

No Fits, Nilson!



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Nilson and Amelia do everything together. But if one little thing goes wrong, Nilson throws the biggest, most house shaking-est fit ever! Amelia helps Nilson control his gorilla-sized temper by promising him banana ice cream and letting him play with her froggy coin purse. But, sometimes, Amelia needs to be calmed down, too.

Inspired by Ohora's own "negotiations" with his two sons, *No Fits, Nilson!* is a hilarious preschool pick for kids and parents navigating the treacherous tantrum phase.

No Fits, Nilson! Details

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From Reader Review No Fits, Nilson! for online ebook

Ro Menendez says

Sweet, amazing, conversation starter! This funny story of a fit-throwing-gorilla and how his human, Amelia, helps him get a grasp on his anger is funny, endearing, and a wonderful springboard to help young readers try to get a hold on their own fits, develop their own ways to help themselves and others. A surprise ending will have readers sighing "AWWWWWW!" I have more than a few young readers in mind that would really enjoy and benefit from O'Hara's brilliance.

Laura says

No Fits, Nilson! By Zachariah Ohora was a wonderful, sweet story and surprise!

We all have our growly, grumpy tantrum days. No matter how old we get! :D Amelia and Nilson's tale teaches and inspires kids of all ages to hold on to their patience and reel in the growls. I couldn't help smiling every time itty-bitty Amelia tried to keep Nilson--a big blue gorilla--quiet and behaved. Haha....

Come meet this adorable pair. The twist at the end was my favorite part though. Mr. Ohora got me good! I did not see that coming!

Recommended read.

Jon(athan) Nakapalau says

Nilson - a blue gorilla with a beret! A beatnik blue gorilla that throws temper tantrums when he gets mad! I LOVE IT!

Becky Shaknovich says

I really like Nilson's early 90s, Run DMC-like style.

Jonathan says

Awesome! Love the illustrations, the page where she locks eyes with him and reflects "banana ice cream" to him, and the surprise at the end!

Amy says

Spoiler alert! Nilson is a gorilla who is prone to throwing temper tantrums and Amelia is his best friend. I read this book thinking, why is this little girl responsible for the behavior of the big blue gorilla? Isn't that sending an unhealthy message? But the twist at the end makes it all worthwhile -- the big blue gorilla is just a doll that Amelia carries with her everywhere she goes. So, now I see that the behavior she's controlling is her own and it's all good.

Sandy Brehl says

Nilson (the gorilla) and Amelia (his best friend) have super-sized personalities and share everything (except baths-Nilson is afraid of water). Amelia's minimalist features reveal her wide-ranging emotions, and Nilson's bold-lined features combine with his gestures and body language to demonstrate emotions that range even more widely and wildly. In the early pages we witness one of Nilson's impressive fits resulting in their shared time-out. (hint-hint)

From that point on Amelia makes it her mission to help Nilson control his fits, modeling good manners, sharing her favorite things, thanking him for his efforts, and using a gorilla eye lock to help him calm down and delay gratification. When the long-awaited banana twist ice cream runs out, Amelia launches her own fit. Nilson saves the day by offering his cone to her and taking chocolate instead.

This simple story is loaded with visual subtext and clues, subtle and otherwise. The bold red endpapers create a clear "stop-sign" and/or danger message. The minute details suggest a more complex relationship between the two than the words convey. Amelia redirects and coaches Nilson with an array of strategies that, if spouted by an adult, would come off as preachy. In this case, though, her efforts to keep the gigantic blue, sneaker-and-beanie-wearing gorilla friend in check are both silly and sincere.

And just in case you haven't guessed that her reminders and warnings to Nilson are a bit more than each-one-teach-one peer coaching, the last page-turn drops Amelia and Nilson back into recognizable perspective as she cuddles in bed with her little stuffed toy gorilla.

This book works on so many levels it should come with an elevator. I'm not an artist (and I don't even play one in the movies) but I know enough about art and picture books to recognize award-winning potential in its design and execution. The white space backgrounds, the shifting in size and proportion, the story-telling power of expressions and details provide discussion points for older readers while parents and young ones will laugh out loud and ask for it again and again.

