

In the Mirror

Fabian E. Ferguson

Alisa Aryutova, Illustrator

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The picture book In The Mirror expresses the beauty of self-acceptance and positivity while building healthy views of people as individuals.

Fabian E. Ferguson's vibrant children's picture book *In the Mirror* promotes self-love, positivity, and individuality.

This lilting, rhythmic narration follows two siblings contemplating their reflections in the bathroom mirror as they prepare for bed. By examining each facial feature—their brows, ears, eyes, noses, cheeks, mouths, and chins—and the different expressions they make with them that are connected to specific emotions, the brother and sister explore their strengths. They also discuss the endless possibilities that lay ahead for them, and acknowledge their victories and mistakes, commenting on how both experiences can help them to grow, and to learn to love themselves even more.

With its dialed-in focus on acceptance for what people find both inside and outside of themselves, *In the Mirror* is a confidence-building text. Through its imagery and narration, it imparts pride in who people are and what they look like, encouraging the audience, too, to hold their heads up high, no matter what their unique, beautiful faces face in the world.

In the digestible copy, emphasis is placed on hard work, putting forth effort, learning and trying new things, expressing creativity, and accepting challenges, whether one succeeds or fails at them. The activities highlighted include homework, athletic feats, art projects, imaginative playtime, and scientific experimentation, all of which are encouraged through indirect means.

By highlighting positive and negative experiences and a wide range of emotions, Ferguson advocates the acceptance of everything that one feels. The goal is for children to understand that what they see and feel in themselves isn't wrong. This healthy acknowledgment further supports the book's message of self-love.

The book's upbeat pace contributes to its fun energy throughout, which is complemented by the colorful, engaging illustrations by Alisa Aryutova. Their healthy mix of dynamic colors, patterns, design features, and various facial expressions melds well with the book's black-and-white images (the color illustrations serve as the hero features on the spreads, while the supplemental images add another layer of engagement).

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ALEX DAILEY (October 14, 2021)

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