



**The Lies They Tell** @sarahstuartxx

8 Aug · 30 tweets · [sarahstuartxx/status/1292073911610494979](https://twitter.com/sarahstuartxx/status/1292073911610494979)



‘I am not a girl’ is yet another book for young kids, written by a child /adult combo. The host of the webinar was a bookshop. I thought it might be a self publish job, but no, it’s been published by an arm of Macmillan Publishers.



The book is a very straightforward story of a young girl, aged anywhere between 5 and 9 as suggested by the drawings and the child author’s experience, and is essentially a ‘coming out as transgender’ story.

The book is officially aimed at 3-6 year olds though.

**Join Second Star for virtual storytime with Maddox Lyons & Jessica Verdi, authors of I'M NOT A GIRL.**

#### About this Event

##### ABOUT THE BOOK

Based on a true transgender identity journey, the picture book *I'm Not a Girl* is an empowering story from writers Maddox Lyons and Jessica Verdi about a boy who is determined to be himself, illustrated by Dana Simpson.

Nobody seems to understand that Hannah is not a girl. His parents ask why he won't wear the cute outfits they pick out. His friend thinks he must be a tomboy. His teacher insists he should be proud to be a girl. But a birthday wish, a new word, and a stroke of courage might be just what Hannah needs to finally show the world who he really is.

[Get the book via Bookshop HERE!](#)

The preview in Amazon gives almost the whole story if you’re interested in looking. The notes at the back of the book, particularly the one from the mother of Maddox and a suggested list of trans people the kids can look up, are very revealing.

<https://www.amazon.com/Im-Not-Girl-Transgender-Story/dp/0374310688>

The illustration for the book was done by Dana Simpson, who naturally has quite a ‘brony’ following on his twitter account, which is as expected as he is the creator of

the comic strip ‘Phoebe and her Unicorn’.

**About the Author**

**Maddox Lyons** is a transgender boy who lives in California with his parents, sister, two dogs, and two pet rats. He does advocacy and outreach with various LGBTQ+ organizations. Maddox loves drawing and writing, acting, figure skating, and getting lost in a good book.

**Jessica Verdi** is the author of several books for children and young adults—including *And She Was*, *What You Left Behind*, *The Summer I Wasn't Me*, and *My Life After Now*. *I'm Not a Girl* is her debut picture book. Jess lives in New York with her family and loves traveling, salsa, hot sauce, TV, theatre, vegetarian soup, leggings, flip-flops, and all animals.

**Dana Simpson**, a native of Gig Harbor, Washington, first caught the eyes of devoted comics readers with the internet strip *Ozy and Millie*. She then developed *Phoebe and Her Unicorn*, which is now syndicated in over 200 newspapers worldwide and has generated a robust publishing program.

Simpson's books have appeared on the *New York Times* bestseller list, and won the Washington State Book Award and the Pacific Northwest Book Award. She lives with her husband and her cat in Santa Barbara, California.

Simpson's comic strip on the day I wrote this piece was of a little girl sticking her fingers in cold soda and saying “I don’t have calluses on my fingers yet, I need to ice them”.



**Phoebe and Her Unicorn by Dana Simpson for August 08, 2020 | GoCo...**

View the comic strip for Phoebe and Her Unicorn by cartoonist Dana Simpson created August 08, 2020 available on GoComics.com

<https://www.gocomics.com/phoebe-and-her-unicorn/2020/08/08>

Tweeps long of this parish will remember the shocking photos of a ‘furry’ who had had to have bilateral hand amputation, due to deliberately freezing his hands. This is what the comic strip reminded me of.

(I wish I didn’t know these things.)

Regardless the comic strip still depicts an act of deliberate self-harm and this is simply grooming in plain sight.

Simpson has a contract with Nickelodeon.



**Nickelodeon Won Rights to Dana Simpson's Beloved Children's Comic...**

Nickelodeon has won the rights to the beloved children's comic strip by Dana Simpson, *Phoebe and Her Unicorn*, per Deadline. This announcement came after both Nickelodeon and Viacom studio were compet...

<https://television.mxdwn.com/news/nickelodeon-won-rights-to-dana-simpsons-beloved...>

The adult author of the book *Jess Verdi*, has written several young adult fiction books, this is her first for young children. Jess said that she was friends with Maddox

and friends with Maddox's mum. The idea for the book apparently came from Maddox aged 9.

