

## Analyzing A Children's Read-Aloud Picture Book

Student's Name: Parvesh Kaur

Book Title: Stand Tall, Molly Lou Melon

Author: Patty Lovell

Illustrator: David Catrow

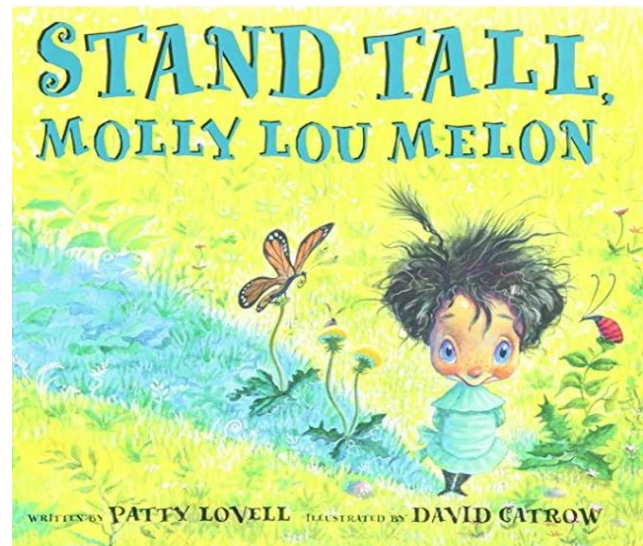
Copyright Date: 2001

Publisher: G.P. Putnam's Sons

Age of viewers/readers: 4-6 yrs

Type of Book: Juvenile Fiction/Social Themes/Bullying

From where you obtained this book: Child Development and Education Department



1. The main character of the story is Molly Lou Melon, a girl of 4 to 5 years who lives with her grandma. Molly is short and clumsy. She has buck teeth and sounds like a bullfrog squeezed by a boa constrictor. Molly's grandma is her inspiration, and she advises her to embrace these unique qualities of hers with pride. Molly's confidence is unshaken, and she is cheerful even in difficult situations like being teased or bullied. Molly is a highly active and enthusiastic child who loves to run around, jump and fall, sing and laugh like other children. Her failures or shortcomings do not disturb her, and she always stands tall.

In the book "Stand Tall Molly Lou Melon", Molly had to leave her town and go to a new place. She had to say goodbye to her grandma, her friends, and her school. But this event does not cast any shadow of negativity or sadness in Molly. She is optimistic as she holds the advice given by her grandma close to her heart. In the new school she encounters a bully- a boy named Ronald Durkin who teases her for her unique physical appearance and calls her names. Molly is not disturbed by any of these, and her cheerfulness is unfazed. She remained confident and triumphed over her bully with her positivity and energy.

Events of moving away from loved ones, name calling, and bullying can leave a negative memory in children's minds. The story of Molly Lou dealing with all these situations in her life fearlessly challenges children's thought process. It encourages them not to be intimidated by a bully or hate anyone for name calling. Instead, like Molly be yourself, confident, irrespective of how people see you or call you.

2. The illustrations in the book are descriptive of the story and the character of Molly. David Crow through his illustrations has given the reader an opportunity to connect with Molly's character. He uses pencil and watercolors. The use of vibrant colors, and exaggerated features of

characters create a very lighthearted environment for the young readers. The illustrations highlight Molly's unique features, her small stature and the buck teeth in a way that celebrates her uniqueness, rather than making her look awkward. The illustrations reinforce the idea of self-acceptance, as Molly who stands tall both literally and figuratively. Also, the illustrations make the reader laugh, enjoy, and ponder upon the idea of embracing oneself happily.

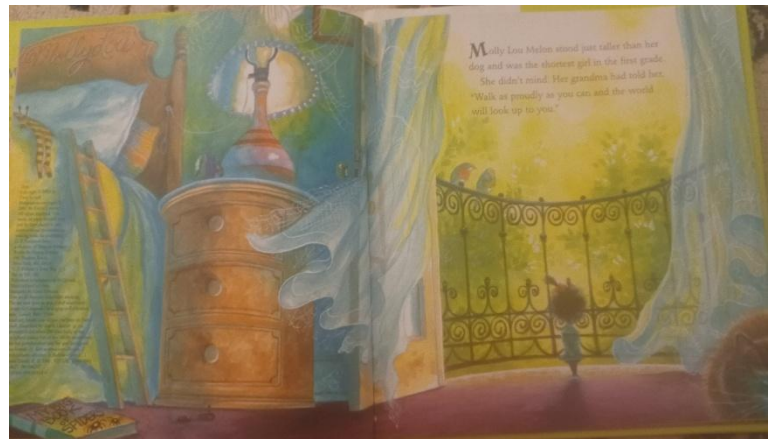
The illustration on the first page introduces Molly's personality in a significant way. In this picture, Mr. Catrow shows a large bed, tiny shoes, and a staircase which Molly must be using to climb the bed.

These details give the reader an idea about

Molly's small stature. On the same page

Molly is shown standing on her balcony

looking at nature, with hands folded behind her back as a thoughtful child, even though the story does not mention Molly's thoughtfulness explicitly.



Another impressive illustration shows Molly's unfazed spirit, in which her bully says she sounds like a duck. She is shown enacting a duck by sitting like one with her hands held like duck mouth. The illustration shows the reader a cheerful Molly, unperturbed by any name calling



and making a loud quack sound which startled Ronald, and he fell. The picture is hilarious and

evokes positivity. It shows Molly's mental strength that comes from the fact that she loves herself the way she is.

3. The illustrations by David Crow in "Stand Tall Molly Lou Melon" are descriptive of the characters and events in the story. Every character Molly, her pets – dog, cat, fish, turtle and a parrot, her friend all are shown integral to the story. Each illustration is very thoughtful and explains the events in a funny and respectful manner.

