

## We Are the Wackadoodles: It's Nice to Be Kind

**T. A. Duggan**

Quantum Discovery

(30pp)

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*In the picture book We Are the Wackadoodles: It's Nice to Be Kind, parents showcase and discuss the merits of kindness.*

In T. A. Duggan's picture book *We Are the Wackadoodles: It's Nice to Be Kind*, goodwill toward others wins the day.

The Wackadoodle parents want to teach their children to be kind and have good manners, even when other people make it difficult to do so. To make the space for this lesson, they plan an outing with their extended family—a picnic in the park. The girls prepare the food while the boys play ball. At one point, Chandy goes to retrieve the ball from the bushes, but three boys grabbed the ball, and they refuse to give it back. The Wackadoodle parents go to see what's wrong and end up inviting the three boys to join in on the family's picnic.

The conflict ends in an easy and abrupt manner once the Wackadoodle parents arrive on the scene, after which the book's children become insignificant to the tale's progression. The question-and-answer sections, in which the Wackadoodle parents dispel misconceptions about meanness and teasing, weigh down the book's ending, functioning more as a sermon than as a natural teaching moment. In addition, while the story focuses on the boys' conflict, the girls are sidelined and separate. Fewer girls are named in the book as a whole, and none are given any lines, making the book's message of family support and conflict lopsided.

The illustrations utilize thin lines and bold fill-in coloring. Ample movement is conveyed in people's gestures, expressions, and silhouettes, resulting in a fun, energetic atmosphere. The color gradients and light shadowing assist in making the picnic food, in particular, stick out with its delicious shine. However, some people's expressions are vacant due to the empty, glassy style of the eyes, and the children, who are numerous, are difficult to differentiate from one another. The latter issue is deepened by the fact that many children are named in the text, but none stick out as having any kind of quirk or unique characteristics.

In the picture book *We Are the Wackadoodles: It's Nice to Be Kind*, parents showcase and discuss the merits of kindness.

ALEENA ORTIZ (October 13, 2023)

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