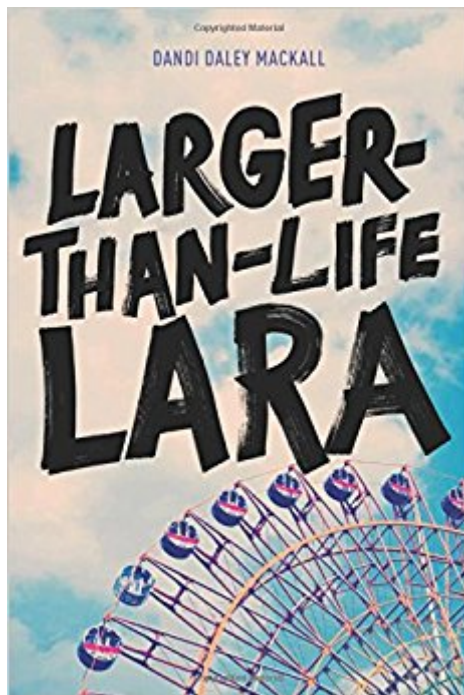


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# Larger-Than-Life Lara



## Synopsis

This isn't about me. This story, I mean. So already you got a reason to hang it up. At least that's what Mrs. Smith, our English teacher, says. But the story is about ten-year-old Laney Grafton and the new girl in her class •Lara Phelps, whom everyone bullies from the minute she shows up. Laney is just relieved to have someone else as a target of bullying. But instead of acting the way a bullied kid normally acts, this new girl returns kindness for a meanness that intensifies . . . until nobody remains unchanged, not even the reader. In a unique and multi-layered story, with equal parts humor and angst, Laney communicates the art of storytelling as it happens, with chapter headings, such as: Character, Setting, Conflict, Rising Action, Climax. And she weaves an unforgettable tale of a new girl who transforms an entire class and, in the process, reveals the best and worst in all of us. This is a powerful and emotional story, which School Library Journal called "Thoroughly enjoyable and unexpectedly wry, . . . as intelligent as it is succinct."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A story that can be appreciated on many levels, Larger-Than-Life Lara is told in the strong voice of Laney. . . . With a strong, positive ending, which is both happy and sad, Larger-Than-Life Lara inspires the reader to treat others with respect and to be positive despite all obstacles. . . .

Consistently ridiculed by her classmates, Lara always responds to her tormentors with forgiveness, and positive words and actions. The book's discussion of literary components adds to its charm. The reader feels the emotions of both Lara and Laney while at the same time recognizing the

important story elements. Teachers can use this book in so many waysâ•as illustrations of the parts of a successful composition, as a model of forgiveness and kind treatment of others, and finally as an example of two separate stories woven together into one marvelous tale. (Christian Library Journal review)

Larger-Than-Life Lara is the most excellent book for teaching the structure of a story in a classroom. I say this from experience as a former middle school and high school English teacher, and a writing instructor for the Institute of Childrenâ™s Literature for almost a decade. (Christine Kohler, Read Like a Writer blog)

Thanks again for agreeing to be our keynote author for the Northern Kentucky Book Fest 2014! Our teachers still use Larger-Than-Life Lara in their language arts programs. (Nancy L. Bowers, Department of English, Northern Kentucky University)

We all still rave about your amazing talk and that wonderful book, Larger-Than-Life Lara. So many of our language arts teachers are using it to teach writing. Others use it teach about bullying. And the kids never feel like weâ™re preaching, so they donâ™t tune us out. (Michele Winship, Ph.D., Capital University, Columbus, OH)

I want to tell you what an amazing book Larger-than-Life-Lara is. I have used this book with my fifth graders. It has been a great tool not only to teach parts of a story but also to open discussion on bullying. Your characters each are unique, and help build a story that children will hold onto for the rest of their lives. Thank you for writing a modern-day classic. I believe every library should have more than one copy available for their patrons. . . . Thanks again for writing one of the best books I have ever read to my students. (Mrs. Woll, St. Francis Xavier School, Medina, Ohio)

I had the privilege to hear you today at CCC as part of the Martha Holden Jennings Lecture Series. I not only enjoyed hearing all your stories, but reading them as well, as I purchased several of the books you made available. How I wish we could get copies of Larger-Than-Life Lara for all of our students! (Bill Van Jura)

Everyone still loves Larger-Than-Life Lara. We could have sold out over and over with paper. Schools need paperbacks. Peter and I still claim that one as a huge favorite. (Tish, The Blue Marble Childrens Bookstore, Ft. Thomas, KY)

So glad to finally get you here as featured author in Nebraska in 2014! Our âœscoutsâ• have raved about your Edgar winning book. And we all love Larger-than-Life-Lara. (Vikki Gremel, Plum Creek Childrens Literacy Festival Coordinator, Seward, NE)

