

Love in All Shapes and Sizes

By: Paige Platter

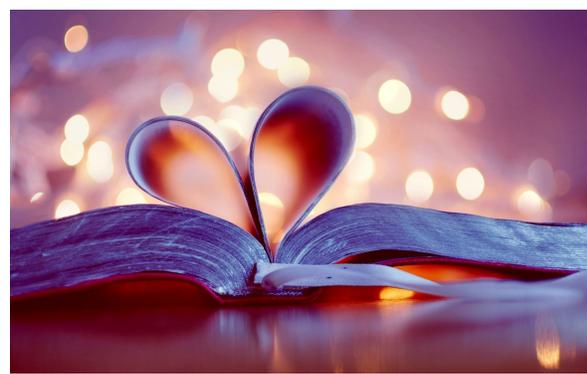
Hair Love is a Sony short film written and co-directed by former NFL football player, Matthew A. Cherry and co-directed by Disney veteran Bruce W. Smith, Dreamworks and Sony veteran Peter Ramsay, as well as two Pixar animators Frank Abney, and Everett Downing. With a team like this, the short film was a success before it was even made, no wonder it won an academy award and a Black Reel Award.

Hair Love follows a young girl, Zuri, who according to the film's Kickstarter is seven years old, as she gets ready for an important day. However, Zuri's hair is a monster in its own right. Zuri tries to style it herself, but it ends in disaster. By the time her dad comes looking for her, he's in a rush. No words are spoken except for a hairstyle video Zuri is watching, you can tell her hair means something to her and that her dad has no clue what to do with it. Failed attempt after failed attempt, Zuri's father gives in and watches the video. Together they make magic happen and Zuri's hair is in cute little bumps and they're ready to face the day. The importance of the day is

revealed as the two enter a hospital room and it's shown that the hair vlogger Zuri was watching was, in fact, her mother, who has now lost all of her hair due to an illness unknown to us. The video ends as the three leave the hospital room, bringing mom home. As the credits roll you see Zuri's father learning how to do Zuri's hair while her mother watches on, slowly but surely regrowing her own luscious curls.

The film itself is heartwarming but it's even more so when you learn the entire film was funded by a Kickstarter! The Kickstarter began in July of 2017 and raised over two hundred thousand dollars to make the film possible. That's some serious Hair Love! While the Kickstarter was running, Cherry announced the release of a *Hair Love* picture book written by himself and illustrated by Vashti Harrison. The book follows the story of the short film however you get to see it from Zuri's perspective with some minor changes. The book was nominated for Outstanding Literary Work in the children's section in the NAACP awards as well as Goodreads Choice Awards in Best Picture Books. It was also a New York Times bestseller.

Hair Love was initially released on Youtube, Instagram TV, Facebook, and Twitter. The film has over twenty-three million views on Youtube alone. Everyone is praising *Hair Love* in the comments too, La La B said "I'm an African-American woman and I'm close to 50 years old. I wish there were more messages about accepting our hair when I was younger. I'm happy to see it happening with my granddaughter's generation!" while others shared their own experiences with cancer and black hair, such as {V}ee O-Sotiz who put, "My mom lost the battle to cancer when I was around that little girls age (4 years old) and that father struggle doing his daughter hair for a special occasion broke my heart. Mine did everything he could as a widow



with no idea what to do with a lil' girl hair. It was madness” and some were dissing Disney for their constant character killing such as Genesis Vazquez who said, “I’m glad this was Sony because Disney will always be killing characters.”

Not only were commenters singing praise, but other YouTubers too. Jim Gisriel called the film “Magnificent animated” in his review and Offscreen Babbled praised it for covering a “topic not often tackled in children’s stuff” when referring to the father and daughter relationship. JACFLYTV mentioned they wished they, “had this when [they] were younger” and said “I can totally relate” to the number of hair products the family owns. This film touched the hearts of everyone, black and white, with its expert use of animation and truly captivating storytelling. This film shows that love can come in all shapes, colors, and hairiness.