



Gaston

By Kelly DiPucchio

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A bulldog and a poodle learn that family is about love, not appearances in this adorable doggy tale from *New York Times* bestselling author Kelly DiPucchio and illustrator Christian Robinson.

This is the story of four puppies: Fi-Fi, Foo-Foo, Ooh-La-La, and Gaston. Gaston works the hardest at his lessons on how to be a proper pooch. He sips—*never slobbers!* He yips—*never yaps!* And he walks with grace—*never races!* Gaston fits right in with his poodle sisters.

But a chance encounter with a bulldog family in the park—Rocky, Ricky, Bruno, and Antoinette—reveals there's been a mix-up, and so Gaston and Antoinette switch places. The new families look right...but they don't feel right. Can these puppies follow their noses—and their hearts—to find where they belong?

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Gaston By Kelly DiPucchio Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

PreS-Gr 2—Mrs. Poodle has new puppies, Fi-Fi, Foo-Foo, Ooh-La-La, and Gaston, but one of them is not like the others. Next to his petite siblings, Gaston is stocky, ungainly, and goofy looking. One day, they encounter a rough-and-tumble bulldog family, and it's immediately clear that there has been a mix-up. Gaston's short legs and broad ears look just like those of the bulldogs', while the bulldog family includes a tiny poodle named Antoinette. What starts out as a typical "Ugly Duckling" plot becomes a tender exploration of nurture vs. nature. The pups go home with their "real" families, but everyone questions the decision. The mothers are shown gazing forlornly at family portraits, and poor Gaston has no interest in anything "brutish or brawny or brown," preferring the "proper or precious or pink" home that Antoinette scorns. The next day they joyfully switch back: "There. That looked right. And it felt right too." But the story doesn't end there. Both families continue to meet and teach each other about being tough and tender, and when Gaston and Antoinette eventually fall in love and have puppies of their own, they teach them to be whatever they want to be. Robinson's expressive acrylic paintings are bright and bold, yet simple, making masterly use of negative space and contrast. This heartwarming story of family will be a welcome addition to homes and libraries of all types.—Anna Haase Krueger, Ramsey County Library, MN

From [Booklist](#)

Nature or nurture? Gaston, born into a family of fancy French poodles, looks and acts different. His coiffure, bark, and demeanor need work. His ears stick up, not down; he ruffs instead of yaps, slobbers instead of sips. Mrs. Poodle and her daughters Fi-Fi, Foo-Foo, and Ooh-La-La love him just the same. Strolling in the park, the family meets a mostly bulldog clan: Rocky, Ricky, Bruno—and Antoinette. She has learned their ways, as she races, yaps, and abhors pink. The mothers decide to switch the two pooches, since each, obviously, belongs with the other clan, but in the end, no one is happy. Puppies are reexchanged, and all works out for the best, especially when Gaston and Antoinette marry. Though readers will probably want to know how the mistake happened (and a mix-up would have been easy to show on the title page), they will mostly adore this joyous tale. The pictures, rendered in simple shapes of warm acrylic colors, are a delight, celebrating each dog's expressive personality. Kids who might feel the odd man out in their own families will take heart from this. Preschool-Grade 1. --Lolly Gepson

Review

* "Robinson's brilliantly designed acrylic paintings, done in an earth-tone palette, beautifully enhance DiPucchio's clever and witty text. His simple, graphic style, reminiscent of M. Sasek, is full of energy and sophistication, and the interplay among type, text and compositions leads to humorous results. Gaston will win hearts, as will his story's message of belonging and family. A perfect read aloud that will leave them begging for more—an absolute delight." (Kirkus Reviews, May 2014, *STARRED REVIEW*)

Gaston, an adorable pup, lives with his loving and proper poodle pack, until an outing reveals there's more to family than meets the eye.

