



Mini Mia and Her Darling Uncle

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Mini Mia loves her Uncle Tommy. They hang out in coffee bars, go for walks, swim, and do other fun stuff. But one day Fergus appears in her uncle's kitchen. Mini Mia does not want to share Tommy with his new boyfriend.

Mini Mia and Her Darling Uncle Details

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From Reader Review *Mini Mia and Her Darling Uncle* for online ebook

Kimberly says

The illustrations were quirky and funny, and Mia's shenanigans will keep kids giggling. Yes, Uncle Tommy is gay and has a new boyfriend, but this is never explicitly said. I'm not sure a child would pick up on it at all. If they do, great--this is a good book to utilize to talk about tolerance and new family members. If they don't, or if their parents don't want them to, then Fergus can just be Tommy's friend who is visiting from Scotland. Again, this is a book I frequently see on challenged material lists, and I think a very tame book like this goes to show how overzealous some people can be.

Samu says

<3

Betsy says

There are so few good quality picture books with gay characters in them that, quite frankly, it's a bit shocking. When people come into my library looking for "non-traditional families" it's pretty much *And Tango Makes Three* or *nuthin'*. Any book where the entire point of the narrative is a didactic look at how everybody's okay is going to suffer. You just can't make a good story that's interesting to kids that way. Far better would be to go the route of *Mini Mia and Her Darling Uncle*. Now there is a book that knows what it's doing. Written and illustrated by the always interesting Pija Lindenbaum, the tale about the simple jealousy of a child makes for as good a story about acceptance as anyone could hope for.

When her parents are vacationing in Miami, that means that Ella a.k.a. Mini Mia gets to hang out with her favorite Uncle Tommy. Tommy's just so much fun to hang out with. He'll sometimes dye Mini Mia's hair a different color every day or take her to the opera or let her people-watch with him. So imagine Mia's shock when she strolls into Tommy's kitchen one day only to find someone else there. Someone by the name of Fergus. Mia takes an instant dislike to this stranger and to her chagrin he goes with her and Tommy everywhere. He's obviously a dweeb and who cares that he's really good at diving? Yet when Tommy comes down with a cold, Mia finds herself stuck with the unwanted tagalong. Fortunately for the both of them Fergus discovers that while they may not have much in common, there is always the all inclusive game of soccer to put everything right.

Technically this is still a remarkably tame book. Tommy and Fergus don't do much more than talk. They don't live together or smooch or even mention that they're gay. The only indication you have of their relationship (other than the fact that Fergus is always around and talking to Tommy) is the final image in the book. There you can see the men with arms entwined with a super satisfied Mia sitting contentedly between them.

I like that this kind of story is normally seen when the plot centers around a single parent dating. Mia's jealousy is clear as clear can be. She may not be able to identify why she finds Fergus's presence so

annoying, but what does seem clear is that Tommy's attention is definitely being misdirected elsewhere. You also could argue that her naughty behavior (which never gets too bad) is more attention-seeking than anything else. I've always enjoyed Lindenbaum's drawing style too. If you didn't know that this book was originally published in Sweden I'd doubt that it would occur to you. Once you know, of course, then it's the only thing you can see. Buying bags of chips in a movie theater? Odd. The shape of the well-designed tulip chairs in the coffee shop? Definitely chic. The fact that the aforementioned movie theater appears to have a unisex bathroom? Yeah, it's very Swedish but all the more amusing when you get into it.

Soon enough I'll be bugging my library to add Mini Mia and Her Darling Uncle, to my library shelves as soon as humanly possible. Picture books where the fact that someone is gay is incidental to the action are few and far between. For its subtlety, grace, and ribald sense of humor I'm propping up Lindenbaum's latest as perhaps my favorite foreign language picture book of the year. Now let's see what we can do about some halfway decent picture books with lesbians in them . . .

Melissa says

Mini Mia absolutely loves spending time with her Uncle, and this pair does all sorts of fun things together. Whether it is going for a swim, a walk, or to get coffee, Mia and her Uncle always have fun. However, things begin to change when her Uncle Tommy brings his boyfriend over. Mia doesn't like her Uncle Tommy's Scottish boyfriend, and wishes he would just go back to Scotland. This picture book is great for younger children, and great for teachers to have in their class. Often children have the same reaction as Mini Mia when someone new comes into their life. Especially when the child feels like they are taking time away from a person that they care about. In addition I think the book does a good job showing that Mini Mia isn't bothered by the fact her uncle has a boyfriend, rather she is bothered that she feels he is taking him away. I really enjoyed this book and I thought it had great illustrations.

