very important book.

It is an important book whether or not you identify with your assigned gender and whether or not you feel that it is a reality that concerns you.

It is an important book because even if your child seems to be happy being a boy or a girl right now, and may always be, he or she is bound to meet or befriend someone who lives their life with a different gender than the one they were born with.

“Introducing Teddy” not only introduces this reality gently and accompanies the message by simply saying that being who you want to be is ok, and that true friends will love you for who you are no matter what, and with that going to a place that is beyond gender.

Just a few words with a beautiful drawings. Sometimes, it's all that is needed to deliver a powerful message.

Lucy says

4.5/5. Super sweet and touching, and I'm so glad my library got this in on my request so that it's now available for the kids (and adults) that need it.

Jennifer B. says

Loved, loved, LOVED this!! A sweet little teddy is worried about something. His name is Teddy, but inside, HE feels like a SHE. A simple, yet sweet and effective way of talking about transgender issues with children.

Many adults would benefit, as well.

Kend says

Aight, so: lovely book, lovely illustrations, lovely premise. Here's the perfect book to use at home or in the classroom to start conversations with children about gender roles and what it means to be trans! It is, of course, exactly the sort of book that is likely to get you, an educator or librarian or whatever, in trouble. As it did me.

The world sucks. This book does not. Read, and consider: is it more important to pacify the raging conservatives out there in the world right now, or to teach empathy and friendship to the next generation? Hmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.

Also, both author and illustrator are active on Twitter, and Jess Walton specifically advocates for the rights of trans, queer, and disabled individuals in her native Australia (as well as abroad). If we want more options in terms of great picture books about hard subjects, we need to make sure we put our money where our mouths are. Support diversity in children's literature and follow the #OwnVoices tag on Twitter for great conversations about and by authors seeking representation for marginalized peoples!

Joey Hines says

Awesome picture book about a trans teddy bear. Really liking all the LGBT and particularly T visibility in kids' lit lately. My only qualm: since part of the idea here is that we should call people by the names they prefer, wouldn't *Introducing Tilly* make a better title? Similarly, I thought the excellent book *George* would've been better titled *Melissa*.

Kris - My Novelesque Life says

Rating: 4.5 STARS

Introducing Teddy is a perfect book, in my opinion, to read to a young child. It explains just enough for a child to grasp the understanding of transgender, without getting into huge concepts. It is also just a lovely story with amazing illustrations.

Linda says

I know that gender transitioning is tough, but sometimes young children need to know a simple explanation for someone close who has those feelings inside, just as Teddy the bear does. And just as Teddy the bear finally shares how he feels, he asks for change, to be called Tilly. A couple of small switches, like putting the bowtie in her hair makes a simple point too, about expectations of others, or the outer needs of someone who wants what hasn't been allowed before. It's a lovely book, written by Jessica Walton because her father transitioned into a woman and she wanted a book to read to her younger son. Dougal MacPherson's

straightforward illustrations create the expressions and the actions, from serious to satisfied to just plain happy, just right for little ones to understand, too.

robyn says

sometimes we adults make this verrrrry complicated. jessica walton made a possibly complicated issue very simple. love it!!

Chiara says

A copy of this novel was provided by Bloomsbury Australia & Allen and Unwin for review.

Introducing Teddy was, in one word: gorgeous. I also think that everyone should read it, so here I have a nifty list just for you, detailing all the reasons why *Introducing Teddy* should be on your TBR.

1) It's LGBTQIA+ kid lit.

I am an advocate for LGBTQIA+ lit in YA (as most of you probably know), but I also know that there is a need for LGBTQIA+ middle grade lit, and also kid lit. So to see *Introducing Teddy* being published makes me incredibly happy. And, hopefully, people will give it the love it deserves so that publishers know how important it is to have LGBTQIA+ books in *all* genres.

2) It's trans kid lit.