Storywraps says

Amelia, the little ferocious heroine of the book, has a best friend who is a mammoth, blue gorilla. His name is Nelson and they are very, very close indeed. They do everything together and are inseparable. One day by mistake she knocks over his building blocks and he erupts with the "biggest, most house shaking-est fit ever!!!". Amelia steps in as his comforter, mentor and "mother". She helps poor Nelson to regain his composure on many occasions after that outburst. She offers him her precious froggy purse to hold onto while standing in a very long, sluggish post office line-up; she uses her best stare down "with a gorilla eye

lock, repeating the words banana ice cream over and over," until he has calmed himself down. Now what gorilla wouldn't calm down for that reward? The irony of it all is when Nelson finally gets to have his ice cream, it's Amelia who loses control and throws a temper tantrum. Nelson graciously gives up his beloved flavour and accepts chocolate ice cream instead to make her feel better and to comfort her.

The tough, woodcut-like acrylic paintings are fantastic and the expressions just perfect. Ohora's colour pallet is limited to blue, red, pink, yellow/beige and green. The details he includes in the pictures will keep you coming back again and again to discover something new on each re-read. His characters are extremely memorable as Nelson sports three watches that he wears on his left arm and three more attached to his right arm. He adorns himself with a black snappy cap trimmed in yellow and makes a fashion statement right down to his feet which he stuffs in trendy black sneakers. Amelia is depicted as innocent and sweet with a cute little black bob haircut.... but we soon find out how her demeanour can change in a second ... into a roaring, tyrannical monster-girl. The book will appeal to both adult and child alike which makes it a fun, fun read. It is both a visual and audio treat to behold. This is a winner indeed.

Samantha says

Amelia and her favorite playmate, Nilson, are prone to fits, but with a little reframing they are able to keep each other's tantrums in check.

Acrylic illustrations are vibrant and creative; I love the image of Amelia staring the message "banana ice cream" into Nilson's focused eyes. PreK-2.

Matt says

Young Amelia is forced to deal with a pet gorilla, Nilson, whose fits sometimes prove troublesome for them both. However, Amelia discovers a way to lower the volume and the emotional output by Nilson. Neo sees the Nilson in him, though he wonders why I never offer him banana ice cream. Always the food with that kid!

Rebecca Honeycutt says

AAAAh-dorable. OHora's funky, chunky illustrations are fantastically fun to look at, and kids will appreciate a book that recognizes just how hard good behavior can be.

Paula says

"Amelia covers Nilson's mouth and stares him down with a gorilla eye lock, repeating the words 'banana ice cream' over and over."

There are two things I like very much here.

1) This acknowledgement that an overtired, impatient toddler is a very fragile thing, and can only be kept in check by means of hypnotic concentration and mantra-like murmured promises of ice cream.

2) The twist at the end that shows us the dual, near-schizophrenic nature of the child. All day Amelia has been urging Nilson to keep his cool. She uses techniques like distraction, recontextualizing ("This is an ADVENTURE, not errands!"), and goal attainment. Her savvy and patience are quite remarkable, so the eventual discovery that Nilson is just a stuffed animal and therefore all the fits and near-fits in the book were in fact Amelia's - underscores and gives credit to the hard, polarizing work of self-regulating that we ask preschool kids to learn to do.

Also, there's a cereal in this book called "Frosted Sheriff" and I want some of that.

Linda Lipko says

This is a lovely book of Nilson and Amelia. Nilson throws big house-shaking fits. Amelia's task is to calm him. Flying off at the slightest thing, Nilson is difficult, and then charming.

And, as the author shows, Amelia would be wise to heed her own advice, because sometimes she needs calming down as well.

This is a fun story and mode to talk to little ones (and big ones) about how others react when emotions are out-of control.

Betsy says

The small child is a frightening beast. A truly terrifying creature that can level the most powerful adult with the mere pitch of their fury laden screams. As a children's librarian I used to tell my husband that mine was one of the few jobs I knew where an average day was punctuated by human sobs and screams of terror, misery, and fury. What then is the reasoning behind the idea that you should read a child a book about a fellow kiddo having a meltdown? Well, kids can get a lot out of that kind of identification. They can put themselves into the role of the parent, to a certain extent. Or maybe it's just good old schadenfreude. Better her than me, eh? Whatever the reasoning, meltdowns make for good picture book fodder. Add in a giant blue gorilla with a penchant for wristwear and you've got yourself a picture book as fine as fish hair. A treat to eye and ear alike, Ohora is truly coming into his own with a book that truly has universal appeal. And a gorilla. But I repeat myself.

