

Splunkunio Splunkey Detective and Peacemaker: Case Two: Big Bully Holly Howler

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Ellie's story is a relevant and useful way to teach children about bullying.

Splunkunio Splunkey Detective and Peacemaker: Case Two: Big Bully Holly Howler by Elana Ashley, PhD is a relatable story that teaches a very difficult lesson about bullying.

This is the story of Ellie Elephant and Holly the hippo. Holly is new in school, and she is bullying her new classmates. The teacher does not see the problem, and Ellie doesn't know how to handle it on her own. With the help of her friend Eli and Splunkunio Splunkey, a magical detective and peacemaker, Ellie learns that treating others with kindness and understanding can help to change a bully into a friend.

Ellie learns that being nice—even when she doesn't want to be—is the best thing she can do. The nuances of Ellie and Holly's situation are shared throughout the story, but the lesson is presented in a very straightforward way. While talking through the problem with Holly, Eli tells Ellie: “Just be yourself—kind and funny. Act with Holly the way you want her to act with you.”

The book is illustrated with posed puppets that are photographed in real, everyday settings of the sort that all children find themselves in: at home, in a classroom, on a sidewalk walking to school. The settings will help children relate the story to their own lives, while the mascot-like characters offer a degree of separation from the problem of bullying, making the topic feel far safer to discuss. The photographs lack sophistication, though, and the character poses are often awkward and unbalanced.

The back of the book includes a useful list of questions that parents and teachers can use to start a conversation about what bullying is and appropriate ways to handle it.

Case Two: Big Bully Holly Howler is a relevant and useful tool to engage children in a lesson on bullying.

CATHERINE THURESON (December 1, 2016)

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