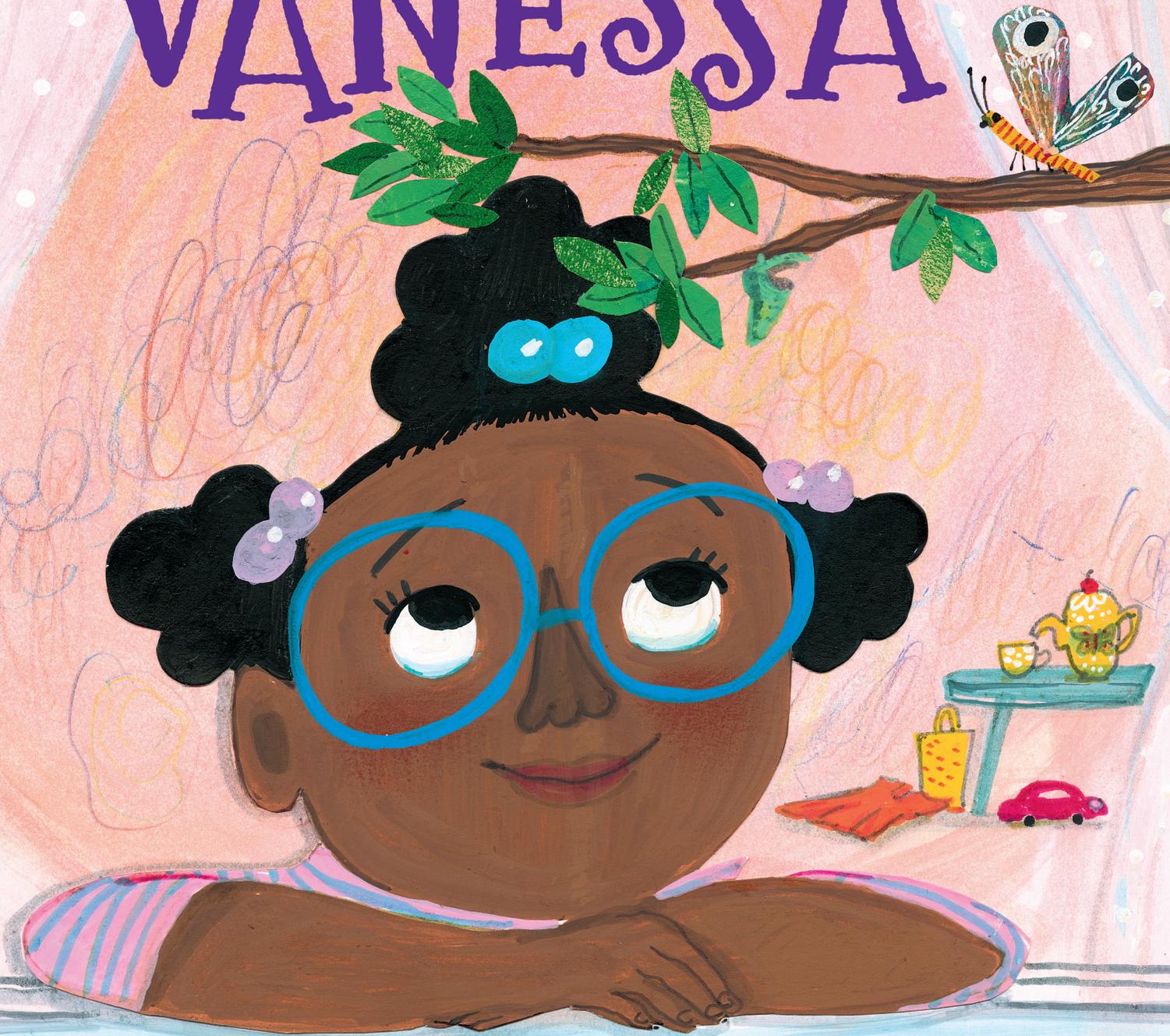


BECOMING VANESSA



By Vanessa Brantley-Newton

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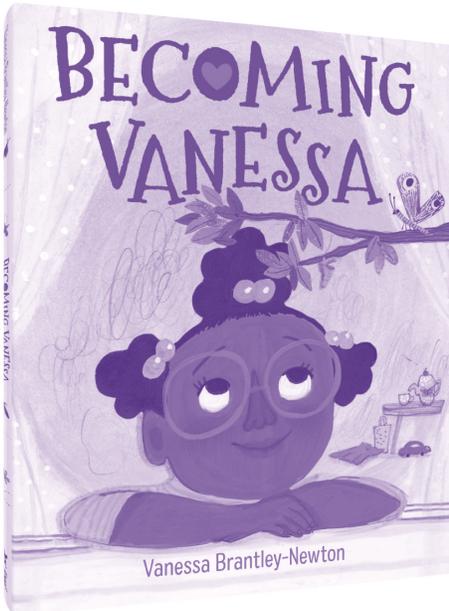


ABOUT THE BOOK

For readers of *Alma and How She Got Her Name* and *The King of Kindergarten*, this story will help kids just starting school transform from timid caterpillars into beautiful butterflies so they can love who they are.

On Vanessa's first day of school, her parents tell her it will be easy to make friends. Vanessa isn't so sure. She wears her fanciest outfit so her new classmates will be able to notice her right away. Her classmates notice, but the attention isn't what she'd hoped it would be; as the day goes on, she feels more self-conscious. Her clothes are too bright, her feather boa has too many feathers, and even her name is too hard to write.

The next day, she picks out a plain outfit and tells her mom that her name is too long. She just wants to blend in, with a simple name like the other girls—why couldn't her parents have named her Megan or Bella? But when her mother tells her the meaning behind her name, it gives her the confidence she needs to introduce her classmates to the real Vanessa.



Art © 2021 by Vanessa Brantley-Newton

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR-ILLUSTRATOR

VANESSA BRANTLEY-NEWTON is a self-taught illustrator, doll maker, and crafter who studied fashion illustration at FIT and children's book illustration at the School of Visual Arts in New York. She is the author and illustrator of *Grandma's Purse* and *Just Like Me*, and has illustrated numerous children's books, including *The King of Kindergarten* by Derrick Barnes and *Sewing Stories* by Barbara Herkert. Vanessa currently makes her nest in Charlotte, North Carolina, with her husband, daughter, and a very rambunctious cat named Stripes. Learn more about Vanessa and her artwork at VanessaBrantleyNewton.com and on Facebook and Instagram.



BECOMING VANESSA

