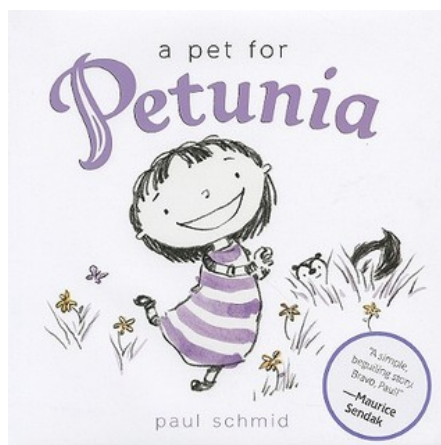




A Pet for Petunia

Paul Schmid

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Meet Petunia.

More than anything, Petunia wants a pet.

I'll feed my pet every day, she promises her parents. I'll take her for walks. I'll read stories to her and draw her pictures.

Petunia knows she can take care of a pet, but what happens when the pet she most desires is a skunk?

A Pet for Petunia Details

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From Reader Review A Pet for Petunia for online ebook

Brittany says

Petunia wants a skunk for a pet. Her parents say no because they are smelly. She calls them lunkheads (*don't read this to a toddler unless you want to be called this*) and runs away to the forest. She meets a skunk in the forest, he sprays a little, she runs home, then decides that she still loves skunks. Not the best story, illustrations (especially of the little skunk) are pretty adorable.

nicole says

At 10:30 am on Monday, May 9th, I conquered one of my greatest fears --- story time at the bookstore.

Of the three books I read (this, I Must Have Bobo, and The Pigeon Wants a Puppy), the crowd, by which I mean approximately 8 toddlers and 6 adults, liked Petunia best by far. I thought the book was adorable and funny to begin with, but now that I get to associate it with MY OWN COURAGEOUSNESS, I like it all the more!

Maria Bulfamante says

This was a very amusing book! I loved every part of it!

Lisa Vegan says

Charming! This is a really fun book to read aloud. It's also amusing, hilarious in spots.

The purple and black and white illustrations are very appealing, and I love how stripes make many appearances.

Petunia sure is persistent. Some will think she's annoying but for the most part I thought she was cute, and I think kids will certainly identify with her yearnings. I would definitely have understood Petunia, what with growing up in an apartment that didn't allow dogs or cats and always wanting a dog, or a cat.

I like that without hitting the reader/listener over the head with the message, it comes across clearly that wild animals don't make the best pets.

Ages 3 to all the way up, but I'd think it would be especially fun for 4-7 year olds. This book is great for reading aloud and also for young independent readers.

5 stars from my younger self.

Tara Morrow says

This book is too cute.

Your daughter wants a pet. She begs and begs for a pet. Promises she'll feed it. Promises she'll walk it. And so you agree to get her a pet. But she leaves out just one tiny detail.. she wants a skunk.

This book would be great at story time. It does a great job at teaching children that if you want something bad enough, you'll more than likely get it.

Karen Arendt says

The perfect story for any child who has always wanted a pet but was told no. Petunia wants a pet skunk. She promises to take good care of it, but her parents still say no. After she has a meltdown on a page where she screams and says her parents don't love her, she decides to run away. She runs into a real skunk and finds out how stinky they really are. Still, she giggles and wants that skunk! Until, she decides another animal would be the perfect pet. (love the picture of the porcupine!)

The illustrations are sparse with simple colors of lavender and black using plenty of white space. The text gets large when Petunia yells- perfect for showing her anger.

Theresa says

A Pet for Petunia

by Paul Schmid

A very cute book about wanting something and not seeing the truth because of your desire. This is a lesson for kids wrapped in a familiar connective power. The moral of the story you don't always get what you want, and sometimes when you get it there is something else you want even more dangerous. Petunia wants a pet, she will accept nothing less than a skunk, but she would not believe that they have a single flaw. She wants what she wants, and when she gets it she finds value in the the flaws.

else fine says

Yes, it's adorable. And yes, SKUNKS! But I'm going to go a step farther and say that this book has the kind of instantly iconic art that kids born today will be tattooing on themselves in 18 years. My prediction: new classic.