Maddox read the whole book out to us, it's in first person. The main character doesn't like dressing up in girly things, says 'I know girls are cool, I'm just not one', tells their mom and dad 'I'm a boy' and asks at the end 'Can I get a haircut?'

That's it. That's the story.

The word 'transgender' is used in the book.

Q&A was brief but revealing.


Maddox, a 13 year old girl who identifies as a boy, was asked how she found the courage to talk to her parents. Maddox responded that her therapist helped her.

Maddox said she wrote the book because she went to the library to find books for trans boys and there weren't any (she came out as TG when she was 9). Writing a book about her story would help her transition.

Jess Verdi, the adult author, said she had a lot of experience in writing about LGBTQ issues. She said that the transgender books currently available mostly address the experience of trans girls and that the question trans boys are mentioned, but not focussed on.

They also tend to be very girly books and therefore off-putting to trans boys.

Then there was this question from a university lecturer who taught gender and sexuality.

  
Thank you so much for this story! I am teaching this book in my 3rd year university course on Gender and Sexuality this term :)  
A lot of Children's lit is written by adults ...  
can you describe the collaboration process for writing, Jess and Maddox?  
  
Also: Maddox, can you picture yourself writing more books?

Jess responded that she and Maddox had worked on the book over a period of four years and that she knew there would be an illustrator, and wanted the pictures to communicate different things from the text.

It was only about 20 people on the call, mainly adult women.

One of the few men, or perhaps the only, a member of staff from the North Country LGBTQ Resource Center, made this comment.

**North County LGBTQ Resource Center**

5:42 PM

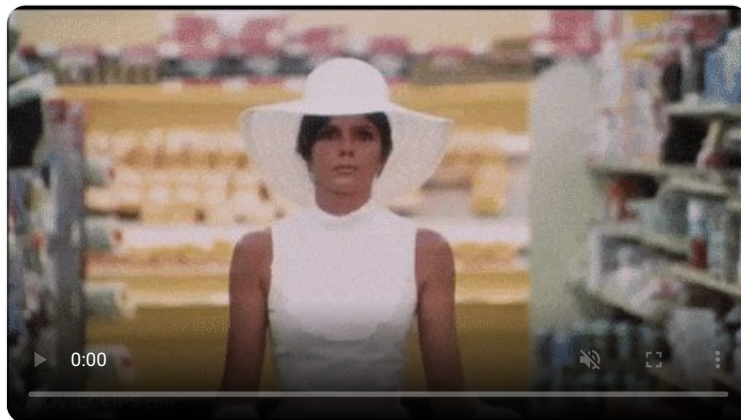
Maddox I just wanted to say that I am very proud of you. This is Max and I have met you at our LGBTQ Resource Center in Oceanside some time ago. I knew then that you would become a brave and outspoken young man.

The host of the webinar, from the bookshop, said she wanted Max to read the comment out and that when he did she thought she was going to cry.

Max duly read the comment out.

Across the gallery of faces several started to contort, eyes welling up and mouths creasing.

One woman took herself off mute and told Maddox 'you've been a big help' in an emotionally wrought voice.



Maddox is an LGBTQ advocate of course.

How did Maddox cope with this love bombing?

She looked uncomfortable, embarrassed and confused, and sadly I also think she might have believed it a bit too.

Jess said that she knew some people would be opposed to the book (my terfiness must have reached her by osmosis) and that we can't let the haters stop it.

Maddox answered a question about what age range was the book for. She felt that it was for all ages.

Jess immediately contradicted and said it was primarily for younger children and that the next book would focus on social transitioning. \*This\* book was just about coming out.

Maddox said it was important to have the word transgender in the book.

The bookstore woman said that it was a wonderful book and read for all ages (yeah, it really doesn't). It was so powerful, she continued, that teens and adults might gain something from reading it.



Jess said that she saw a review posted online (I think the one below) in which an adult man had enjoyed reading the book.

