



## Henry Holton Takes the Ice

*Sandra Bradley*

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A “Billy Elliott on ice” story about following your heart no matter where it takes you. Illustrated by Pura Belpré Illustration Honor Award winner Sara Palacios.

### **Henry Holton Takes the Ice Details**

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Author : Sandra Bradley

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## **From Reader Review Henry Holton Takes the Ice for online ebook**

### **Kristen says**

I'm not sure how I feel about this book.

At first I didn't particularly like it because I thought, here we go again with all this social commentary about how everything should be gender neutral (think about the backlash about Target having signs that said "girl toys" for Barbie aisle and such). I firmly believe that there is difference. Yes, girls can play sports and lift weights just like boys, and boys can cook dinner and watch the kids, like girls. There is an overlap that I do believe should be there. But if we start blending **everything** then there will be no difference between boys and girls in the future...

However, it wasn't that bad. I also believe that all kids are good at different things. So for Henry, he was good at ice dancing, rather than Hockey. His family was staunchly against it and fought him on it for a long time. It was finally his grandma who helped him. If she had been a figure skater, I'm not sure why the family was so against it, except that ice dancing is a "Girl" thing.

This makes me think about when my nephew was younger and he wasn't showing that he really liked sports - he wasn't as coordinated and just overall wasn't very interested. But when he was like 6 months old, his absolute favorite toy was his guitar. His parents kept trying to push him in sports (and still does, though he seems to enjoy them more now), but we told them they should give him some music lessons. But that is not a "cool" thing for kids to be in to, so he still hasn't been introduced to the music classes. I believe that you should help your child in what they are good at, rather than try to push them inside a box you want for them.

It had a happy, predictable ending of course showing that you should fight for what you want and that boys can be just as good at things that are considered "boy" things. It also has a lesson for parents that you can break your child's spirit if you push back on them too much. If you try to push them in to something that they just don't enjoy. You need to keep an open mind about their desires and their skills. Your child will be much happier if you listen to them.

So overall I think that I give this book a solid 3 stars. I wasn't sure at the beginning, but it ended up having a good message for both kids and adults.

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### **Romelle says**

Henry's dad says they're a family that plays HOCKEY. His sister says ice skating is for girls. His mother says skating is good for him. But Henry WANTS to ice DANCE! How many times have we wanted to do something only to be told we can't or we shouldn't. Henry Holten Takes the Ice is a nice story on being true to yourself and pursuing your passion, despite what others say. I love that even with the obstacles Henry faced, he stood his ground. I could see this book being used to open up discussion for topics such as gender identity/equality, or expressing individuality.

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### **Melissa says**

This is really such a sweet and beautiful book. I loved the pictures. You don't see many picture books illustrated with pencil crayons these days, and I loved the art style. It was really sweet how everyone in Henry's family had red hair. The drawing of his room was really colourful and beautiful.

I really loved the story, too. It's amazing how figure skating and hockey skating are both extremely gendered. Loved Grandma's role in the book.

Thank you so much Sandra Bradley and Penguin for this beautiful book :) I am going to pass it along to my nephew.

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### **Laura says**

I'm torn -- I agree that kids need books that show perseverance and that sometimes we have to fight hard to overcome adversity. But holy cow, Henry Holton faced roadblocks, negative attitudes, put downs, and a complete dismissal of his preferences before he was allowed to try ice dancing. Realistic perhaps but still a harsh and unforgiving portrayal of what happens when boys like something generally considered 'girly.'

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### **Ann Williams says**

Another great "don't be afraid to be yourself," book and message. Hockey fans will love and appreciate Henry's story, as well as moms and dads.

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### **The Library Lady says**

Yes, it's predictable, but that doesn't keep it from being charming. And there are fewer books about boys wanting to do "girl" things than the other way around. I don't think that Palacios's art style is what I'd have picked for this book, but the illustrations are bold and energetic.

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### **Ben Truong says**

*Henry Holton Takes the Ice* is a children's picture book written by Sandra Bradley and illustrated by Sara Palacios. It is a quaint story about Henry Holton, a budding figure skater, in a family of hockey fanatics.

Bradley's text is rather simplistic and straightforward. It is a story about a hockey mad family trying to cope with a budding figure skater in their ranks. Palacios' illustrations are colorful and accentuate the text extremely rather well – not to mention they are all redheads – I have a weakness for them.

The premise of the book is rather straightforward. Henry Holton is a budding figure skater in a family of hockey players – his parents, older sister, grandfather, uncle, and twenty-three of his cousins. Raised on

hockey, Henry Holton loves to skate, but when a hockey stick was placed in his hands – it felt wrong. It was not until he saw a figure skating event that he knew what he was destined to be – a figure skater. It took a while, but his family came to terms with this.

All in all, *Henry Holton Takes the Ice* is a rather good book about being true to oneself.

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### **Steph says**

A boy whose family LOVES hockey decides he might want to figure skate instead... a very clear you-can-be-anything-you-want-to message included.

3.5 stars

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### **Marg says**

Great choice for our 2nd Annual L&A's Big Family Read!

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### **Edward Sullivan says**

Predictable but appealing and encouraging.

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### **AbsentLibrarian says**

Finally, a book about ice skating that is not all hockey or all pink! Henry Holton takes the Ice manages to capture the Hockey-Maddness that Canadians see every year. A tale about being different and being yourself and finding that you can still fit in when those things are true. I especially enjoyed that it was not just the mom or grandma that became accepting of Henry's passion for ice skating, but that it was his Dad who took steps to make his dream come true. It's nice to see a book that can explore non-conforming gender behaviour without focusing on the gender too much. There are many books that tackle this, yet focus more intently on the boy vs. girl aspect of the story. Bradley, thankfully, focuses more on the idea of finding your passion and accepting and supporting others when they have different interests than we do. Perhaps, as a society, we are starting to focus on the individual rather than the gender?

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### **Julia says**

Henry Holton, the black sheep of his redhead hockey-loving family, just doesn't fit in, until he goes to see ice dancing at the rink and realizes he wants to dance on the ice instead. It takes the support of his ex-figure-skating grandma to convince his family that this is his passion, but they eventually come around. I was glad to see that his hockey-loving father didn't object to ice dancing because it was "for girls" (his tomboy sister is the one who brings that up, despite the fact that she and other girls play hockey passionately with no gender

issues), but instead just doesn't seem to understand why hockey isn't good enough for Henry. And when he sees how much Henry loves ice dancing, his supportive father is the one who buys him top of the line skates and gets him a coach. The illustrations are adorable and the story is heartwarming and modern, and perfect for families who are looking for not-so-football-and-monster-trucks "boy books."

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### **Bethe says**

Although the story is predictable, albeit done in a different setting, Henry's hockey mad family is fun and loving. Winter Olympics and sports fans in general will like this book.

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### **Jason says**

Once upon a time there was a boy/girl/elephant who was pressured to do things the way everyone else in his/her school/family/church/friend group did them but then realized that they had to do things THEIR OWN WAY and after some minor misunderstandings, they got the FULL SUPPORT of their school/family/church/friend group. THE END.

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### **Canadian Reader says**

Boys continue to have a rough time if they eschew rough and tumble sports, so when young Henry Holton rejects his family's hockey madness for the magic of ice dancing, it takes a while for his family to catch up with him. His grandmother, a former figure skater who rejected figure skating for hockey understands and gives Henry her old skates. When Henry's dad sees the boy's joy on ice, he comes to his senses, getting a good pair of skates for his son as well as a coach. As grandma says, Henry is a beauty, skating against the stereotypes which hold boys back far more than girls.

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