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Darcy Pattison , Steven Salerno (Illustrator) , ??? ???? (?????)

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Jennifer says

John Hercules is the only boy in his class. 19 girls and...John Hercules. His brother teases and warns him that those girls are going to turn him into a sissy. Each day of the first week, John Hercules suggests a new, imaginative place to go. John Hercules and the 19 girls climb Mount Everest, dig to China, sail down the Amazon river, wrestle alligators, build a skyscraper and sing to the moon. Each day, John Hercules tells his brother what they did - proving that he wasn't a sissy and that the girls were tomboys. But each day, his brother says "...those girls will turn you into a sissy tomorrow." Then Friday comes. The second-graders are eating lunch with John Hercules and his class. What is his brother going to think? By the end of the story, John Hercules realizes that he doesn't care if its tomboy or sissy, he has 19 friends.

Love the story! It has travel, school, imagination, adventure - would love to read in a storytime. I think it would do better for a school-age storytime versus preschool.

Autumn C says

Great book on imagination and the importance of friendship, it also shows you to never change others because who they are just might surprise you! this would be a fun book if there is an only boy in a house of girls. :)

Nojood Alsudairi says

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Just got the English version!

Caleb says

Steven Salerno is the illustrator of this children's book, working with author Darcy Pattinson, but it's his show. The story is repetitive--but not unpleasantly so. First-grader John Hercules is the only boy in his class, and, despite his manly name, he and his older brother are afraid the girls will turn him into a sissy. He resolves to turn them into tomboys. Can he do it? Or will they change him? Or is there a third, positive moral-teaching opinion? Oh the drama!

For a week or so, the kids go out to recess, John suggests a "boy" game that they all play (pretending to dig to china), then someone suggests a "girl" game (drinking green tea while in China). Then the exciting climax in which we learn if boys can play "girl" games and if girls can play "boy" games.

Salerno's art is great; big-headed designs with wide, dot eyes and curly-little noses, all drawn with a fast and loose looking line that belies the careful construction of the images. He folds colorful imagined scenes of their play into the more gray-colored school scene, incorporating a yeti and alligators and suchlike without

ever breaking the visual tone. He also draws 19 completely distinct girls with 19 completely distinct looks, personalities and hairstyles, and manages to squeeze all 19 of them into every single page/two-page spread.

Kelsey Gift says

In this book, there are 19 girls and one boy in the class. The little boy is told by his brother that he will be a sissy if he plays with these girls, but the boy does play with the girls and they have lots of fun together using their imaginations. This is a fun book that will get children's imaginations flowing. It also has a good message about how boys and girls can play together and the games can be enjoyed by both boys and girls.

Erin Dianis says

This book tells the story of a little boy, John Hercules, whose class at school has nineteen girls and him. His brother warns him that eventually the girls will turn him into a sissy. John denies this and says he will make it nineteen tom-boys and him. Throughout the story, it shows what the class does for recess. Each day, John comes up with the main game, trying to prevent them from doing something "girly," but as the week goes on, some of the girls add little details to the game like giving a car a girl name and singing to the moon. His older brother saw him singing to the moon and said, "Those girls got you today." When the second graders, the class his brother is in, join them for a picnic, John Hercules stands up to his brother and realizes that he had fun with the girls all week and didn't care if they were tomboys or if he was a sissy. All he cared about was that they were playing fun games. The second graders then ask the younger kids to show them their games. At the end of the story, John's older brother congratulates him on nineteen tomboys, but the little boy corrects him and says, "Nineteen friends."

There are various themes covered in the story, but the main theme is acceptance of non-traditional gender roles and seeing past gender. Words like "sissy" and "tomboy" are used throughout the book in relation to girls doing things commonly done by boys and boys doing things commonly associated with girls respectively. The story shows how other people's words can make you question your actions. John struggles with the fear of being labeled a sissy, but as the story progresses, he focuses on the fun he is having instead of how people may view him. This is exemplified in the last few pages of the book where John corrects his brother and says "nineteen friends." This demonstrates the importance of acceptance and the fun you can have when you focus on the way being with people makes you feel as opposed to who it is you're playing with. Another theme that is represented in this book is bullying; the older brother in the story is quick to call both John and the girls in his brother's class names. John Hercules worries about how he will explain things to his brother, which takes away from the enjoyment he could be getting from the game. He fears that his brother will look down on him and judge him, which is a common form of bullying. A third theme that presents itself in the story is the importance of imagination in young children. During each school day, the children come up with a new game based on everyday things they see lying around, like a ladder or a hose. This imagination even crosses over to the food that the children say they have for lunch, like space worms instead of spaghetti. This imagination has no bounds and brings the children together despite gender differences. The importance of imagination is then validated when the older children ask the younger children to show them their games. The power of imagination is able to bring together people of all ages, races, and gender.

