

Artie and Julie

Chih-Yuan Chen

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Artie the lion and Julie the rabbit's dutiful parents teach their offspring how to be good members of their species. Artie is expected to catch a rabbit, while Julie is expected to cleverly evade a lion's jaws. However, the book's illustrations show early on that Artie and Julie have other interests. Both are sent off to put their lessons into practice, but befriend each other instead.

The book itself also strays from tradition: the beginning and end are presented as split pages. Only when Artie and Julie meet is the story told on one, unified page. When they are with their families the pages are cut in half, so readers can follow all of one story and then the other or alternate between them. The illustrations do a good job at giving clues. The only oddity is that Julie wears red pumps while her mother wears flats.

Chih-Yuan Chen is an award-winning children's book author and illustrator from Taiwan. The English version of his book *Guji Guji* was an ALA Notable Book. This new book helps to show children the very first hurdle of going against tradition: acting on the desire to do something different. Yet, the story ends before addressing the next barrier to following your heart: handling the adverse reactions when you demonstrate that you are "different." The illustrations register what the text does not mention: the parents' dismay at Artie and Julie's new friendship. For their part, Artie and Julie fall asleep, glad to have made a new friend.

JADA BRADLEY (August 15, 2008)

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