Storytime Chrissy says

An absolutely adorable tale. Petunia wants a pet skunk more than anything, but her parents say NO - it's too stinky!

This was a great storytime read. Kids immediately knew that a skunk was stinky, so it was easy to ask them why Petunia's parents would say no to a skunk. There was plenty of nose pinching when we read about the big, humongous STINK. I had intended to actually bring a clothespin and pinch my own nose at the end but alas, forgot that part. I think it would have been a hilarious addition.

The story lent itself extremely well to a dramatic reading aloud, especially as Petunia is outraged over being denied the pet skunk. The more exaggerated, the better.

Jo Oehrlein says

Petunia has horrible taste in pets. Petunia is obsessing over the idea of a pet skunk. Her parents tell her know and she has a page long rant. She runs away to the forest and meets a real skunk and discovers that they really do smell horribly bad.

She decides maybe a stuffed skunk is okay until she sees a porcupine....

The art is black and white line art except for the purple stripes on Petunia's dress.

Betsy says

When I was in ninth grade or so I learned that a fellow classmate owned a pet skunk. I joke not. Apparently these things do happen. While not strictly domesticated, it is possible to remove the scent glands from the animal, rendering it relatively harmless (teeth and claws aside). This was a good thing since if you grow up in Michigan you're pretty much guaranteed to know the stink of the skunk (hopefully not firsthand). I assume that there must be kids in the world who don't know this particular olfactory pleasure. And skunks, when viewed from a safe distance in a photo or a picture, are rather adorable looking. *A Pet for Petunia* is sort of made for both those kids who may be a bit unaware of the downside of skunk ownership and those others who are already in on the joke. Kids ask for all kinds of crazy pets. Few requests, however, are quite as uniquely skewed as those that involve animals that can turn you on to the wonders of tomato soup baths. In a field of I-want-a-pet-book *A Pet for Petunia* stands alone.

To know Petunia is to know her obsessions. And one obsession that Petunia is currently harboring is an overwhelming, almost incalculable desire to own a very particular animal as a pet: a skunk. Boy, she'd just do anything for a skunk. And when her parents tell her in no uncertain terms that this plan will not be happening their answer seems insufficient to her. Skunks stink? Clearly there's a bit of parental prejudice at work here. After storming out of her house ("naturally Petunia must leave home") as luck would have it she encounters her very own, one-of-a-kind, skunk! A real one! Yet as the age old adage says, be careful what you wish for. Sometimes you might just get it.

The book is written entirely in the present tense, which I found interesting. At first I wasn't quite certain why this was. Then I got to the moment when Petunia hears her parents say that skunks stink and launches into an offensive. The book goes from one sentence per page to about twenty-two sentences on a single page. I realized that sentences like "I bet Katie's parents would get HER a skunk!" what the story sounded like. "*A Pet for Petunia*" is similar in many ways to the old Mo Willems tale *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus*. Or, even more on the nose, *The Pigeon Wants a Puppy*. This means that the book may be perfect for readalouds

to large groups of kids. I haven't tested it out myself but I bet that a creative reader could have a lot of fun not only with Petunia's somewhat familiar pleas, but also the book's cute twist at the end.

Because Mr. Schmid is both the author and the illustrator, he's allowed to have complete creative control over what the text of his picture book says as well as what it shows. So when I first started to read the book and hear Petunia's pleas, I suffered a very brief moment of confusion. Here you have Petunia, desperately pleading with her parents for a pet skunk while all the time there appears to BE a small purple collared mammal in her possession with a distinctly skunk-like appearance. As you go through the book you come to the realization that this is just a stuffed skunk. It doesn't seem to have much initial influence over the plot until you get to the end of the book. Then the stuffed pal takes on a great deal of importance. That's the kind of thing that Schmid the author would have had to have explained to Schmid the illustrator if he'd ended up being two people. As it stands, the stuffed "pet" isn't even really mentioned in the text directly. It's useful since it gives Petunia someone to discuss things with aside from her parents, but you could certainly excise it from the narrative if you were to rewrite the book.

