



Lola Sleeps Over by Anna McQuinn

Illustrated by Rosalind Beardshaw

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*Age Range: 2 to 5

BOOK SYNOPSIS

Lola has a new adventure with her cousin Hani: her very first sleepover!

Lola has been to her cousin Hani's house many times, but she's never spent the night until now. With a well-stocked suitcase in tow, she and Daddy head to Hani's house. The two girls play, build, dress up, and try new things together before settling in for the night. After French toast breakfast the next morning, Daddy picks Lola up. It was the best sleepover ever. Maybe next time, Hani can stay at Lola's house! A reassuring read for children preparing for their own sleepover adventures.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

“Like other books in the Lola series, this outing keeps readers engaged with delightful illustrations and simple, straightforward narration perfect for introducing young ones to new experiences. . . . Lola's fans will be pleased to add this volume to their collections and see how Lola's first sleepover goes. Caregivers can use it to talk about what to expect at a first sleepover.”—*Kirkus Reviews*

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [Sleepovers | Anna McQuinn | Blog](#)

AUTHOR STATEMENT

Many conversations around banned books focus on parents' rights to choose what their child reads, while counter arguments say one parent shouldn't dictate what every child in a school or a district reads or doesn't read...

Other conversations discuss censorship versus freedom of speech, and argue that book bans keep children in ignorance . . . Still more talk about parents wanting to avoid having difficult discussions about complicated issues with their children, while others counter that the real world is full of these difficult issues and argue that we adults have a responsibility to prepare children for this world . . .

But then I look at my little picture book, Lola Sleeps Over.

It's about a little girl, aged about 3, going on her first sleepover.

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It IS a new and possibly a little daunting experience, but Lola is not a character I write to explore challenging or contentious issues, so I chose to have her stay with her cousin Hani. Lola has had many playdates with Hani, so sleeping over is just a small new step, no big drama!

I can't see any issues, contentious or otherwise in the story—there's no inappropriate language, and the subject is not inappropriate for the age group. Lola and Hani play imaginative games (nothing shocking, they pretend a watering can is a waterfall); they make water pictures; they swop clothes (but there's no nudity—we just see them in each other's outfits); Lola tries some new foods; they watch a movie and then have a bedtime story. . . Yet this little book is banned in a number of states.

When I tell people this, they ask me why on earth . . . What could people possibly object to?

Lola Sleeps Over has nothing in common with other banned books except for the fact that Lola is an African American child. Could it simply be that? There really is nothing else in common with other banned books except that. And Lola is not alone in being a simple picture book with a completely unremarkable story about a little African American child that is banned . . .

So please, don't be taken in by the complex discussions around high-profile "controversial" books, or think that buying a controversial book from the Banned Books table is the only radical act you need to take . . .

Because while these discussions rage on, attracting and distracting our attention, lots of perfectly lovely, ordinary story books are being banned simply for featuring an African American child.

Librarians, educators, parents, editors and authors who have children's best interests at heart have been fighting since the 70s to include under-represented children in books—African American children, Asian children, children with disabilities, gay children, strong female characters and more . . . After almost 50 years of hard work, we are just beginning to get there.*

So, for me it's very simple: we have to ignore the distracting conversations and fight these bans so that all children can see themselves in books . . . So that all children can see the reality of the world we live in - in all its richness and diversity—reflected in their reading and educational materials. Don't be distracted.

**See *Reading into Racism: Bias in Children's Literature and Learning Materials* by Gillian Klein, Routledge, 1985, Chapter 2*

***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.

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