Mrs. Poodle treasures her new puppies: Fi-Fi, Foo-Foo, Ooh-La-La and Gaston (say them aloud, and there will be giggles!). Four white pups, so attentive and sweet. But upon second viewing, it's clear not all are the same. Gaston—the one with the eager-to-please smile—is, well, different. His sisters are naturals at etiquette, while he is comical in his efforts. When a park visit establishes that puppies were mixed at birth, Gaston heads home with the bulldogs, while his counterpart, Antoinette, takes her place with the poodles. But it's clear the two truly belong with their adoptive families. Once returned to the families who nurtured

them, all feels *and* looks right as the dogs celebrate with joy. Now fast friends, the families meet and play; much later, when Gaston and Antoinette fall in love, the two allow their brood—who are a delightful mix of their parents—to be whatever they want to be. Robinson’s brilliantly designed acrylic paintings, done in an earth-tone palette, beautifully enhance DiPucchio’s clever and witty text. His simple, graphic style, reminiscent of M. Sasek, is full of energy and sophistication, and the interplay among type, text and compositions leads to humorous results. Gaston will win hearts, as will his story’s message of belonging and family.

A perfect read aloud that will leave them begging for more—an absolute delight. (*Picture book*. 2-7) (Kirkus Reviews, May 2014, STARRED)

* "DiPucchio's lively, occasionally direct-address text was made to be read aloud. . . . In Robinson's elegant illustrations, the dogs' basic white forms. . . have minimal yet wonderfully expressive facial details. . . . Excellent messages about family, differences, and friendship are implicit. But first, just share and enjoy." (Horn Book Magazine, May/June 2014, *STARRED REVIEW*)

Bumptious Gaston looms over his elegant poodle sisters Fi-Fi, Foo-Foo, and Ooh-La-La; they’re “no bigger than teacups,” but he’s “the size of a teapot.” Like a good twenty-first-century parent, Mrs. Poodle praises her well-mannered daughters (“Good.” Well done.” “Very nice”), while Gaston gets an encouraging “Nice try” for his sloppy slurping. Out in the park, they meet a family like theirs but in reverse: bulldogs Rocky, Ricky, and Bruno and their petite sister Antoinette. Were Gaston and Antoinette switched at birth? Should they trade families? It seems like the right thing to do until they try it, only to discover that what looks right doesn’t always feel right. So they trade back, to general contentment. DiPucchio’s lively, occasionally direct-address text was made to be read aloud (“And they were taught to walk with grace. Never race! Tip. Toe. Tippy-toe. WHOA!”). In Robinson’s elegant illustrations, the dogs’ basic white forms—on saturated acrylic painted backgrounds of cheery sky blues and grass greens—have minimal yet wonderfully expressive facial details; with the simplest of settings, all eyes will be on the action. Excellent messages about family, differences, and friendship are implicit. But first, just share and enjoy (THE HORN BOOK, May/June 2014, *STARRED REVIEW*)

Mrs. Poodle dotes on her four puppies, three “no bigger than teacups” and one—Gaston—“the size of a teapot.” Although he strives to be dainty, Gaston stands out from his sisters. He learns why when he meets Mrs. Bulldog, herself the mother of four: three roundish bulldogs and Antoinette, a poodle. Gaston and Antoinette “could see that there had been a mix-up,” so they trade places: “There. That *looked* right... it just didn’t *feel* right.” They longingly gaze back at their former families, and their adoptive mothers miss them. DiPucchio (*Crafty Chloe*) tells a poignant tale, despite implying that gendered behavior results from nurture: raised with feminine poodles, Gaston “did not like anything brutish or brawny” like his bulldog kin, and rough-and-tumble Antoinette “did not like anything proper or precious” like her fellow poodles. They grow up to marry and breed independent puppies. DiPucchio’s narrative gets a brilliant boost from Robinson’s (*Rain!*) savvy stencils and acrylics, which—like Maira Kalman’s designs—simultaneously evoke fingerpaintings and elegant gallery work. Gaston’s charm is a blend of sweetness and style. Ages 4–8. *Agent: Steven Malk, Writers House. (June)* (Publishers Weekly, April 14, 2014)