I immediately connected to the text on a personal level as soon as the word "Tomboy" was said. Growing up,

I was often called a tomboy because I played sports and did things that were more associated with boys. I also felt a connection to the story because my school had a very small playground but a lot of open grass to play in, so it was crucial to be creative and use your imagination to come up with new games to play.

I would recommend this five star book because of the broad range of topics it covers in a unique way. It is the first book that I have ever read that openly uses terms like “sissy” and “tomboy” and has such a dynamic main character who grows so much throughout the text. It presents the idea of overcoming the traditional gender roles placed by society in a very light hearted way, with activities like singing to the man on the moon. I would also recommend this story because often times, there are children with older siblings who tell them what they should and should not do; this story exemplifies an appropriate response to being bullied by an older sibling. This book overall sends a very positive message about looking past gender, which is a very hot topic currently, especially with the discussion of transgender people becoming more open.

Michelle says

Great message!

Suzannah Thompson says

A little boy starts school in a class of 19 girls. And him. His brother warns him not turn into a sissy, but our hero turns out to be smarter than preconceptions.

I have never read a picture book that could be so empowering for little girls and so freeing for little boys. I love the illustrations and the imaginative spirit of this book.

I would use this in a class that may be having boy-girl conflict to reinforce the idea that it's ok for us all to get along. I highly recommend this book. Over the moon.

Bethany Brown says

19 Girls and Me by Darcy Pattison is the story of a kindergarten class that is made up of 19 girls and 1 boy. In this story, we get to see the adventures the class has at recess, and learn about unity on the way.

This book was precious. I didn't know what to expect at first, but by the end I absolutely loved it. I thought the message was wonderful, and it was a good way to go about it.

I would use this book at the beginning of the school year to help my students understand the importance of unity and enjoying time together.

Alshaimaa says

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Alyssa Nelson says

I was pleasantly surprised by how good this book is. The cover didn't grab me at all and I was expecting a so-so book, but apparently my niece knows the good ones when she sees them. She took this right off the shelf and said, "I want this one."

The main message of this book is friendship. It teaches that no matter your gender, you can all play great games, have fun, and be friends. And it does this in a creative, fun way by delving into the world of children and imagining all sorts of activities they do and places they go. It is too easy to turn this sort of message into a preachy sermon, but Pattison stays away from that and keeps it fun. And oh my goodness are the words catchy! After reading it once, the catch phrase, "nineteen girls and one lone boy" stayed in my head for hours. It's very rhythmical. Children will love having this read to them.

The illustrations were also a lot better than I expected from the cover. Whenever the characters play a pretend game and "go somewhere," such as The Great Wall of China or the Amazon river, the pictures really come to life. There's a lot of detail and bright colors that kids will love. During one reading, my niece took the time to count all the birds and alligators (or was it crocodiles?) in the Amazon picture, so this story can be used for reading, geography, and counting too!

In short, I recommend this one. Children will love it, adults will love it, and it's a story that you can use for teaching a lot of different things. Definitely worth the money!

Also posted on Purple People Readers.

Mary says

In the beginning this picture book seems like it will be reinforcing girl/boy stereotypes because big brother warns little brother about not turning into a sissy because he is the only boy in the class. But it ends with a confident little brother rejecting the stereotypes and seeing the girls as his friends.

Skylar Burris says

Boys and girls can play together and each contribute something different and valuable to the imaginative play. Well, my daughter certainly didn't need a book to teach her that, although I did have to tell her what a "tomboy" and a "sissy" was. Nevertheless, a good story, using the kind of repetition children thrive on, with fun illustrations. It doesn't preach to the parents, but meets the kids in a situation they might encounter. My daughter wanted me to read it several times.

Amber says

The first look at this book, you might wonder what this book is really about and why would someone pick up a book like this. This book is about a boy who is in a kindergarten class with 19 girls. It talks about all the imaginations that the boy has to prove that he will not be turned into a "sissy" as his brother calls him. The girls and him go on extravagent imaginative trips from items that are just laying around the school yard. As I was reading the book, I was thinking that this could possibly happen in our classroom one day. Also, it shows how girls and boys can get along at such a young age, but as they get older, they get a little more like: "Oh no a boy! Ack!" :) This book would be good to share with your children in the classroom because it shows them how they can get along even though they may have different ideas and different desires.

Karen says

Jake and mom rate 4 stars, Ellie 3 stars. Good use of imagination by the kindergarten class.
