



# BOOK RESUME: CALVIN

## BOOK SYNOPSIS

In this joyful and impactful picture book, a transgender boy prepares for the first day of school and introduces himself to his family and friends for the first time.

Calvin has always been a boy, even if the world sees him as a girl. He knows who he is in his heart and in his mind but he hasn't yet told his family. Finally, he can wait no longer: "I'm not a girl," he tells his family. "I'm a boy—a boy in my heart and in my brain." Quick to support him, his loving family takes Calvin shopping for the swim trunks he's always wanted and back-to-school clothes and a new haircut that helps him look and feel like the boy he's always known himself to be. As the first day of school approaches, he's nervous and the "what-ifs" gather up inside him. But as his friends and teachers rally around him and he tells them his name, all his "what-ifs" begin to melt away.

Inspired by the authors' own transgender child and accompanied by warm and triumphant illustrations, this authentic and personal text promotes kindness and empathy, offering a poignant and inclusive back-to-school message: all should feel safe, respected, and welcomed.

## REVIEWS AND PRAISE

★ "This is one happy book that reflects an idealized world, a way we all wish it could be, and that's all right. Illustrator Harren's softly colored, realistic pictures capture that world and Calvin's look perfectly—he's cute as the proverbial button. Finally, the coauthors write with gentle insight, for, as they share in an endnote, they have a trans child themselves." —*Booklist*, starred review

"This transition story depicts a community cultivating an affirming environment in which a child can flourish. . . Harren's warm, expressive illustrations communicate much of the emotion in the story and are populated with diverse background characters who have various body sizes, skin colors, hair textures, and disabilities. A valuable model of intentional, compassionate response to gender expansive kids and their needs." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"The bright and engaging illustrations capture Calvin's emotional journey very effectively and feature a diverse community. The author's note is affirming and acknowledges the experiences of the authors who are parents of two children, one of whom identifies as transgender. . . Calvin is a hero for young people who need support in voicing their essential selves, and also for those children who need to see how easy it is to be an ally to others. This addition to the growing list of titles that feature transgender characters is most welcome!" —*School Library Journal*

**Title:** Calvin

**Author:** Vanessa Ford and J.R. Ford

**Illustrator:** Kayla Harren

**Imprint:** G.P. Putnam's

Sons Books for Young Readers

**Publisher:** Penguin Young Readers

**On sale date:** November 9, 2021

**ISBN:** 9780593108673

**Format:** Hardcover

**Age Range\*:** 4-8

**Grade Range:** Gr 1-2

(Recommended by School Library Journal)

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\*Publisher suggested age range covers the wide range of readers 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 range for their diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book's intended use.

“Gives transgender youth a superhero. Illustrations by Kayla Herren are full of bright, vivid pastels, showing a joyful Calvin and a diverse group of classmates. An intentional, inclusive book.” –*The Boston Globe*

“Harren’s ... soft, retro palette and colored pencil-esque linework are reminiscent of Leo and Diane Dillon . . . [and] gives the book a cheerful energy; Calvin is impossibly adorable, with a button nose, dimpled cheeks, and wildly curly hair, and his multi-racial family would fit perfectly in the work of a modern Norman Rockwell. The intentionally diverse cast includes various body types, physical disabilities, and even freckles and vitiligo, making this an excellent addition alongside Kyle Lukoff’s *When Aiden Became a Brother* to bring more inclusivity to Trans Day of Visibility and Pride displays.” –*The Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books*

### **AWARDS AND ACCOLADES**

- The 2022 Lambda Literary Award Winner in the LGBTQ Children’s/Middle Grade category
- A 2022 Bank Street Best Children’s Book of the Year
- A 2022 ALA Rainbow Book List Top Ten Title for Young Readers
- A 2022 NCSS-CBC Notable Social Studies Trade Book Pick

### **MEDIA AND RESOURCES**

- [Discussion Guide](#)
- [Human Rights Campaign’s Welcoming Schools Creating LGBTQ+ Inclusive Schools Booklist for Elementary](#)

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