

Chilla Gorilla & Lanky Lemur Journey to the Heart

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Jon Bier

Donald Wu, Illustrator

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A sage, affirming picture book, Chilla Gorilla & Lanky Lemur Journey to the Heart models finding one's calm in challenging situations via its fun story of a friendly adventure.

A wise gorilla guides an excitable lemur toward regulating his emotions in Kimberly Snyder and Jon Bier's practical picture book *Chilla Gorilla & Lanky Lemur Journey to the Heart*.

When Chilla Gorilla asks Lanky Lemur to relax with him, Lanky admits that he has too much energy to be calm. Chilla takes Lanky on an adventure to get his sillies out, but they encounter obstacles that make Lanky emotional. He becomes angry when a monkey cuts in front of him in line to the water slide, he gets frustrated when he can't reach a mango in a tall tree, and he is scared when darkness falls and he loses sight of his guardian. During each outburst, Chilla reminds Lanky to recite a calming mantra that helps Lanky assess the situation and move forward with a peaceful mindset.

Chilla's sage presence counters Lanky's youthful energy well. Their friendly parent-child dynamic is endearing, as when Chilla gives Lanky a reassuring hug and tucks him into bed at night. Chilla accompanies Lanky on his adventure, guiding and advising but never forcing his hand. He affirms that Lanky's feelings are valid but that he shouldn't let them impede him from solving challenges. The mantra that Chilla shares with Lanky is wise yet wordy: "Feelings come and go, yet in your heart is a calm place where peace and love can grow." Their conversations are didactic in nature, but their water park activities and bedtime routine put the lessons into helpful context. Notes at the end of the book suggest brief child-friendly meditation practices that encourage using the imagination to focus on breathing and thinking joyful thoughts.

Chilla and Lanky are rendered a charismatic duo in the book's incredible colorful and dimensional illustrations. Their expressive faces and dynamic poses bring out their personalities and convey their water slide splashes, hugs, and branch swinging with captivating realism within their vibrant jungle habitat. A jungle sunset and Lanky's adorable pajamas are features of particular charm.

Chilla Gorilla & Lanky Lemur Journey to the Heart is an eye-catching picture book about navigating intense emotions with meditative mantras.

AIMEE JODOIN (April 12, 2024)

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