Amelia and Nilson are inseparable. They play together, eat together, and with some exceptions (Nilson is afraid of water so no baths) they're never out of one another's sight. The fact that Amelia is a little girl and Nilson a gigantic blue gorilla? Not an issue. What is an issue is the fact that Nilson has a terribly short fuse. Good thing Amelia knows exactly what to do to calm him down. Don't want to go with mom to do chores? Amelia calls them adventures instead. Nilson's getting testy waiting in line at the post office? Amelia hands him her froggy purse. It's the moment that Nilson gets the last banana ice cream that Amelia's composure finally breaks down. Now she's the one who's upset. Fortunately, Nilson knows the perfect way to make everything right again.

When we think of the great tantrum picture books out there, the mind immediately leaps to the be all and end all of fits, *When Sophie Gets Angry Really Really Angry* by Molly Bang. That book sort of set the standards for meltdown lit. It's simple, it gets to the point, it teaches colors (though that's more a nice bonus rather than anything else). After *Sophie* authors tried to come up with different unique takes on a common occurrence. Rosemary Wells came up with *Miracle Melts Down*, Robie Harris dared to discuss the unmentionable in *The Day Leo Said "I Hate You "*. And who could forget David Elliott's truly terrifying *Finn Throws a Fit?* In the end, this book is almost an older version of *Knuffle Bunny* by Mo Willems (it involves preschooler fits rather than toddler fits, which as any parent will tell you are a different beast entirely). But part of what I like most about *No Fits, Nilson!* is that it sort of harkens back to the early days of *Sophie*. Ohora makes a metaphor out of the familiar and in doing so makes it even more understandable than it would be if his gorilla was nowhere in sight.

Ohora's previous picture book, *Stop Snoring Bernard* was a lovely book to look upon. As an artist, the man has cultivated a kind of acrylic mastery that really does a wonderful job of bringing out the personalities of his characters within a limited color palette. However, while the art in *Bernard* was at times beyond stunning, his storytelling wasn't quite there yet. It was all show without the benefit of substance. So it was a great deal of relief that I discovered that *No Fits, Nilson!* had remedied this little problem. Story wise, Ohora is within his element. He knows that there is no better way of describing a kid's tantrums than a 400-pound (or so) gorilla. Most important of all, the metaphor works. Nilson is a marvelous stand-in for Amelia, until that moment of spot-on role reversal.

As I mentioned before, the acrylics threaten to become the stars of the show more than once in this book. Limiting himself to blue, red, pink, yellow/beige and green, Ohora's is a very specific color scheme. Neo-21st century hipster. Indeed the book appears to be set in Brooklyn (though a map on one of the subways manages to crop out most of the Bronx, Queens, Staten Island and half of Brooklyn, so maybe I'm reading too much into the setting). As I also mentioned before, painting beautifully is one thing, but coming up with delightful, memorable characters is what separates the RISD grads from the true picture book masters. Nilson is the one that's going to get the kids the most excited to read this book so it was important for Ohora to make him a unique blue gorilla. Not the kind of guy you'd run into on the street. To do this, Ohora chooses to accessorize. Note the three watches Nilson wears on his left arm and the three on his right. Note his snappy black beret with the yellow trim, and yellow and black sneakers. Next, the artist has to make Nilson a gorilla prone to the grumps but that is essentially lovable in spite of them. For this, Amelia is a very good counterpoint. Her sweetness counteracts Nilson's barely contained rage. Finally, Ohora throws in some tiny details to make the reading experience enjoyable for adults as well. The typography at work when the tiny words "banana ice cream" move from Amelia's mouth and eyes to Nilson's mouth and eyes is a sight to behold. Ditto the funny in-jokes on the subway (New Yorkers may be the only folks who get Ohora's "Dr. Fuzzmore" ads, and the one for the zoo is a clear cut reference to *Stop Snoring, Bernard!*).

Yeah, I'm a fan. Kids may be the intended audience for books like this one, but it's parents that are shelling out the cash to buy. That means you have to appeal to grown-up sensibilities as well as children's. What Ohora does so well is that he knows how to tap into an appreciation for his material on both a child and adult level. This is no mean feat. Clearly the man knows where to find the picture book sweet spot. A visual feast as well as a treat to the ear, this is a book that's going to find an audience no matter where it goes. At least it better. Otherwise I might have to sick my own 400-pound gorilla on someone, and believe me . . . you do NOT want to get him angry.

For ages 2-6.

Dolly says

This is an entertaining and humorous tale about a little girl and her pal, a gigantic blue gorilla who really likes wristwatches. They help each other when they get frustrated and they work hard to control their emotional outbursts.

The narrative is fun to read aloud, but the illustrations are what won me over. I love the ending and despite the fact that this book is a bit too babyish for our girls (I would recommend it for toddlers and preschoolers), we really enjoyed reading this book together.
