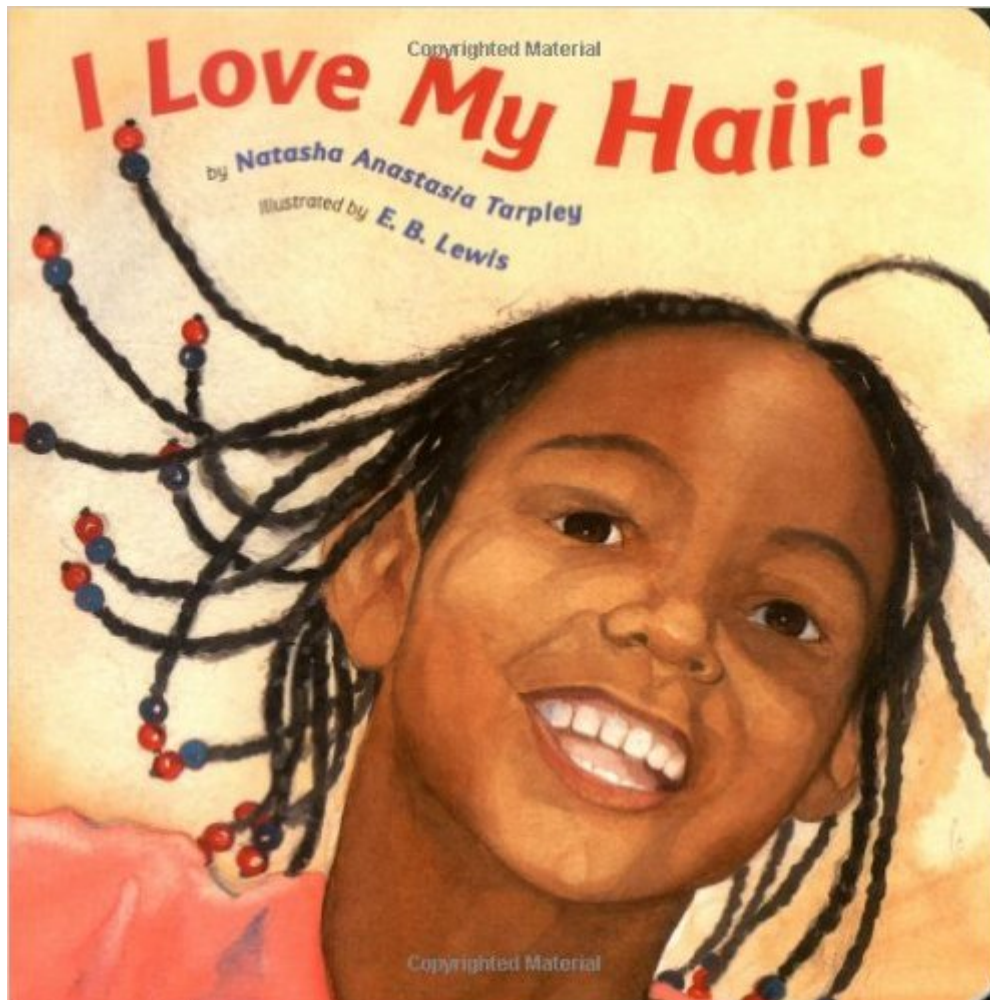


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# I Love My Hair!



## Synopsis

Now in a board book format--the bestseller that encourages young black children to not only feel good about their special hair but to also feel proud of their heritage. Full color. 11 spreads.

Baby/Preschool.

## Book Information

Board book: 22 pages

Publisher: LB Kids; Brdbk edition (November 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0316525588

ISBN-13: 978-0316525589

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.6 x 6.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (258 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #16,605 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #56 inÂ Books > Children's Books >

Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > African-American #113 inÂ Books > Children's

Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Parents #154 inÂ Books > Children's Books >

Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Self-Esteem & Self-Respect

Age Range: 2 - 4 years

Grade Level: Preschool and up

## Customer Reviews

Roethler, Jacque. "Reading in Color: Children's Book Illustrations and Identity Formation for Black Children in the United States." *African America Review* 32.1 (1998): 95-104. Tarpley, Natasha Anastasia. *I Love My Hair*. Illus. E. B. Lewis. Canada: Little, Brown and Company 1998. In *I Love My Hair*, the author reflects on a little girl's experience of her mother fixing her hair. Although Keyana's experience of getting her hair fixed is not always pleasant, the outcome is always pleasing. While Keyana's mother fixes her hair, she tells Keyana how beautiful her hair is and that she is lucky to have the kind of hair that she does. Once when Keyana's mother fixes her hair in an afro, the kids at school teased her, but then her teacher told her that she should be proud of her hair and that the afro style is a statement of pride in her African heritage. Through her mother's and her teacher's encouragement, Keyana learns to appreciate and love her hair as well as herself. I like this book for various reasons. First the main character is Afro-American. During my childhood, I was not exposed to books in which the main characters and illustrations reflected African American