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others. Next to his petite siblings, Gaston is stocky, ungainly, and goofy looking. One day, they encounter a rough-and-tumble bulldog family, and it's immediately clear that there has been a mix-up. Gaston's short legs and broad ears look just like those of the bulldogs', while the bulldog family includes a tiny poodle named Antoinette. What starts out as a typical "Ugly Duckling" plot becomes a tender exploration of nurture vs. nature. The pups go home with their "real" families, but everyone questions the decision. The mothers are shown gazing forlornly at family portraits, and poor Gaston has no interest in anything "brutish or brawny or brown," preferring the "proper or precious or pink" home that Antoinette scorns. The next day they joyfully switch back: "There. That looked right. And it felt right too." But the story doesn't end there. Both families continue to meet and teach each other about being tough and tender, and when Gaston and Antoinette eventually fall in love and have puppies of their own, they teach them to be whatever they want to be. Robinson's expressive acrylic paintings are bright and bold, yet simple, making masterly use of negative space and contrast. This heartwarming story of family will be a welcome addition to homes and libraries of all types. (May 1, 2014 School Library Journal)

"Robinson's naïf paintings are the source of tremendous delight in this story, as Gaston and Antoinette try hard to fit in with both their own and the other's family. Best of all, and most reassuringly, DiPucchio leaves readers with the message that home is home, even when you don't look like your brothers and sisters." (Publishers Weekly BEST SUMMER BOOKS 2014 Review)

"A tender exploration of nurture vs. nature. . . . Robinson's expressive acrylic paintings are bright and bold, yet simple, making masterly use of negative space and contrast. This heartwarming story of family will be a welcome addition to homes and libraries of all types." (School Library Journal, May 2014)

"[A] joyous tale. The pictures, rendered in simple shapes of warm acrylic colors, are a delight, celebrating each dog's expressive personality. Kids who might feel the odd man out in their own families will take heart from this." (Booklist, June 2014)

"A case of mistaken identity in two families of the canine variety produces perplexity in "Gaston"...a wonderfully colorful picture book for the younger set. In Kelly DiPucchio's conversational telling, we meet a boisterous puppy whose manners and appearance are not quite so refined as the rest of his poodle family.... In Christian Robinson's stylish, expressive artwork, we see nature and nurture exerting their separate claims on Gaston and little Antoinette, with a cheery conclusion that pays respect to both." (The Wall Street Journal, May 2014)

Gaston

By Kelly DiPucchio and illustrated by Christian Robinson

(Atheneum; ISBN 9781442451025; June 2014; Summer Catalog)

Kelly DiPucchio (*Crafty Chloe*; *Zombie in Love*) and Christian Robinson (*Harlem's Little Blackbird*) team up for a heartwarming story about how the true sense of belonging comes from the inside, not the outside.

On the title page, Robinson shows a beautifully groomed white pampered poodle, pushed in a peach-toned baby carriage with a matching peach bow on her head; the pooch passes by a wide-eyed French bulldog peeking over the edge of a corrugated box. DiPucchio then introduces Mrs. Poodle and her new puppies: Fi-Fi, Foo-Foo, Ooh-La-La and Gaston. As the puppies grow, "three were no bigger than teacups." But the fourth (guess which one) "continued to grow. And grow." Poor Gaston! As Fi-Fi, Foo-Foo and Ooh-La-La politely sip from their bowls, quietly "yip" and walk on their "Tip. Toe. Tippy-toe[s]," Gaston spills his

water, barks loudly and races around the house. When Mrs. Poodle meets another canine family in the park, puppies Rocky, Ricky and Bruno resemble Gaston, while Antoinette looks more like Fi-Fi, Foo-Foo and Ooh-La-La. Might there have been "a terrible mistake?"

Readers will likely predict what will happen--and be thrilled by the surprise twist. To Mrs. Poodle's and Mrs. Bulldog's credit, they let their pups decide how to handle the situation. Robinson plants subtle (visual) red herrings, such as a mother duck and her identical four ducklings enjoying the park. This is the story of choosing the home where you feel that you belong, not necessarily where you look like you belong.

Discover: A story about finding out where you belong and making your own home.