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM USES



- ♥ Take a picture walk through the book. Ask students to share ways they think Vanessa is special.
- ♥ Encourage students to connect to Vanessa by thinking about their own special qualities. Are they the same as Vanessa's?
- ♥ Before reading, ask students to think about ways they express themselves. Do they wear bright and colorful clothing? Do they move their bodies in a certain way? Do they sing songs? Do they write poems or stories? Encourage them to notice the different ways Vanessa expresses herself in the story.
- ♥ During the reading, stop at different parts in the story to comment on how Vanessa is feeling. Ask students to identify how they would feel if they were Vanessa. How would they check in with Vanessa if they were her friend?
- ♥ At the end of story, have students reflect on what is special about themselves. Is it their name? Is it the special way they wear their hair? Encourage students to share their specialness with another student.
- ♥ Vanessa Brantley-Newton uses a variety of media and techniques to create her unique illustrations. Consider exploring the art of collage with your students. Provide newspaper, scrapbook paper, and construction paper. Encourage them to create a butterfly using these materials. Hang the butterflies throughout the classroom.

WHAT WOULD YOU WEAR?

Becoming Vanessa celebrates the beauty of being unique. Just like a caterpillar, Vanessa undergoes a metamorphosis.

By the end of the story, she realizes that being exactly who she is is the best way to show others her uniqueness.

Encourage your students to design a unique outfit for a special occasion. Once they have drawn their outfit, provide them with craft supplies like fabric, ribbon, felt, sequins, and anything else you have on hand to decorate their design.

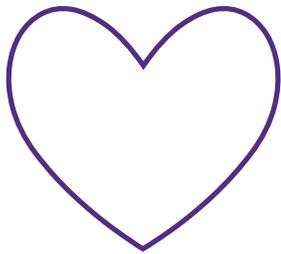


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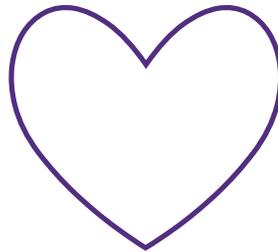
HOW DOES YOUR HEART FEEL?