Erin says

This book is about a little girl who loves her Uncle Tommy. He is her favorite. They do everything together on Saturdays, just the two of them. One Saturday, when Mini Mia goes to Tommy's house, there's a random guy sitting in Tommy's kitchen named Fergus. Fergus spends the day with them. Mia does not like this. She wants all of Tommy's attention. The next weekend, Fergus is there again! Mia does everything she can to ignore Fergus.

You know how this one goes. Eventually, the two of them bond over something they have in common. All's well that ends well. It's a good book for a young one who's getting used to someone new in one of their adult's lives.

Judy says

A book about jealousy.

How much did I love this book? LOTS!

The facial expressions on the child are too fantastic for words. The colour is great. The humour in both text and image is delightful.

It has the same kind of storyline and function as the classic, 'Naughty Agapanthus'; one of my favourite books. This is a very reassuring shape for a story for children of a certain age. It tells them very clearly that even if you are very, very naughty, your family still loves you and it will be alright. (Admittedly, Agapanthus did make an effort to improve her behaviour, whereas Mini Mia was merely coaxed into a better frame of mind, but nevertheless, it's a very similar theme.)

I might have to buy a copy.

Lisa Vegan says

I enjoyed this story and its illustrations. I really appreciated that the gay uncle not only is treated as just a fun uncle, but most young kids will not even pick up on his sexual orientation. I love how Mia (real name Ella) and her uncle Tommy are the best of friends and how except for Ella's interest in soccer, share so many interests and activities. The aspect of the story I think is best and one I think kids can identify with is Ella's jealousy when someone else comes into the picture, a male friend of Tommy's who joins them when they get together to do some of their fun activities, such as swimming, watching sad movies, getting haircuts, shopping, and sharing meals. All of Ella's acting out and her sulking makes sense. And I love how Tommy's friend Fergus finally wins her over. This is a very sweet story and I like that the two men's sexuality is not really addressed. Given that this is a picture book and any adults' sexuality is not a factor in the relationships they have with young kids, the story and characters rang so true. This is a great story for kids who have jealousy issues, kids who know a gay adult, kids who love soccer, and kids who have any relationships that are in flux in ways they find upsetting. 3 ½ stars

Leslie Sanchez says

I really liked this book, its about a little girl nick named Mia and her uncle Tommy. It's a good aid or tool to help children understand that same sex couples are as normal as heterosexual couples. It was funny and cute how sassy Mia was. At first I was wondering why the author had included the other uncles that worked in the offices. But later on I noticed that they didn't seem to love Mia as much as Tommy. The other uncles have disappointed faces when they are looking at Mia, but Tommy has nothing but smiles for her. I have several family members in the LGBTQ community, so I look forward to reading this book to my future children.

First of all there aren't many books on the LGBT community and, so I believe this book is one of a few that is parting the way for a future larger genre. By teaching children that Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer is normal we are then decreasing violent hate crimes in the future.

Krysta King says

Very odd story line. Inappropriate illustration. Large conflict with little solution...

Erica J says

This story is very comical. Ella aka Mia has a hard time accepting her uncle's new friend Fregus. She tries her best to ignore him even though he's around all the time. The illustrations are brilliantly done. However, there is one illustration I feel pushes the envelope. I'm not quite sure I'd feel comfortable with the book in my class because of it. The illustration shows Ella getting dressed at the pool, and it's like a nude cartoon scene. Additionally, the relationship between her uncle Tommy and Fregus isn't quite clear. I did enjoy the read, but I do feel that this is a book to read at home so a deeper conversation can occur.