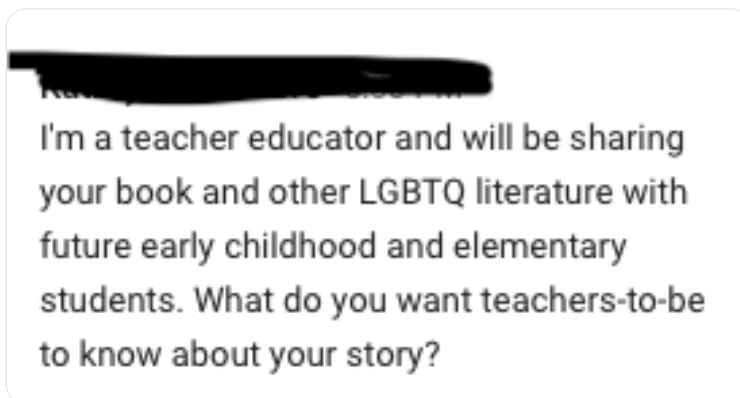
His favourite part of the book appears to be the notes at the back. I am not sure he's the full ticket tbh.



<https://www.youtube.com/embed/UBhd3Ra-87E>

A teacher educator asked this question and Maddox responded that she sometimes speaks to educators and 'Everyone's experience is different and I'm just a boy, er yeah'.

Jess said it wasn't everyone's experience. Making it clear, yet again, that the book is really her work.



The bookshop woman wanted to know if Maddox had any advice for other 'LGBT kiddos'?

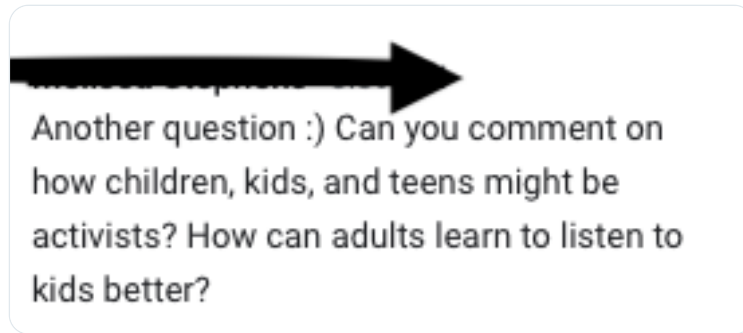
Maddox said 'be yourself' and 'find your community'.

Ya-huh, said the bookshop woman, and sometimes you have to travel to find your community, don't you?

Jess said yes & that the character in the book travels to meet new people.

The gender and sexuality lecturer had a second question to ask Maddox, how can kids be activists, and how can adults stay out of the picture.

Maddox responded 'yeah I'm an advocate and this is my story'.



Jess pitched in again to confirm that the book itself was a form of activism and raised the spectre of the unnamed enemy of the book/ activism once again.

Maddox said she hoped sharing her story helps.

Cue more soppy smiles from the loony ladies on the call.

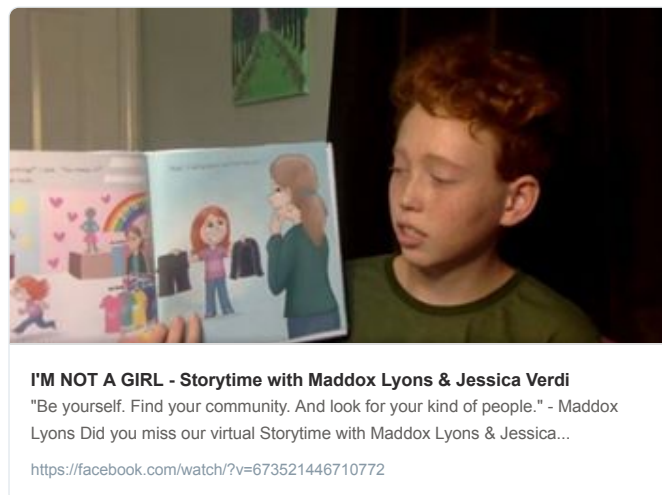
Jess gave a shout out to Dana Simpson, who was her first choice illustrator for the book, since Dana is also transgender and was able to add to the perspective.

Maddox added that she had meet Dana and thought him 'awesome'.

It was really noticeable that the only other kid on the call, was one sandwiched unhappily between two fat entitled-looking women.

There was general agreement that the book needed to be got into schools.

The bookshop woman said that the video of the call would be on Facebook the following day, just for 24 hours.



[@threadreaderapp](#) unroll