The illustrations depict Molly's self-esteem and confidence in herself in an easy understandable way. Her posture, big smile and wide eyes speak of her unique physical appearance but do not demean her in any way. The subtle details like the staircase with the bed, Molly standing on the Yellow Pages book to look into the mirror help the reader get the perspective of Molly's personality.

Describing the event of bullying, the illustration does not show the boy Ronald who bullied Molly in a bad light. The illustrations focus more on the message of maintaining self-esteem and self-embrace irrespective of the circumstances. The illustration on the last page of the grandma is descriptive of her wisdom and bond Molly shares with her. The illustrations by David Crow make the book a fun and inspiring read for young children.

4. The story of Molly reflects how families can reinforce self-esteem amongst children. The simplicity of the story helps the children associate with it and instill individuality in them. Children would be able to identify someone in the family or close circle like Molly's grandma who accepts them with all their uniqueness and loves them unconditionally. Families play a significant role in the development of a child. The story is not only relatable but also inspiring for families to play the role of mentoring kids.

Kids who experience bullying can find comfort and learn the upbeat way of dealing with the situation through Molly's story. Molly is positive, cheerful, lively, and kind while being bullied, because she has been told by her grandma to be proud of herself. Parents who encourage their children to act with empathy, kindness, and perseverance may see their own family values mirrored in the lessons Molly Lou learns.

5. Molly's character exudes positivity, cheerfulness and confidence which is very easily relatable for any child. Molly is very much aware of her physical uniqueness like her buck teeth, small stature, and squeaky voice, but she never lets these things define her personality. In fact, she walks proudly, smiles broadly, and sings loudly. Association with these spirited qualities is very natural for any child. Children might go through negative experiences due to their physical appearance or personality traits. For every such child Molly Lou is identifiable because she shows them a positive and happy way to win over any situation.



6. Children in California come from diverse backgrounds of ethnicity, culture, lifestyle, and socioeconomic status. The children can readily connect with the story and images in the book. For example, children might have a different family structure than Molly's, but they can connect with the strong bond she shares with her grandma. The outstanding part of their relationship is empowerment, which Molly feels because of her grandma's advice. Children can relate to this empowerment, which they might experience through their own family or close ones.

Further, illustrations depict children in Molly's school with diverse backgrounds and appearances. Children can relate to this as schools in California also have a diverse population. Even the school activities described in the book vary from sports to singing, and origami which are also part of the school curriculum here.

Lastly, the letter Molly writes to her grandma and the image showing grandma reading the letter are relatable too. First grade children are learning to write so they might feel enthusiastic about writing a letter on their own or with adult help, especially to someone with whom they share a similar bond as Molly did with her grandma.

7. The story of Molly Lou is a fine example of how to counteract negativity caused by body shaming. Children are very susceptible to television and the media's idea of being attractive and being liked by everyone. But this can be conflicting with a child's self-image. The book "Stand Tall Molly Lou Melon" on the other hand celebrates the concept of individuality. It reinforces the idea of self, irrespective of how he or she is perceived by the world. While strengthening self-esteem the book never loses the ground of values like thoughtfulness, kindness, and compassion.

8.(11) The book has a lively and cheerful tone which demands animated story telling rather than just a simple read aloud session. So, I would include voice modulations and act out a couple of actions of Molly to maintain a happy environment. In fact, including kids in those acts will make it very interactive and fun for them. For this, I would like to have props like a puppet duck, and a frog, and together we can imitate the sounds of a quack and a loud croak like a squeezed bullfrog.

To emphasize on Molly's thoughtfulness which is not explicitly mentioned in the text, and is an important quality to have, I would take a pause at the first image in the book where Molly is seen standing on her balcony, observing nature with her hands folded behind her back. Here I would discuss with the children, what thoughts are and how positive and negative thoughts can affect us. How we must be mindful and respectful towards people around us and still be ourselves. I would like to copy Molly's gestures here like walking proudly, adoring her teeth in the mirror and then smiling big. All to signify how we are different than others and be proud and happy.

Lastly, I would include two activities in which children would participate. One in which they would say two or three things about another child in the class. To pick a person whom they want to speak about there would be a bowl of name tags and they must randomly pick one. Also, they must share positive things about the child whose name they pick. This activity will help to boost self-esteem in children. This activity will not only help in reinforcing the idea of self-acceptance in fact, will also enhance inclusion and friendliness in children. So, I would do this activity at least once every month.

Another activity to emphasize the importance of individualism is to make snowflakes with paper. Each snowflake is different from the other but is beautiful in its own way.

9. Following is the list of words which might be unfamiliar to young children.

- Buck teeth
- Bullfrog
- Boa constrictor
- Shrimpo
- Beaver
- Glee
- Somersault
- Fumble fingered.
- Touchdown (as in football)

10. From the above list of words, I would emphasize and explain the following three words to the children. These words might be difficult for the children to comprehend but are important to understand the context in which they are used in the story of Molly.

- Buck teeth – It can be explained as a condition when the front teeth stick out more than usual like bunny teeth. They can also be explained with help of a prop of buck teeth available easily. Buck teeth are stand out part of Molly's personality, which she enjoys by stacking pennies on them.



- Fumble fingered – to understand the personality of Molly children need to understand why author mentions her fumble-fingered. Fumble- fingered means someone who is clumsy, who keeps dropping things. It is to emphasize that even though Molly was shown to be clumsy, this never pulled her back from trying new things.
- Glee – It means super excited and happy. A similar feeling when children plan to go to Disney Land or any other fun activity with the family and they cannot stop talking about it. Like in Molly's story when the kids saw Molly stacking pennies on her front teeth they could not stop smiling and feel glee.