Here comes Lara, a new girl in Laneyâ™s fourth-grade class. Sheâ™s the largest kid Laneyâ™s ever seen and even requires a special desk. Now Lara will be the one who is picked on and teased instead of Laney, right? Lara surprises everyone though. Through chapters that give instructions for writing a story, Laney not only tells Laraâ™s story, but also reveals her own troubled life. Touching and insightful, this book will stay with you long after youâ™ve finished reading it. (Bookhive)

Laneyâ™s account of Laraâ™s persecution refreshes middle readers on literary devices and elementary writing, and,

not incidentally, tutors about compassionâ •a sensibility too often absent from society. (Denver Post)

Dandi Daley Mackall is the author of numerous books for children, including "Larger-Than-Life Lara." She lives in West Salem, Ohio, with her husband and their three children.

I am reading this book to my 4 kids right now (ages 8,10,11 & 13) They all LOVE it. Clever, relevant with a great story line. So glad I purchased it!

I sent this book to my daughter for her little gal to read together. They really like it! I am gathering they read it at night, for a bedtime story.

Laney Grafton was relieved Lara Phelps showed up as the new girl in her class, but not for the reasons you'd think. She isn't eager to be her friend, but instead is happy that the constant teasing will shift from her to Lara. Lara is a simple girl with a big heart. Her simple look made her an easy target for teasing and bullying, but she doesn't react the way most kids would. Instead of being scared or fighting back, she reacts in kindness. This slowly begins to change everyone- even the reader. Who would have known that a 4th grader would be able to demonstrate such compassion and determination. This book was written to impress! Honestly, Dandi Daley Mackall couldn't have done a better job! I love that it directly tackles the common bullying issue, but that it does so in a gentle and graceful way. Bullying is more common than many people would like to believe and this book definitely shines a much needed light on the topic. Not only does it tackle such a major concern that our children face, it also helps teach kids about parts of a story and how to build a story. That's a win win in my book! I love how each chapter tells you about a new element in story building, while still maintaining complete control over the actual story. I love that the story was written through Laney's eyes and that it's written in such a delicate way that it can genuinely connect with kids. My daughter and I read this book together and both felt that we could connect with the characters, their struggle, and their story. It truly felt as if we were sitting in that 4th grade class right next to them. It's a great book to read and is easy to understand. Truly a must read! Disclosure: I received the following book for review purposes only. All opinions remain my own and weren't influenced. My opinions may differ from others as well as those of the author and publisher.

Lara Phelps is the victim of bullying. The story is told by Lara's classmate, Laney Grafton.

She breaks the story down by the components of storytelling beginning with character and ending with the resolution. Lara handled the situation with kindness. It would have been interesting to hear it from Lara's perspective too. Her outward response most likely did not reflect her inward thoughts. Lara was bullied but it wasn't overwhelming. I found myself focusing on what would happen next based on story elements. Bullying is a tough topic and the author handled it appropriately for the elementary reading level. She ended it with a satisfying resolution and the conflict continued to increase as the story unfolded. I would recommend this book to the elementary reading level. And I hope that it will encourage the readers to consider and apply it to their own classmates. I received a complimentary copy of this book and was not required to write a positive review through Tyndale Blog Network.

Life Lessons from Lara: Larger-Than-Life Lara, Dandi Daley Mackall approaches a difficult subject, one that is a life lesson every child should be taught at a young age, with grace, care and a pinch of humor. A book that should be required reading in every school class room, Lara handles herself well in every situation—well, almost every one. What's even more cool about this book is it not only deals with the topic of bullying but it also teaches readers the different parts of telling a story as each chapter deals with one of these elements (Dialogue, Setting, Rising Action, Details, Cliff-Hangers, and Climax are all addressed). Ten-year-old Laney Grafton is a tad relieved when the new girl enters her classroom because everyone's mean words and teasing shifts away from her and onto Lara Phelps. But here's the thing about Lara: she doesn't react like she should. Nope. Instead, Lara accepts the bullying and returns each action with a kindness. And while the storyteller (Laney) doesn't intervene, she does begin to change. As will every reader of this book. As a reader, I felt Laney's hardships as well as Lara's as I was taken along for the ride through the eyes of a fourth-grade girl shares a story through her eyes. The author portrays this excellently through the writing of the story. I was there in that class room with Laney and as she shares this impactful time in her life all the while commenting on what she's learned about telling a story. And the results are sometimes humorous, sometimes heart-breaking, but always memorable. If you have young children who are being bullied or if you know young children you want to encourage to help a friend who is being bullied or if you want to share how one person can make a difference, then Larger-Than-Life Lara is a way in which to do it impactfully.\*\*\*\*I receive complimentary books for review from publishers, publicists, and/or authors, including Netgalley. I am not required to write positive reviews. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.

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