



***Something Happened in Our Town* by Marianne Celano, Marietta Collins, & Ann Hazzard**

Magination Press, in imprint of the American Psychological Association, 2018  
ISBN: 9781433828546 (Hardcover)

\*Age Range: 04 – 08 (Suggested by Publisher)

## BOOK SYNOPSIS

---

*Emma and Josh heard that something happened in their town. A Black man was shot by the police.*

*“Why did the police shoot that man?”*

*“Can police go to jail?”*

*Something Happened in Our Town follows two families — one White, one Black — as they discuss a police shooting of a Black man in their community. The story aims to answer children's questions about such traumatic events, and to help children identify and counter racial injustice in their own lives.*

*Includes an extensive Note to Parents and Caregivers with guidelines for discussing race and racism with children, child-friendly definitions, and sample dialogues. Free, downloadable educator materials (including discussion questions) are available in the additional resources tab.*

## REVIEWS AND PRAISE

---

*This book helps children grapple with one of the most disturbing and troubling issues in our society today, police shootings of people of color, and helps them to identify and counter racial injustice. —Mommy Poppins*

*This beautifully written and illustrated book tackles a difficult subject with grace, helping families share conversations about racism and discrimination. —What's Up Moms*

*This book provides the necessary framework for talking to children about racial injustice. —Women's Day*

*Written by three psychologists, this is a great educational resource for parents... how to talk to children about race and racism and trauma, how to identify and counter racial injustice. —Vogue*

*Does an admirable job showing two families' reactions to a police killing... important for library collections. —School Library Journal*

**Updated 01.22.23**

American Psychological Association

Contact [jwells@apa.org](mailto:jwells@apa.org)

*This is a difficult subject, and I think this book handles it well. The language is age-appropriate and gentle. The illustrations are beautiful, and the message is positive: kids can start a "better pattern" by including kids who are different than themselves. —Five Star Review, San Francisco Book Review*

*Something Happened in Our Town respectfully and honestly deals with a paramount social problem, and is worthy of the highest recommendation for public, school library, and family picture book collections. —Children's Bookwatch*

*This story will open up the doors to some important and heavy issues that children are exposed to in today's society. Issues of race, discrimination, stereotypes, racial profiling, entitlement... —Lulu's Book Journey*

*Right now, parents are looking for more children's books that accurately depict the world their kids live in today. They also want a book that helps them discuss the tough issues that they would otherwise feel uncomfortable talking about. This is that book...The lesson of compassion and tolerance will touch anyone's heart...This beautifully depicted picture book is a must for parents, teachers and librarians alike. —cup of tea with that book, please*

*In this beautifully written and illustrated children's book, children were learn about racial injustice as it happens today. —Medium*

*Beautifully written and illustrated...I give [it] five out of five stars! —Medium*

*Provides an unflinching look at how families can and should talk about racism...Explores the roots of racism in America, the importance of actively fighting for social justice, and how kids can respond to the prejudice and exclusion that creeps into their classrooms... Whatever this discussion looks like in your household, it's just a first step. —Mashable.com*

## AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

---

- *Featured in Forbes, "Why Kids Of All Races Need to Know How to Talk About Race"*
- *Featured in The Christian Century—"Talking to white kids about what whiteness means"*
- *Featured on Today—"10 books to help you discuss anti-racism with children and teenagers"*
- *Featured in Glamour—"10 Books to Help Talk to Your Kids About Racism, as Recommended by Black Authors"*
- *Picture Book Finalist in the 2018 Foreword INDIES Book Awards*
- *NCSS-CBC 2019 Notable Social Students Trade Book for Young People*
- *National Parenting Product Award Winner*

## MEDIA AND RESOURCES

---

- [Listen to a podcast with author Marianne Celano, PhD.](#)
- [Recognizing World Day of Social Justice \(PDF, 3.7MB\)](#)
- [Anti-Racism Resources for Children and Adults \(PDF, 122KB\)](#)
- [Read Aloud Tips for Educators \(PDF, 76KB\)](#)
- [Educator Resource Guide \(PDF, 53KB\)](#)
- [Watch the author read \*Something Happened in Our Town\*](#)
- [Read a press release about the book](#)

Updated 01.22.23

American Psychological Association

Contact [jwells@apa.org](mailto:jwells@apa.org)

- This book is part of the Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) Social Emotional Learning Collection: Free resources, including puzzles and word games, designed to enhance both literacy skills and socioemotional engagement of young readers.

### **AUTHOR STATEMENT (OPTIONAL)**

---

<https://www.smith.edu/news-events/news/my-book-was-banned-heres-my-story>

### **\*A NOTE ON AGE RANGES**

---

A publisher-suggested age range covers the gamut of readers that publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate age range for the diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book's intended use.

**Updated 01.22.23**

American Psychological Association

Contact [jwells@apa.org](mailto:jwells@apa.org)