culture and values. The beginning of *I Love My Hair* depicts a situation that is so familiar among African American communities: Keyana sits between her mother's legs, squeezing her eyes together as her mother combs her hair. I became nostalgic while I read that page. I believe that literature containing African Americans as central characters is vital for African American children. This view is also shared by Jacque Roethler who, in her article "Reading in Color: Children's Book Illustrations and Identity Formation for Black Children in the United States" declares that children are sensitive to illustrations. She says that one of the ways in which Afro-American children develop their schemata is through illustrations in literature. This statement alone conveys how important it is to have Afro-American characters in literature. Roethler goes even further to say that the absence of Afro-Americans from literature and illustrations is detrimental because it makes Afro-Americans invisible in society. It is important to have Afro-Americans as main characters in literature, but it is more essential that their presence be positive. Many people perceive African American physical features as ugly or in need of correcting. In *I Love My Hair*, Tarpley takes one of these features and refutes its long-lived misconception. In this book, Tarpley tells of the natural beauty of Afro-Americans' kinky hair texture, thus countering the myth that most Afro-American females in today's society were brought up to believe: that if you don't have "good hair" (not kinky and fuzzy), then you must straighten or relax your hair to make it beautiful. Tarpley describes the beauty of Afro-American hair when Keyana's mother tells her that because she has this kind of hair, she can fix it in any style she wishes. Her mother continues to tell her that never will she be restricted to one style: one day, she can plant rows of braids in it like rows of vegetables in a garden; the next, she can have two ponytails on the side like wings to fly away. Just as the comparisons of her hair to nature portray the naturalness and beauty of her hair because nature is beautiful, the multifaceted nature of Keyana's hair also symbolizes the versatility of the African American people. This is another reason that this book is so enjoyable. Finally, E.B. Lewis' illustrations communicate the essence of what Tarpley describes in words. The cover of this book shows Keyana smiling, with her hair in small braids with red and blue beads on the ends. In this picture, Lewis makes visible the stray strands on Keyana's braids. This picture is so beautiful to me because it looks real. The familiarity and realism of the scenes in this picture made me wonder about Lewis's race. Because of the way these illustrations capture the experience of "hair fixing," I concluded that Lewis is indeed Afro-American. . Roethler states that Afro-American illustrators, having first-hand experience, seem to know what fits naturally and are able to "touch chords" that illustrators from other cultures may not be able to caress (Roethler 98). For instance, the afro-picks, hair bows, beads, twistlers, and grease are objects that African Americans associated with hair fixing and these are all pictures that

appear in this book. In an illustration, Keyana's skipping down the sidewalk and in the background two girls are playing a hand game like "Miss Mary Mack". Hand games are a common tradition among African American communities. These are some things that illustrators from other cultures may not have captured. *I Love My Hair* captures the African American community in a positive way. This book promote the messages of accepting and loving one's self and accepting other peoples differences. Tarpley does a wonderful job of taking what is often seen as negative and showing where it is actually positive. More books of this caliber are needed.

As the cacaussian mother of an African-American daughter, I am grateful for this book. My daughter hates having her hair combed. She has always cried and begged me not to do it. So I bought this book. Now she looks at the pictures and reads about Keyana and her hair while I comb through her own. It not only gives her something to do, but she doesn't feel singled out any more! Thank you to the makers of this title.

Natasha Anastasia Tarpley's "*I Love My Hair!*" is a children's book that combines an easy-to-read text with colorful illustrations by E.B. Lewis. The text represents the first-person reflections of a little Black girl named Keyana. After describing the hair care ritual she goes through with her mother, Keyana reflects on the different styles in which she can wear her hair: cornrows, an Afro, a bun, etc. The appealing illustrations blend fantasy and reality as Keyana thinks about each hairstyle. For example, her two ponytails become wings that allow her to fly. The text is also fun. Sample line: "I love my hair because it is thick as a forest, soft as cotton candy. . ." This is an especially empowering book for Black girls, but the imaginative elements in the book also make it good for a broader audience.

"*I Love My Hair*" by N.A Tarpley is a lovely book for children about self-acceptance. The story effectivly portrays a positive side of African American culture that is often ridiculed - Black hair. Through internalized racisim and negative media images the ugly seeds of self-hatred and shame often take root in many young African American children. These negative images about their Afrocentricity often lasts far into adulthood. Tarpley did a wonderful job reversing such negative images. Kudos to E.B. Lewis! His creative artistic talents tell a story about African American idenity, beauty and acceptance. His illustrations stood alone in successully describing the story just as effectivly as the author's words. My daughter was elated when I presented this book to her. Imediately upon viewing the illustration of the little brown skinned girl with braided hair on the cover

of the book, she looked up at me with joy in her eyes and a smile on her face and said, "Oh, Mommy she looks just like me!"

The narrator of this tale is a bright, beautiful little girl who is proud of her naturally thick curly Black hair. She, like most folks find combout sessions quite painful, but her very wise mother tells her why she is lucky to have such beautiful, thick, naturally curly hair. Keyana, the child narrator describes the care her hair requires; her mother rubs coconut oil into her scalp to help the comb glide through it. Her mother applies rich poetic descriptions to Keyana's hair; she tells Keyana every time she corn rows it, it is like planting a beautiful garden; when she combs it out into a big, beautiful Afro, it is a globe as round as the world that contains everybody; she tells Keyana she can spin it like silk the way their ancestors spun silk on a loom. Each description is accompanied by a lovely picture showing the mother's vision; for example, when she applies the silk comparison, Keyana is drawn with her beautiful hair being spun on a loom. Keyana herself celebrates her natural beauty, hair and all and takes pride in the myriad of hairstyles her thick, curly hair will allow her to try. I like the way she said that the hair styling sessions were a time of mother-daughter bonding and the illustrations are first rate. This is a book all parents and educators will want to use to promote self pride among all children, particularly children who are black. This book celebrates the beauty of being human. It is for everybody. I love this book!

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