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Jennifer M. Brown, children's editor, *Shelf Awareness* (Shelf Awareness June 20, 2014, *STARRED REVIEW)

* "Kelly DiPucchio (Crafty Chloe; *Zombie in Love*) and Christian Robinson (Harlem's Little Blackbird) team up for a heartwarming story about how the true sense of belonging comes from the inside, not the outside. . . . This is the story of choosing the home where you feel that you belong, not necessarily where you look like you belong." (Shelf Awareness, June 2014, *STARRED REVIEW*)

Gaston, a bulldog puppy, is the earnest hero of this lively story about acceptance. Mrs. Poodle lovingly raises all her pups to behave gracefully at all times. Mrs. Bulldog is raising a poodle puppy, Antoinette, among her rough-and-tumble bulldog boys. When the mothers realize that the two pups were switched at birth, they try to "fix" the mix-up. It is clear, however, that Gaston belongs with the poodles and Antoinette with the bulldogs. What first appears to be wrong is, in fact, very right. The narrator's invitation to listeners to carefully consider the puppies, plus the abundance of alliteration and the bold acrylic illustrations, make this a dynamic read-aloud. The dogs themselves are rendered in relief, with penned facial expressions that skillfully depict contentment and concern. There are complex ideas here—nature vs. nurture, cultural assimilation into one's family vs. individual identity, and rigid vs. flexible gender roles. (Library Media Connection Nov/Dec 2014)

"[A] charming exploration of the deceptiveness of appearances. Robinson's gorgeous acrylic illustrations evoke Parisian life.... These winking depictions of privileged canine life (for instance, Gaston in a smart neckerchief) convey both humor and haute homeyness, as does DiPucchio's playful prose, which immediately engages with its tone of familiarity. Useful for a lighthearted look at feelings of not quite fitting in (or even at adoption), this delightful readaloud will have audiences très enchantés, indeed." (The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, September 2014)

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""Mrs. Poodle admired her new puppies," begins "Gaston," written by Kelly DiPucchio. "Fi-Fi, Foo-Foo, Ooh-La-La and Gaston. Would you like to see them again?" Yes, I would, and so will readers, surely, because they are adorable. Christian Robinson's seductive illustrations are painted in acrylic with a striking palette, visible brush strokes and retro details. The mostly white dogs have expressive features using minimal

marks." (Sophie Blackall The New York Times Book Review, August 2014)

Mrs. Poodle is proud of all her pups, even Gaston, who, as the size of a teapot, doesn't quite fit in with his teacup siblings, Fi-Fi, Foo-Foo, and Ooh-La-La. One day at the park, the Poodle family encounters Mrs. Bulldog and her brood, the robust Rocky, Ricky, Bruno—and the fluffy, teacup-sized Antoinette. "It seems there's been a terrible mistake," the mamas concur, and, after some evaluative circling, Gaston and Antoinette decide to swap families. Yet Gaston doesn't take to typical bulldog romping, and Antoinette struggles in the refined atmosphere of the Poodles' pink-saturated home. While they return to the comfort of their original families, they learn a valuable lesson about being oneself (that they then pass on to their own offspring when they grow up and get married to each other) in this charming exploration of the deceptiveness of appearances. Robinson's gorgeous acrylic illustrations evoke Parisian life, from the simple refinement of apartments to the ornate wrought iron of park benches, in a palette reminiscent of French macarons, grounded by sophisticated greys. These winking depictions of privileged canine life (for instance, Gaston in a smart neckerchief) convey both humor and haute homeyness, as does DiPucchio's playful prose, which immediately engages with its tone of familiarity. Useful for a lighthearted look at feelings of not quite fitting in (or even at adoption), this delightful readaloud will have audiences *très enchantés*, indeed. (Bulletin September 2014)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Darius Cramer:

Do you have favorite book? For those who have, what is your favorite's book? Book is very important thing for us to understand everything in the world. Each book has different aim as well as goal; it means that publication has different type. Some people really feel enjoy to spend their time for you to read a book. They may be reading whatever they take because their hobby is reading a book. Think about the person who don't like studying a book? Sometime, person feel need book when they found difficult problem or even exercise. Well, probably you will need this Gaston.

Julio Yates:

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Lorraine Woodward:

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