

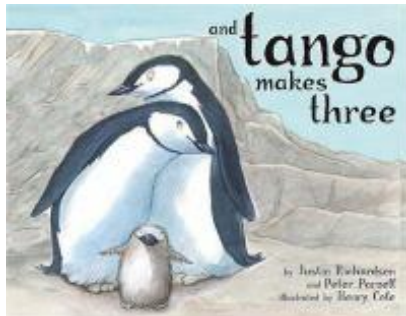


OWWL LIBRARY SYSTEM

BOOK CHALLENGE REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING: AND TANGO MAKES THREE BY JUSTIN RICHARDSON

INTRODUCTION

Item Reviewed



Title: And Tango Makes Three

Author: Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell

Illustrator: Henry Cole

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers (2005)

Copies Owned: 16 physical copies are available in the OWWL catalog at member libraries. One eBook copy and one audiobook copy are available in the System's OverDrive collection.

Shelving Location(s): Physical copies available at member libraries are shelved under "Juvenile" and "Picture Book."

Book Description

"At New York City's Central Park Zoo, two male penguins fall in love and start a family by taking turns sitting on an abandoned egg until it hatches¹."

"At the penguin house at the Central Park Zoo, two penguins named Roy and Silo were a little bit different from the others. But their desire for a family was the same. And with the help of a kindly zookeeper, Roy and Silo got the chance to welcome a baby penguin of their very own²."

Reason for Review

And Tango Makes Three by Justin Richardson has appeared on ALA's 10 Most Challenged Books list in 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2017, and 2019. The challenges associated with this book include the following: anti-family, homosexuality, unsuited to age group, anti-ethnic, religious viewpoint, sexism, political viewpoint, "promotes the homosexual

¹ And Tango Makes Three (Book), OWWL Library System Catalog, <https://search.owwl.org/Record/254303>

² And Tango Makes Three (eBook), OverDrive Catalog, <https://owwl.overdrive.com/media/2231284>

agenda,” same-sex relationship, and LGBTQIA+ content³.

COMMITTEE REVIEW

Committee Charge

A six-member committee comprised of Member Library Directors, a System Staff member, a System Trustee, and the System Executive Director met on September 28, 2023 to discuss the book's content and identify any actions to respond to challenges to this particular title.

Committee Discussion

The committee overwhelmingly believes that the book *And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson is a cute and loving story that should be in every library.

This true story features two male penguins, Roy and Silo, who are given an egg that was unable to be cared for by another penguin couple. Roy and Silo hatch the egg, which becomes Tango, and the three chinstrap penguins live happy lives at the Central Park Zoo.

The story shows how different families exist and normalizes the adoption. Aside from knowing that Silo and Roy are male, there is no indication of homosexuality or “promoting of a homosexual agenda” in the story.

PROFESSIONAL REVIEWS⁴

Booklist – May 15, 2005

*“PreS-Gr. 2. Roy and Silo were “a little bit different” from the other male penguins: instead of noticing females, they noticed each other. Thus penguin chick Tango, hatched from a fertilized egg given to the pining, bewildered pair, came to be “the only penguin in the Central Park Zoo with two daddies.” As told by Richardson and Parnell (a psychiatrist and playwright), this true story remains firmly within the bounds of the zoo's polar environment, as do Cole's expressive but still realistic watercolors (a far cry from his effete caricatures in Harvey Fierstein's *The Sissy Duckling*, 2002). Emphasizing the penguins' naturally ridiculous physiques while gently acknowledging their situation, Cole's pictures complement the perfectly cadenced text--showing, for example, the bewildered pair craning their necks toward a nest that was “nice, but a little empty.” Indeed, intrusions from the zookeeper, who remarks that the nuzzling males “must be in love,” strike the narrative's only false note. Further facts about the episode conclude, but it's naive to expect this will be read only as a zoo anecdote. However, those who share this with children will find themselves returning to it again and again--not for the entree it might offer to matters*

³ American Library Association, Top 10 Most Challenged Books Lists, <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks/frequentlychallengedbooks/top10/archive>

⁴ All professional reviews were retrieved on October 6, 2023 from Syndetics Unbound, a catalog enrichment service connected to the OWWL.org online catalog, https://search.owwl.org/Record/254303#unbound_reviews

of human sexuality, but for the two irresistible birds at its center and for the celebration of patient, loving fathers who "knew just what to do." --Jennifer Mattson Copyright 2005 Booklist

Horn Book Guide – October 1, 2005

"Two male penguins at the Central Park Zoo court, build a nest, and raise their (adopted) daughter Tango. Highly anthropomorphized to maximize the sentimental but noteworthy lesson on family diversity, the story gains depth from the biological reality of same-sex penguin partnering. Gentle illustrations of the smiling penguin family add appeal, if not scientific accuracy, to this book based on a true story. (c) Copyright 2010. The Horn Book, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. All rights reserved."

