

LITTLE BEE

THE STORYTIME EXTRAVAGANZA



WRITTEN BY
DANNY NEVILLE

ILLUSTRATED BY
COLLEEN MCKEOWN



Tiam loves butterflies and sparkly nail polish—but why does another kid give him such a hard time about it?

For the first time ever, Bee's friend Tiam is unsure of himself. Bee and Sarah enlist Bee's Uncle Andy, aka the drag queen Peppa Mint, to help Tiam express his true self. But not everyone is happy about a drag queen coming to school . . .

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DANNY NEVILLE



&



COLLEEN MCKEOWN



**annick
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toronto • berkeley

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For Matthew.

—D.N.





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King of the Glitter Glue

“BUTTERFLY POOP!?” TIAM WHISPER-SHOUTS. “DID YOU know butterflies are named after their poop!?”

“Really? No way!” Sarah says, grabbing the tablet to check it out for herself. “It’s true! It says people thought their poop looked like butter, so they called them butterflies!”

“So cool, right, Bee?” Tiam says, eyes wide, a huge smile on his face as usual.

“Um . . .” I’d probably choose the word *disgusting*, but . . . “Yeah, so cool, Tiam.”

We’d already done a ton of research for our habitats project, so Ms. Tam brought the class to the library to build our dioramas. Our school librarian, Mr. Brookes, has a huge cabinet filled with all kinds of recycled stuff we can use, like empty egg cartons, cereal boxes, and yogurt containers.

Tiam, Sarah, and I decided to do our project on the Painted Lady butterfly, and we even have a real butterfly kit, thanks to my uncle Andy. He thought it would be cool to actually see them in real life, and he was definitely right! It came with five caterpillars in a plastic cup, food, instructions, and a big, mesh hatching cage. We take turns looking after them, so



Tiam's mom is going to drop them off at Sarah's house tonight after school.

"And how is my butterfly group doing today?" asks Mr. Brookes as he walks over to check on us. "Any updates on those little caterpillars?"

"Nothing yet, Mr. B. But you should have seen how Camilla was all curled up next to Carlos this morning," says Tiam. "They were so cute!" Tiam talks about our caterpillars like most people talk about puppies. Apparently, he can tell them apart, even though I think they look like identical brown worms with little bits of hair sticking out.

"Camilla and Carlos?" asks Mr. Brookes. "Do they all have names that start with C?"

"Of course, they do," Tiam says, looking

slightly offended. “But when they turn into butterflies, we’re going to have a renaming ceremony! Don’t worry, Mr. B., I’ve got it all planned out.”

“I’m sure you do, Tiam. I’m sure you do,” Mr. Brookes says, smiling and shaking his head. “Oh, I nearly forgot. In our latest book order, we got a new picture book about a butterfly who lost her spots. Maybe I’ll read it to you next time you come for library class?”

Tiam doesn’t say anything but by the flapping of his hands and head-nodding, I’d say he’s in.

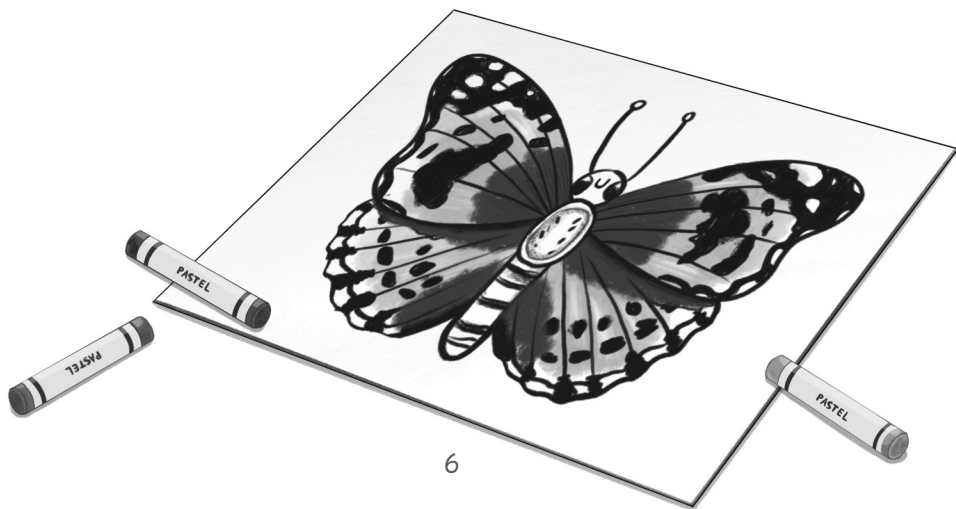
“Did you hear that?” he squeals as the librarian wanders off to check on another group. “Mr. Brookes has a new butterfly book!” I think Tiam is literally vibrating. “Mr. Brookes

