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Different Like Coco



Synopsis

The rags-to-riches story of Coco Chanel plays out in a wonderful picture-book biography as full of style and spirit as its heroine. Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel was always different. And she vowed to prove that being different was an advantage! Poor, skinny, and orphaned, Coco stubbornly believed that she was as good as the wealthier girls of Paris. Tapping into her creativity and her sewing skills, she began making clothes that suited her (and her pocketbook) — and soon a new generation of independent working women craved her sleek, comfortable, and practical designs. Now an icon of fashion and culture, Coco Chanel continues to inspire young readers, showing just how far a person can come with spunk, determination, and flair.

Book Information

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Age Range: 5 - 9 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 4

Customer Reviews

Grade 2 — A celebration of the life of a major fashion designer and independent spirit. Chanel was born poor, was scorned, and ultimately succeeded because of her own talents. "Coco couldn't afford to dress like the corseted ladies of high society and she was never going to be shapely. There was no point in trying to be like them. Instead, she tried to be different." Like Kathryn Lasky's *Vision of Beauty* (Candlewick, 2000), this imaginative tale should be shared with every child who thinks Jane O'Connor's *Fancy Nancy* (HarperCollins, 2005) is the epitome of high fashion. The

story is accompanied, appropriately, by elegant pen-and-ink and watercolor cartoons that capture her struggles as a young woman, as well as her innate sense of style. Viva, Coco. — Kathleen Whalin, York Public Library, ME Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

As it turns out, Coco Chanel is a terrific subject for a picture-book biography. A poor, skinny orphan, she brightened her colorless convent childhood by sewing dresses for her dolls. She also dreamed big dreams. Once she was on her own, she turned her tailoring talent into a career as a dress designer. Coco, who was sticklike rather than shapely, designed dresses for figures like hers. Soon, her clothes were being snapped up, and thanks to her enigmatic personality and sense of style, she became a celebrity. Matthews' writing style is right on the mark, as breezy and appealing as Coco herself. Wisely, the author frontloads the book with stories of Coco's disadvantaged youth, which have immediate pull for readers. It's too bad that the pictures don't measure up to the writing. Although often amusing, and occasionally moving, they never capture Coco's elegance. Moreover, all the characters have snoutlike noses that are seriously distracting. Despite that, this rags-to-much-nicer-rags story is well worth reading. Ilene Cooper Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

I love the illustration but the story is definitely not for a kid...or even a teenager. It says in several pages that Coco was thin and she would make clothes for slender women. Okay, that might be true in the fashion world but do we want to stick these ideas in a child's mind to be thin in order to look good or fit into fancy clothes? There are better books out there for children. I'll just keep this one for myself since I like Chanel and I'll just give it to my daughter when she's old enough to understand that body image is not important. Slender or voluptuous does not define anyone. Also, it gives an image of Chanel asking her lover for money so she can open her boutique - it happened, I saw the movie, but come on! It's a children's book!

Wow! Quite a story.

As a long time Chanel fan, I got this book for my 9 year old niece and she loved it! Even though she is only 9, she enjoyed the story line of a little orphan girl who ended up being rich and famous. At first I thought the book would be too difficult for her to follow, but it really wasn't. It told Coco's life story very appropriately for girls her age. The illustrations on this book are really cute! I know that

one day my niece will one day love everything Chanel just like the women in her family!

Coco Chanel started out with nothing and became a household name with a lasting legacy. Her name and style is known throughout the world, and admired. I didn't realize the extent to which she influenced what women could wear -- what we DO wear. The book covers her personal life, and also the evolution and impact of her creations.

I love this book!! The cover is this fantastic soft paper over the hard cover and inside is told the life story of Coco Chanel in a colorful and liberating way. I read it and then read it again and made my mother read it. Enjoy the read.

My 9 year old daughter loved this book! The book is also wonderfully illustrated & the author did a great job at including Coco's lifetime achievements.

Very cute book. As a young teacher, I find the over all message of a story to be of the utmost importance. This book seems to be more written by a fashionista with a great idea than a dedicated children's author. However, I still enjoy it and will read it to my daughter, perhaps more for myself than her?

My girlfriend loved this book as part of a Christmas present. She is a big fan of Coco!

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