Not only is *Introducing Teddy* LGBTQIA+ kid lit, which is important in and of itself, but it's trans kid lit. Tilly is a transgender teddy bear, and the way that this presented is so incredibly lovely.

3) Errol's acceptance of Tilly.

Now, I didn't really think that Tilly's friend, Errol, would turn around and be horrible to Tilly, but it was absolutely gorgeous to see him just completely accept Tilly as she is. He says: "I don't care if you're a girl teddy or a boy teddy! What matters is that you are my friend." And then they just keep playing and hanging out. It was sad to see Tilly so afraid of telling Errol how she really felt, and it was just amazing to see and feel such emotion from a picture book.

4) Gender stereotypes are absent.

Not only is *Introducing Teddy* about Tilly and her interaction with Errol regarding her being trans, but the gender roles of Errol, and his friend, Ava, are not stereotypical in any way. Errol likes gardening and having tea parties. Ava doesn't like bows and builds a robot. It was so lovely to see this complete and utter lack of gender stereotypes that we see so often in kid lit (and other genres, as well).

5) The illustrations.

Every picture in *Introducing Teddy* is absolutely gorgeous. I loved it. The fact that every stroke of pencil (or

whatever was used – I have no idea being completely unartistic myself) was visible gave such an authentic feel to the images, and the story. The mix of messy and smooth was just something I really, really liked.

6) The epilogue picture.

There's a picture on the very last page of *Introducing Teddy*, and it's a polaroid-like picture of Tilly wearing her bow, with her name written underneath. This was such an adorable addition to the book, and had me smiling so much when I turned the last page and saw it. It just reinforced everything that *Introducing Teddy* had brought forward: that Tilly was being herself, and accepted and loved by her friends.

Introducing Teddy is an incredibly touching story that will warm every reader's heart – whether you're a kid or adult or somewhere in between.

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trigger warning: none

Sara Grochowski says

I'm a fan of this quiet story about a teddy named Thomas who nervously tells his best friend Errol that, in his heart, he is Tilly the Teddy. Hurrah for Tilly and her loving friends - both new and old!

Krista Regester says

The “too good to be true” easy vibe of this story is a sweet surprise for me. I think it’s important to show challenges and compromises in children’s literature – but sometimes it’s ok to just show complete acceptance too. We need both, and we also need more.

Melissa Chung says

As you all may know, I don't usually write reviews for picture books. The last one I reviewed was about a boy who wanted to wear a dress. His boy classmates teased him but realized at the end that anyone can wear a dress.

Introducing Teddy is about a teddy bear named Thomas who is very sad. His owner Errol asks him what is wrong and Thomas says "I don't feel like a boy teddy I feel like a girl teddy and I want to be called Tilly."

Just wanted people to be aware of this transgender picture book that helps introduce diversity to a younger audience. It wasn't the most interesting premise. Friend and bear just go to the park, but it was impactful because Errol the kid doesn't care what gender his bear is, as long as they are friends.

Sass says

A sweet and beautiful picture book that introduces young children to the concept of gender identity in a gentle and age-appropriate way.

Nicole Field says

I get a lot of people asking me for recommendations for trans literature for all ages and I think this is the youngest one I've found: A picture book about a boy and his teddy.

Oh wow, am I glad that I picked this up. It's a short read of course, but it's hugely profound.

Told in the standard, simplified narrative of a picture book for children, this story follows the tale of a teddy who is miserable until his companion, the boy in the story, asks him what's wrong.

It explores the fear of the teddy, that the boy will no longer be friends with him. It explores pronouns, gender and naming people. And, just as importantly, it explores the no drama ways to respond to this whenever it comes up.

I particularly liked Ada, a friend who builds robots in her spare time, who also seemed to have some genderqueerness hinted at, although this was not explicit.

Seeing Tilly ending up so happy at the end as she and the boy do the same things as they had at the start, only now with the acknowledgement that Tilly is a girl, was just wonderful to see.
