



[Mama and Mommy and Me in the Middle](#) by Nina LaCour, illustrated by Kaylani Juanita

ISBN: 9781536211511 (Hardcover); 9781536226775 (E-Book)

Candlewick Press, 2022

*Age Range: 3–7 (Suggested by Publisher)

Grade Range: Kindergarten–Grade 3 (Recommended by *School Library Journal*)

BOOK SYNOPSIS

A little girl stays home with Mama when Mommy goes off on a work trip in this tender, inviting story that will resonate with every child who has missed a parent.

For one little girl, there’s no place she’d rather be than sitting between Mama and Mommy. So when Mommy goes away on a work trip, it’s tricky to find a good place at the table. As the days go by, Mama brings her to the library, they watch movies, and all of them talk on the phone, but she still misses Mommy as deep as the ocean and as high as an astronaut up in the stars. As they pass by a beautiful garden, the girl gets an idea . . . but when Mommy finally comes home, it takes a minute to shake off the empty feeling she felt all week before leaning in for a kiss. Michael L. Printz Award winner Nina LaCour thoughtfully renders a familiar, touching story of a child who misses a parent, illustrated by Kaylani Juanita, whose distinctive style brings charm and playfulness to this delightful family of three.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

★ “LaCour gives readers a closely observed portrait of two moms who nurture their child through challenges, while Juanita lavishes attention on detail, lushly capturing facial expressions, figures, and flower petals in an unabashed celebration of familial love.” —[Publishers Weekly](#), **starred review**

★ “A joyful and inclusive book that’s just what’s needed for children whose parents have to be away for a period.” —[Booklist](#), **starred review**

“Juanita’s distinct style is unique and adds a touch of whimsy to this story that deals with big feelings. The pages are filled with muted yet warm colors that really explore feelings of love and (temporary) loss. . . . This story lends itself well to conversations about feelings, boundaries, and social-emotional learning; the sweet, inclusive story will resonate with children who are missing a loved one.” —[School Library Journal](#)

“Filled to the brim with love. Juanita’s mixed-media illustrations—a combination of spot art and full-bleed spreads—vividly capture the coziness of the family’s life and the range of emotions the child experiences. . . . A tender tale featuring a loving two-mom family that will resonate with any child who has ever missed a loved one.” —[Kirkus Reviews](#)

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“Juanita’s illustrations are packed with small details that will entice and hold young readers’ attention. . . . *Mama and Mommy and Me in the Middle* is a reassuring and inclusive look at what it feels like to be separated from and reunited with a parent.” —[Bookpage](#)

“Heartwarming. . . . Juanita’s distinctive mixed-media illustrations match and reflect LaCour’s writing style, with comforting soft colors, realistic figures and tons of details. . . . LaCour’s representation of a two-mom family in *Mama and Mommy and Me in the Middle* allows young readers, regardless of the gender of their parents, to relate to this sentimental, delightful story.” —[Shelf Awareness](#)

“This nod to conflicted feelings flows naturally from charming art and lyrical storytelling. It’s no big deal that the family is pictured as African American and has same-sex parents. Instead, the focus is on learning to navigate everyday emotions.” —[The San Francisco Chronicle](#)

“*Mama and Mommy and Me in the Middle* reflects on all the ways a child can miss a family member when they are gone, while showing the happy life this family shares when they are together. It’s a lovely pick for children with same-sex parents that will also resonate for any kid missing a loved one who is away from home.” —[Entertainment Weekly](#)

“Award-winning YA author Nina LaCour makes her picture book debut in this beautiful, LGBTQ+ affirming picture book about a little girl who misses her mommy when she leaves on a work trip. . . . Kaylani Juanita’s sweet, pastel-toned illustrations perfectly capture this cozy and lovely family. This is a perfect book for any family with a parent who travels for work.” —[Book Riot](#)

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- An American Library Association Rainbow List Top Ten Selection
- A Lambda Literary Award Finalist
- A *Booklist* Editors’ Choice

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [Teachers’ Guide](#)
- [Author’s Note](#)
- [Family and Classroom Discussion Guides from the Anti-Defamation League](#)
- [A Q&A with the Author and Illustrator at We Need Diverse Books](#)

*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.