It's also fascinating to think that in this book, Schmid has turned the child reader into the ultimate authority: the parent. Maybe kids reading this book know that skunks stink and maybe they don't, but the way Schmid has drawn the images he has Petunia plead her little purple heart out to you, the viewer. She's looking right at you. She's making her pro-pet pitch to you. And when the parents respond, you don't see them at all. All that happens is that the page goes entirely purple with a single sentence on it. " `They stink', say her parents." It's almost as if the reader is telling Petunia this. Kids love being placed in a position of authority and they especially like to deny characters in the same way that they themselves have been denied. Schmid taps into that strange bit of schadenfreude. All power to him.

The use of color is almost entirely inspired (with the exception of one little picture). For the most part you're dealing with the thickly penciled Petunia in black with her watercolored purple stripes against a pure white background. A little shot of yellow watercolor will highlight some minor detail; A baseball or a flower in a vase. Then comes the moment when the parents inform Petunia in no uncertain terms that skunks stink. All at once her background goes a yellow/brown color so as to best depict her horror at her parents' prejudices. All this works very well in the context of the book. Then you get to an odd selection when Petunia has finally sniffed a skunk at a relatively close range and has run hell-for-leather back to the safety of her bedroom. Once in the bedroom she discusses the stinkiness of the skunk with her stuffed one, but for some reason Schmid has colored the bedspread yellow in this section. Not the whole bedspread, mind you, but a little section near the little skunk. Coming so close on the heels of the stink section, it's hard to look at these pictures as anything but a moment when the stuffed skunk, by some miraculous means, has peed on the bedspread. Mind you, I have a filthy mind so it's possible that no one else would see this, but if I know kids there may be a bit of confusion with this section.

Of course skunks don't constantly stink. We can just assume that the skunk in this tale recently got somebody and maybe that accounts for why it has remained stinky. Put that theory into practice and you have a fun little book about a failed child manipulation. You might want to consider pairing it with other I-want-a-pet picture books out there. Books like *Wanted: The Perfect Pet* and maybe a chapter book like *A Room with a Zoo* (which somehow manages to include every conceivable pet EXCEPT for skunks). Yet by itself, *A Pet for Petunia* stands on its own. Fun book. Fun art. A good potential storytime text. And perfect for the kid that's obsessed with skunks (they exist) nothing else will do. Who knew skunks could be so charming?

For ages 4-8.

Anna says

Title: A Pet for Petunia by Paul Schmid

Summary: Petunia begs her parents for a pet. However, she doesn't want a dog or a cat, she wants a skunk!

Age: 4-6 years

Rating: Maybe

Pros:

I love the fact that the main character has a unique name.

Skunks are not often celebrated in literature. I think it's great that Petunia loves skunks, that detail is delightful and humorous.

The illustrations are minimal but lovely; Schmid does a wonderful job of conveying Petunia's energy and lively personality.

Cons:

There is a part in the book where Petunia reprimands her parents for saying skunks stink. This text is supposed to be humorous but at times Petunia's tirade borders on disrespectful and feels uncomfortable to read; its length also pulls readers out of the story and it's difficult to reconnect with the main character afterwards.

Usage:

This title could be used for storytime (but librarians and educators will need to reconcile themselves with the afore mentioned passage prior to sharing).

Pam says

Petunia wants a pet skunk but is told no by her parents because skunks stink. Readers will enjoy the tantrum she throws and relate to all that she says before running away to the woods. She makes the sad discovery that her parents are right and skunks do stink.

Humor for readers as they make predictions about what's coming in the story.

Kellee says

I love Petunia! She loves the animals no one else does no matter how stinky or scary they are- no judgment. I loved the colors and drawing style of the illustrations as well- all added up to a really cute, fun book.

Illeyana says

This was a really funny book. However, Petunia would give the younger students so pretty iffy ideas...