Sara Jones says

Mini Mia loves her eccentric uncle and the time they spend together. Then Uncle Tommy gets a 'roommate' and Mini Mia rebels against having to share her darling uncle with boring old Fergus. Uncle Tommy is, obviously, gay... in an amusing but very stereotypical way: "I like meat loaf fine. But Tommy prefers sushi." Tommy is also terrible at sports, is cultured, frequents the opera and does hair. Whatever... about as good as it gets at present. (Fergus IS good at soccer, if that helps at all.) I hear this book has some parents up in arms, but young kids would never even realize that darling uncle is a homosexual guy - we adults are much more intimate with the stereotype. And so what? GASP! Gay people exist!

Ann says

Mia's dislike of her uncle's boyfriend is something that I think most little kids can relate to, whether it's dealing with a sibling's new best friend or a parent's new significant other, and this book could be a really useful tool in helping kids work through those feelings. The ways she acts out are pretty funny, and the illustrations suit the style of the story well. I wasn't crazy about the Americanization/translation of the story, though; it seemed really clunky to me.

Kathryn says

First let me say that I appreciate a picture book featuring a gay family member that does not make a "big deal" out of the sexual orientation factor. Mia's uncle is presented as her uncle, that's that, and although he is clearly gay and the ensuing "conflict" in the story involves Mia's coming to accept her uncle's new boyfriend, the heart of the matter lies in Mia's feeling that she is no longer the center of her uncle's attention--it is a jealousy that could be felt by any child of homosexual or heterosexual relatives. The illustrations are cute and amusing and add to the story.

So, why only three stars? Because I felt that Mia was a brat and got away with it. While I certainly appreciated her feelings and could even accept some of her rude behavior to her uncle and his boyfriend given that this was a new experience for her and she had a learning curve to go through, no one ever pointed out to her that she was behaving in a selfish manner. Of course, she does come around to accept her uncle's new boyfriend at the end--but it is all through THEIR efforts to be kind and include her, while she continued

to be stubbornly rude and annoying.

Still, this is a great story for families to share; parents can ask their children what they think of Mia's behavior, if there was a better way to handle the situation, etc. The resolution at the end of the story is so sweet and suits Mia perfectly!

It's also fun to see all the Swedish elements in the illustrations since this book was originally published there.

Salsabrarian says

Tommy is Mia's favorite uncle. They do lots of fun things together such as dyeing her hair and people-watching. One day Tommy has a new friend from Scotland, Fergus. Unfortunately, Fergus appears to be horning in on Mia's time with her uncle and she resents the shift in dynamic. When Tommy isn't feeling well, Mia reluctantly plays soccer with Fergus (who, as opposed to Uncle Tommy, can actually play soccer). It goes unsaid in the story but it's apparent from the illustrations that Mia has accepted Fergus.

Fjóla says

The book illustrates how hard it can be to share a special loved one with someone else. I thought Ella's (Mini Mia's) battle with herself here was well portrayed, and although it doesn't talk about the exact same feelings it reminded me of Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse where resentment is handled in a mature way.

I don't share the view of those who think the book encourages bad behavior. In my opinion, being overly didactic with children often misses the mark. Even three to four year olds often understand more about social dynamics than you think they do. It was quite clear to me, but also to my 4 year old, that Ella's behavior in the book was not exemplary. After the second display of rogue behavior I turned to my son and asked "What do you think?" He quietly shook his head and said "That's not nice!" "It's hurtful to say someone's pants are ugly!" He didn't need a mommy figure in the book to step in and spell those things out. And, anyway, this was not the purpose of the story, more important here, I think, was for them to understand that they are not the only ones to experience feelings of jealousy, but that things often work out all the same.

Also, I don't honestly see the bad in portraying uncle Tommy as this cool, fun friend yet who isn't good at soccer, but who obviously is way more interesting than his three still-living-with-mother brothers. Yes, visual details give little clues about Tommy's personality: Stereotyping? Maybe, but at least it's rather in a good way. He's hip, thus ... ? And, we're all victims of stereotyping anyway. Hey, my little guy yesterday had to tell off his 4 year old girlfriend who in a spurt of jealousy for his pretty tableware lashed off: "You can't use that plate, pink is for girls only!" He told her "Get over it! I don't care. I like pink and I like flowers and that's my choice!!" Finally, I happen to think that Tommy's choice of shirts in bright color prints is his way of defeating stereotype anyway. And he's visibly very accepting of Ella being who she is too. So, let's just all accept each other, and there!
