



***Lola's Nana-Bibi Comes to Visit* by Anna McQuinn**

Illustrated by Rosalind Beardshaw

Charlesbridge, 2023

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*Age Range: Ages 2 to 5

BOOK SYNOPSIS

In the latest Lola Reads book, Lola welcomes a special visitor—her grandmother Nana-Bibi!

Lola's grandmother is coming to visit, and Lola can't wait for all the family fun. Nana-Bibi will stay in Lola's room, so Lola gets to sleep on a special blow-up bed. The family spends the week doing different activities, like shopping for presents for family back in Tanzania, having dance parties, and making special mandazi doughnuts. Nana-Bibi and Lola share a special time as Nana-Bibi remembers all the things she used to do with her nana.

This multigenerational celebration of grandmas, moms, and granddaughters will reassure all children preparing for a visit from a faraway relative.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

“Alongside Beardshaw’s warm illustrations, this edition celebrates multigenerational relationships and portrays the love between a grandmother, mother, and granddaughter. McQuinn also promotes diverse family structures by depicting how some families live far apart but maintain special bonds. This book is perfect for younger readers.”—*Children’s Literature*

“For Lola, every day spent with her grandmother is quite special. Writing in short, well-phrased sentences, McQuinn conveys the affection that makes even the simplest activities the two share more enjoyable.”—*Booklist*

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- 2024 Bank Street College Best Children's Books of the Year

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [New Kid's Books about Grandparents | Babies to Bookworms](#)

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- [Tanzanian khanga fabric | Anna McQuinn](#)

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's Nana Comes to Visit*. It's about a little girl, aged about 3, who is excited because her Nana (who lives far away) is coming to visit.*

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's nana needs a nap when she arrives; she brings everyone wonderful presents; she shares quality time with Mom and Lola and the family; she shares a family recipe and tells Lola about when she was a little girl... 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's Nana Comes to Visit 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

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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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