Kirkus Reviews

*"In this true, straightforwardly (so to speak) delivered tale, two male chinstrap penguins at New York City's Central Park Zoo bond, build a nest and—thanks to a helping hand from an observant zookeeper—hatch and raise a penguin chick. Seeing that the penguins dubbed Roy and Silo "did everything together. They bowed to each other. And walked together. They sang to each other. And swam together," their keeper, Mr. Gramzay, thinks, "They must be in love." And so, when Roy and Silo copy the other penguin couples and build a nest of stones, it's Gramzay who brings a neighboring couple's second egg for them to tend, then names the resulting hatchling "Tango." Cole gives the proud parents and their surrogate offspring small smiles, but otherwise depicts figures and setting with tidy, appealing accuracy. Unlike Harvey Fierstein's groundbreaking *The Sissy Duckling* (2002), also illustrated by Cole, this doesn't carry its agenda on its shoulder; readers may find its theme of acceptance even more convincing for being delivered in such a matter of fact, non-preachy way. (afterword) (Picture book/nonfiction. 5-9) Copyright ©Kirkus Reviews, used with permission."*

Publishers Weekly – May 16, 2005

*"Tango has two daddies in this heartwarming tale, inspired by actual events in New York's Central Park Zoo. Two male penguins, Roy and Silo, "did everything together. They bowed to each other.... They sang to each other. And swam together. Wherever Roy went, Silo went too.... Their keeper... thought to himself, 'They must be in love.' " Cole's (*The Sissy Duckling*) endearing watercolors follow the twosome as they frolic affectionately in several vignettes and then try tirelessly to start a family—first they build a stone nest and then they comically attempt to hatch a rock. Their expressive eyes capture a range of moods within uncluttered, pastel-hued scenes dominated by pale blue. When the keeper discovers an egg that needs tending, he gives it to Roy and Silo, who hatch and raise the female. The keeper says, "We'll call her Tango,... because it takes two to make a Tango." Older readers will most appreciate the humor inherent in her name plus the larger theme of tolerance at work in this touching tale. Richardson and Parnell, making their children's book debut, ease into the theme from the start, mentioning that "families of all kinds" visit the zoo. This*

tender story can also serve as a gentle jumping-off point for discussions about same-sex partnerships in human society. Ages 4-8.”

School Library Journal – July 1, 2015

“Toddler/PreS-It's been a decade since Richardson, Parnell, and Cole told the true story of Roy and Silo, two male penguins at the Central Park Zoo who became inseparable. When zookeepers gave the pair a motherless egg, they successfully hatched baby Tango. Commemorating the book's 10-year anniversary, this edition gives even younger readers the opportunity to enjoy this pioneering picture book, which was among the first to offer an example of a same-sex family.”

APPROPRIATE AGE LEVEL

The publisher's recommended age for *And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson is 4 to 8 years old⁵.

OWWL Library System does not offer a recommended age range or title restrictions. We encourage parents and guardians and their children to discuss their reading habits in the context of their goals to determine if this title is appropriate.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

Item Copy Actions

And Tango Makes Three is available at 16 member libraries, and digital copies are available through <https://owwl.overdrive.com>. At this time, additional copies are not needed.

Concerned Parent Actions

A minor's access to materials is the responsibility of that minor's parents or guardians. According to the American Library Association:

The mission, goals, and objectives of libraries cannot authorize libraries and their governing bodies to assume, abrogate, or overrule the rights and responsibilities of parents and guardians. As “Libraries: An American Value” states, “We affirm the responsibility and the right of all parents and guardians to guide their own children's use of the library and its resources and services.” Libraries and their governing bodies cannot assume the role of parents or the functions of parental authority in the private relationship between parent and child. Libraries and their governing bodies shall ensure that only parents and guardians have the right and the responsibility to determine their children's—and only their children's—access to library resources. Parents and guardians who do not

⁵ Reading Level retrieved from Syndetics Unbound, OWWL Library System Catalog, https://search.owwl.org/Record/254303#unbound_readinglevel

want their children to have access to specific library services, materials, or facilities should so advise their own children. Libraries and library governing bodies should not use rating systems to inhibit a minor's access to materials.⁶

To aid parents and guardians in addressing title access in OWWL Library System's OverDrive collection, the default collection can be changed under account settings.

To accomplish this, log in to an OverDrive account at <https://owwl.overdrive.com/> > click on My Account > Settings > Content Preferences > Audience(s). An account can be limited to All Audiences, Juvenile, Young Adult, General Adult, and Mature Adult.

Physical collections cannot be changed to restrict a minor's access to materials. Instead, please follow the American Library Association's recommendation noted above.

CONCLUSION

Future Reconsideration Requests

This report shall appropriately respond to any challenge or request for reconsideration of *And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson until November 8, 2025. At that time, should a formal challenge or request for reconsideration be received by the OWWL Library System, the Executive Director shall once again form a committee to review the title and use this documentation and all other professional material as the foundation of that discussion.

System Policies and Resolutions

For additional information on the selection of System materials, please review the Selection and Reconsideration of Materials Policy and the Resolution on the Freedom to Read by visiting <https://owwl.org/freedomtoread>.

Report Approval

OWWL Library System's Board of Trustees reviewed and approved this report on November 8, 2023.

Approved: November 8, 2023

⁶ Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/minors>