



Heather Has Two Mommies by Lesléa Newman, illustrated by Laura Cornell

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9780763679873 (E-Book); 9780763679897 (E-Book with Audio)

Candlewick Press, 2015

Originally published in 1989 by In Other Words Press

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

Grade Range: Preschool–Grade 2 (Recommended by *School Library Journal*)

BOOK SYNOPSIS

Heather’s favorite number is two. She has two arms, two legs, two pets, and two mommies. When Heather goes to school for the first time, someone asks her about her daddy, but Heather doesn’t have a daddy. Then something interesting happens. When Heather and her classmates all draw pictures of their families, not one drawing is the same. This delightful edition for a new generation of young readers features fresh illustrations by Laura Cornell and an updated story by Lesléa Newman.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

“That book is important!” —Judy Blume in [Variety](#)

“You really should read this book—it will make your day, and it changed the world.” —Rachel Maddow

“Each page is artfully and distinctly rendered to be a visual depiction of the beauty and joy of diversity.” —[School Library Journal](#)

“Heather has two mommies—and a new look! Newman’s picture book about Heather and her mommies first appeared 25 years ago as the product of desktop publishing and a determination to create a story reflecting family diversity. This updated version includes new illustrations by the commercially successful Cornell, which supply humor and avoid lesbian stereotypes that dogged earlier versions. . . . Welcome back to Heather and her mommies.” —[Kirkus Reviews](#)

“Though a quarter of a century has passed, the book holds up well. With new illustrations and a slightly revised text, it remains a charming, sweet-spirited story that still fills a need. . . . Newman and her new illustrator Cornell deserve kudos for bringing fresh life to this standard title.” —[Booklist](#)

“Now a modern classic, the children’s book *Heather Has Two Mommies* is the perfect Mother’s Day book, times two.” —[Los Angeles Times](#)

“This is a warm and gentle view of a little girl starting school, meeting new friends, and discovering a wider world. The kids learn that differences are just another part of life.” —[New York Journal of Books](#)

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

Updated 1/5/24

Candlewick Press

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- An American Library Association Rainbow List Selection
- A Cooperative Children’s Book Center Choices List Selection
- A Parents’ Choice Recommended Title
- A Lambda Literary Award Finalist

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [Entertainment Weekly Interview](#)
- [The New Yorker](#)
- [The New York Times](#)
- [Reflection by Lesléa Newman in *the Horn Book*](#)
- [Book Riot](#)
- [GLSEN Resource Page](#)
- [Blog Post by Lesléa Newman](#)

RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES

[ACLU response](#) to effort in Loudoun County, VA, to remove books in “diverse classroom libraries,” including *Heather Has Two Mommies*:

“‘The First Amendment does not allow the government to get rid of or limit the use of books or ideas because they are controversial, unpopular, or offensive,’ stated the letter. ‘Purging certain books from school libraries because some parents do not like them is government action favoring the opinion of some parents over others. Passing judgments, applying labels, and red-flagging educational materials that might prompt uncomfortable but insightful discussions are activities that do not belong in our public schools.’

“Besides raising serious First Amendment concerns, censorship is counter to [Loudoun County Public Schools]’s commitment to providing access to diverse text collections for all students. ‘By shielding students from these books, educators miss out on opportunities to engage in a dialogue about the historical period in which a book was written, the author’s individual viewpoints, and the use of literary devices, all of which may play a part in how a group or individual is depicted,’ stated the letter. The ACLU of Virginia strongly urges the School Board and all school administrators to reject calls to remove books and keep censorship out of Virginia’s public schools.”

AUTHOR STATEMENT

The worst part of book challenges and banning is that the people who are most affected are children. When *Heather* is removed from the shelves of a school or public library, children with two moms lose the opportunity to see themselves represented in a book and thus feel validated, and children in other types of families lose the opportunity to learn about families that are not like their own and expand their vision of the world. When there is a lot of noise around the challenge (meetings, letters to the editor, protests, TV news segments, etc.) children with two moms receive the message that there is something wrong with their family. After I wrote *Heather Has Two Mommies*, I was accused of having an “agenda.” And yes, the book does carry a message, namely the statement that Heather’s teacher tells the children in the book (and the children—and adults—reading the book): “The most important thing about a family is that all the people in it love each other.” To this day, I fail to understand why anyone considers that sentence controversial.

*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.