



Dana, Kimberly

PRETTY DOLLS

Tate (20 pp.)

\$8.99 Paperback

November 15, 2011

ISBN: 978-1613464168

In Dana's debut picture book, one haughty doll learns that being pretty isn't everything.

Nothing makes little Tasha happier than her four dolls: Emily-Nicole, Chloë-Anne, Lilly-Kate and Gracie. Emily-Nicole is the most beautiful doll of all; with snowy skin, lustrous red locks, turquoise eyes and long eyelashes, she stands tall and proud on Tasha's bookshelf. But it's Gracie, Tasha's other favorite doll, that snuggles up with Tasha when the lights go out at bedtime. Gracie isn't a beautiful doll like Emily-Nicole; she has spiky hair, purple eyes and a missing arm thanks to Tasha's hungry dog. While Gracie lies at Tasha's side every night, Emily-Nicole and the other bookshelf-dwelling dolls taunt her with a song: "Pretty eyes and pretty hair. We're the best dolls anywhere. If you were a pretty doll, you'd be up here standing tall." Their cruel words hurt

Gracie's feelings—if only Tasha knew that her prettiest dolls weren't so pretty on the inside. It's only when Emily-Nicole encounters danger one afternoon that she learns an important lesson about what makes someone truly beautiful (and not just pretty). Dana's story is familiar, but welcome, commentary on why "mean girls" never really win. Parents dealing with childhood bullying might find the dolls' conflict resolution a bit sugarcoated—if only all bullies could be so easily redirected—but it's a sweet, simple message that is sure to resonate with little girls everywhere—little girls who might think twice before tossing aside their own "ugly" dolls. Glossy pages and Kurt Jones' candy-colored illustrations add to the book's girlish aesthetic, and it will find good company on the shelf next to perennial classics like *The Ugly Duckling*.

A positive read that encourages children to look beyond surface appearances when choosing their friends.