

Librarian's Shelf by Brad Hruska

"Lions and Tigers and Lice, Oh My"

Traveling down the Parenting Road, my wife and I have had many adventures. Some good like when my son, Brennan, caught his first ten pound catfish while at Gavin's Point Dam; some not so good like when my youngest daughter, Bekka, went to ER because she figured she was old enough to use a knife to cut her own apple; and some that left us scratching our heads like when my wife discovered, in the middle of church, that our eldest daughter, Alena, had head lice. Bizarre as it may seem; it is this particular memory that Mary and I often find ourselves talking about while driving to worship.

Head lice can strike fear into any parent; however, it is more disturbing to children, who not only have to comprehend that they have something living in their hair, but also has to undergo the torturous treatment to eradicate the little pests, but I have found a book that does a wonderful job explaining these little creatures to children in a way that is both an entertaining and informative, "Bugs in My Hair!" by David Shannon.

In this overly dramatic tale, Shannon introduces readers to a young redhead who's just discovered that he has head lice. The "terrible" discovery sends his mother running in terror, leaving the youngster to pondering what "having head lice" really means. The author explains that having head lice simply implies that tiny bugs have taken up residents on one's head. Because the tiny invaders keep moving, the boy's scalp itches, causing him to wonder what the little creatures are doing up there. Were they having a "Lice-A-Palooza" complete with a fiddle and banjo? Shannon tactfully explains that the bugs are actually feasting on his blood, which might mortify certain individuals; however, Shannon's illustration of Lice-acula (the lice version of Dracula) is laughable and calming.

The redhead's imagination runs wild envisioning himself going to school with a giant louse on his head, feeling ashamed and humiliated. "Everyone will know" and "I won't have any friends," he whimpers. But Shannon gently explains that typically everyone gets head lice and that having them is not a horrible ordeal. He goes on to say that it can be difficult for some children to admit that they have head lice and that some individuals may even believe they have head lice, when in reality they do not, saying that the lice are "in their heads, rather than on their heads."

If you are embarking down the Parenting Road and encounter a few bumps in it, stop by the Columbus Public Library and check out the wonderful collection of books that can help you overcome those tough issues like head lice, potty training, or manners. I am sure not matter what obstacles you encounter, you will find an ideal book to help both you and your child. If you have questions, about "Bugs in My Hair!" by David Shannon or would like recommendations for other great books, please contact me at (402) 564-7116 opt.