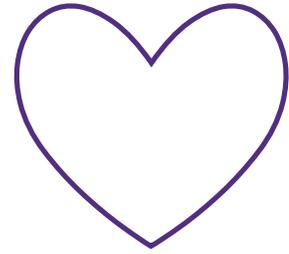
Have you ever felt upset? Did you feel like pushing your feelings away? It's important to talk about your feelings. It is okay to feel all kinds of feelings. Who is someone you talk to when you want to talk about your feelings? Draw a picture of how your heart feels when you experience different emotions.



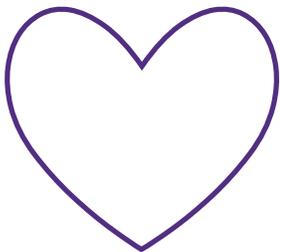
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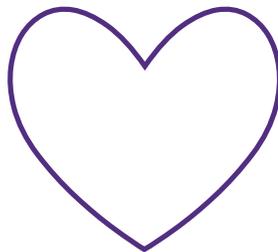
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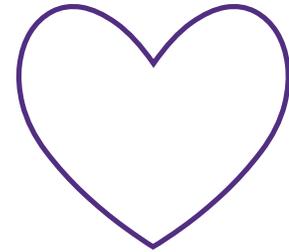
HAPPY



SHY



SAD



EXCITED



WHAT IS YOUR NAME? WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT YOUR NAME?

Use the space below to write your name. Be sure to add beautiful details and designs. Use your favorite colors to decorate your name. Hang your decorated name in your classroom or at home for everyone to see.

A large dashed rectangular box for writing and drawing.





BECOMING VANESSA

WHAT WOULD YOU WEAR ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL?

Draw a picture of your first day of school outfit. Think about why you want to wear this!

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for a child to draw their first day of school outfit.

WHAT IS SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT BEING YOU?

Draw a picture of what you like most about yourself. Finish the sentence below.

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for a child to draw something special about being themselves.

I AM SPECIAL BECAUSE

Praise for BECOMING VANESSA



“This classic school story offers a full range of emotions and situates this life-loving Black child in affirming family and school settings. The illustrations use variety in texture, color, and composition to effectively draw readers into the energy on the page and to hold interest to the beautiful last endpaper.”

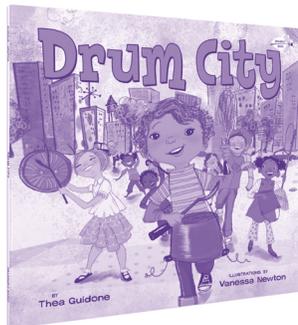
—*Kirkus Reviews*

“Bright, childlike mixed-media illustrations with a variety of patterns will appeal to youngsters, and the idea of a name having a meaning will be new to many children.”

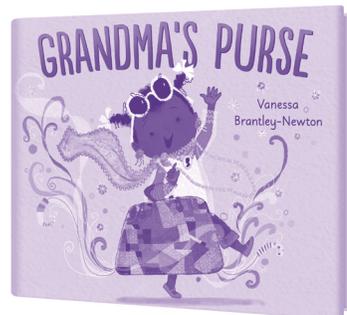
—*Booklist*



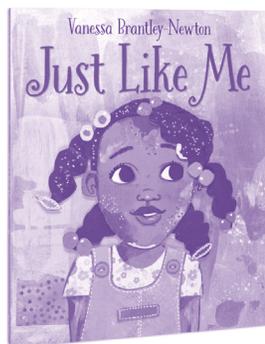
Learn more about Vanessa Brantley-Newton's books,
perfect for classroom activities and storytime!



A summer parade, a drummer parade,
a magical bucket-and-bowl serenade!



Spend the day with Mimi and her granddaughter in this
charming picture book about the magic found in a purse.



An ode to the girl with scrapes on her knees and
flowers in her hair, and every girl in between.



A heartwarming picture book biography of artist and
quiltmaker Harriet Powers, who was born into slavery and
whose pictorial quilts now hang in museums across the country.