does the *B-E-S-T* best read alouds.” It’s true. He uses different voices for every character and always waits just the right amount of time before turning a page.

Before we unpack our stuff, Tiam pulls out a new Painted Lady drawing to show us. He loves any excuse to use all his fancy art supplies.

“Tiam, it looks amazing!” Sarah says.

On one side of the paper, he drew the butterfly with its wings open. On the other side, its wings were folded together. The open wings are



mostly orange with lots of brown patches and some smaller white spots. The undersides of the wings are light-brown with a few white sections and a couple of blue and purple dots. He even used his special pastel set to color in the wings, which makes them look even more magical.

The library is buzzing with excited kids grabbing and organizing supplies. Chloe and Hanako are working on a robin's nest made out of grass and twigs they collected on the playground. Santiago and Dylan are trying to make tadpoles out of play dough, but so far, they just have a few brownish-green blobs. Then there's the bunny group. Penny and Alysha are using about a million cotton balls to make a bunch of baby rabbits.

"Hey, Tiam," Penny says, walking over to

our group. “Do you have any pink glitter glue I could borrow? It’s the finishing touch we need for our cute little bunny noses.”

Tiam is the king of glitter glue, so I’m not surprised when he pulls out exactly what she’s looking for. She gives a little squeal of delight before bouncing back to her fluff balls.

“Penny is so . . . so . . .” Sarah is searching for the right word.

“Nice?” I say, and she nods her head. I’m still getting used to this new version of Penny, but I’m not complaining. Ever since our Mother’s Day Beehive Party when her mom didn’t show up, she’s been a lot nicer to us.

“Tiam, I’m so impressed with your drawing,” says Ms. Tam as she walks over to inspect our work. Tiam smiles at her and blushes a bit

before mumbling a quick thank you. “Maybe you three should work in the hallway so you have some extra space to spread out your diorama materials.”

“That would be great! Thanks, Ms. Tam!” says Sarah, and we drag our stuff out the door. I start cutting up a shoebox while Tiam and Sarah begin unpacking our supplies. As soon as Sarah pulls out the pastels, she grabs a purple one and smears it across Tiam’s cheek.

“Aaah! Sar-rah!” he squeals—then turns his other cheek for more.

“Shh!” she says between giggles. “Don’t let the teachers hear you!”

No one comes out to check on us, so Sarah adds a few more stripes, dots, and colors, trying to copy Tiam’s butterfly drawing.

“What do you think, Bee?” Tiam asks, fluttering his eyelids. “Do I look like a real butterfly?”

“Actually, Tiam, you look more like Uncle Andy right now . . . if he was putting his makeup on in the dark”—I say with a giggle—“during an earthquake!” He puts a hand over his mouth, smearing some color across his face as he tries to hold in a laugh. At our last sleepover, the three of us watched about a thousand videos of Uncle Andy, aka Peppa Mint the drag queen, doing makeup lessons online. Tiam tried copying her eyebrow technique with a glue stick and a marker, but that didn’t end well.

“Wait! I have an idea,” Tiam says, then starts digging through his backpack.

That’s when I hear laughter from down the

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