



## A Bully-Bad Day

**Diana Kizlauskas**

Bright Bear Books (Sep 1, 2022)

Hardcover \$19.99 (48pp)

978-0-9915233-8-2

*In the instructive picture book A Bully-Bad Day, a boy and his dog run into raucous animals, learning how to confront their behavior with care.*

In Diana Kizlauskas's whimsical picture book *A Bully-Bad Day*, a boy and his dog face an onslaught of troublesome animals.

Stanley is a dog. He and his human hear strange noises from their window. When they go to investigate, they discover chaos. There are pirate parrots sputtering cracker crumbs; a hippopotamus sudsing up in the bath; and a bear watching the game and spilling popcorn across the carpet. Not only are the animals disrespecting Stanley and the boy's home and possessions, they taunt the boy as well: "I look great in stripes,' he tells me. / 'Stripes make you look fat.'"

In another room, an elephant cheerleader chants in support of the bullies as they exclude Stanley and the boy from their games. When the boy and Stanley tell them to stop and be respectful, the animals scoff and threaten them. Disheartened, Stanley and the boy hide in the attic and think about their options. There, they find an old letter whose content helps them.

Inventive turns like bears in sports gear, predatory cats with painted nails, and a squid lounging in the washer make this a fun take on a serious subject. The illustrations burst with details and color: there's a the rubber duck by the bathtub and a classic Pfaltzgraff plate in the attic. These features complement the central foci of the images, like the boy's expressive face; he is shown feeling disgruntled, scared, thoughtful, and inspired.

The solutions that the boy-dog duo arrive at are much less fantastical than the creatures who prompted them: they are able to solve their dilemma with kindness and consideration. They learn about the real-world origins of the bullies' issues—including the poor treatment of animals in circus shows and in lab settings. The story is followed by a list of resources for confronting bullying, while the rhyme scheme that runs throughout makes for easy, rhythmic reading.

In the instructive picture book *A Bully-Bad Day*, a boy and his dog run into raucous animals, learning how to confront their behavior with care.

CAMILLE-YVETTE WELSCH (February 23, 2022)

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