



Supplement to *What's the Story?* newsletter ISSN 11750189: Volume 10: Issue 1: February 2011

## *Friends will be friends*

*'Friendship is unnecessary, like philosophy, like art... It has no survival value; rather is one of those things that give value to survival.'* ~ C. S. Lewis.

Friendship comes in many shapes and sizes. You can find your best friend in the unlikeliest of places – or species – as this collection of books show. Some also show that friendships have a lifecycle and sometimes their nature changes.

### **Please note:**

Not all of these are still in print, but they should be available from libraries.

Age recommendations are based on both reading level and comprehension. If a book is in the teen list, it is because we feel the content, context, and language is more suitable to older readers, although younger readers may be capable of reading the text, they may not identify with the issues the teenaged characters are dealing with, or the issues may not be appropriate to their age group.

**Reviewers:** Kerry Aluf; Sanya Baker; Helen Beckingsale; Crissi Blair; Allister Campbell; Tina Collins; Annie Coppell; Libby Limbrick; Wayne Mills; Helen Schwarcz; Angela Soutar, Rosemary Tisdall; Helen Villers.

---

## Younger readers

### *Tall*

Jez Alborough

Walker Books 2006

ISBN 1406301736

Bobo, the young chimp first introduced in *Hug*, finds that friends can be very helpful, when you want to be tall. Bobo climbs on each baby animal, getting progressively taller, until he... falls. Sparse text makes this a perfect interactive read-aloud for 2+. Annie.

### *My Friend Bear*

Jez Alborough

Walker Books 2005

ISBN 9781844284795

Eddy and the Bear, who first scared each other in *Where's My Teddy?*, discover that they might just be perfect friends. Of course, it comes about with the help of their teddies. Read all the books about these two characters. 3+. Annie.

### *Forever Friends*

Carin Berger

Greenwillow Books 2010

ISBN 9780061915284

In Spring a small blue bird awakens a little brown rabbit and invites him to play. True friendship grows between the rabbit and the bird as they find ways to play together right through Spring and Summer until late Fall. Then their friendship is tested by separation: the bird flies away for the winter, leaving the rabbit lonely in the forest – we see their separate experiences of winter, apart, in parallel and almost wordless scenes. The anxiety of the question ‘will my friend return?’ is one every child suffers, usually as silently as little rabbit does here. Elegantly designed collage pictures add to the appeal of this book. 2-6. Tina.

### *Pearl Barley and Charlie Parsley*

---

Aaron Blabey

Puffin 2009

ISBN 9780143503071

Exuberant text and matching illustrations tell the story of two very disparate people who are best friends. Thoughtful use of black and white, then colour, illustrations show how much better they are together. 4+. Annie.

*Do You Want To Be My Friend?*

Eric Carle

HarperFestival 1995

ISBN 9780694007097

This classic wordless picture book featuring a little mouse who is searching for a perfect friend is now available as a board book. Helen B.

*I Am TOO Absolutely Small for School*

Lauren Child

Orchard Books 2004

ISBN 1843623668

Mum and Dad think Lola is nearly quite big enough for school but Lola isn't quite so sure. Charlie does his best to persuade her that she will learn all sorts of important and interesting things. After listening to all of Charlie's patient and humorous reasoning Lola finally admits that she doesn't have a problem it's her invisible friend Soren Lorensen who 'is feeling wobbly, worried and not so well.' When Lola finally gets to school she has a great day and even makes a new friend. The illustrations combine photography, collage and watercolours in imaginative and engaging ways managing to show Soren Lorensen looking suitably invisible. Helen S.

*A Dog Like That!*

Janene Cooper, illustrated by Evie Kemp

Duck Creek Press 2010

ISBN 9781877378416

A young girl describes her dog – who isn't well-behaved, well-trained, nor well-groomed – like other dogs. But, her dog is her

---

best friend as he offers her comfort and help. 3+. Annie.

*I'm the Best*

Lucy Cousins

Walker Books 2010

ISBN 9781406323689

Dog loves to boast about how clever he is. He can run faster than Mole, dig deeper than Goose, swim better than Donkey. But his friends get fed up with him and let him know who's really the best, which leaves Dog feeling like a sad loser, until his friends all gather round to cheer him up. Glorious loose vividly coloured illustrations with hand-drawn text. An exuberant book to share with 3-6 year olds. Crissi.

*Ladybug Girl and Bumblebee Boy*

Jacky Davis, illustrated by David Soman

Dial Books 2009

ISBN 9780803733398

Lulu and her friend Sam can't agree on what to play. Then they play Ladybug Girl and Bumblebee Boy – saviours of the playground. They learn that it is much more fun playing and working together. Annie.

*Mr Pod and Mr Piccalilli*

Penny Dolan, illustrated by Nick Sharratt

Walker Books 2005

ISBN 9780744540666

Mr Pod and Mr Piccalilli both live by themselves in a big block of flats. Mr Pod has a cat called Tod and Mr Piccalilli has a cat called Millie and when both their cats go missing they both are very sad and look everywhere. They both decide to bake a cake to cheer each other up and as they take their very delicious cake up (and down) stairs they hear a 'Miaow!' and out of a cupboard come Tod, Millie and six little kittens. After that Mr Pod and Mt Piccalilli become best friends and sometimes the kittens play in one flat and sometimes the other and everyone is very happy. A lovely story, easy to read aloud and Nick Sharratt's illustrations are as engaging as always. Helen S.

---

*Cold Paws, Warm Heart*

Madeleine Floyd

Walker 2005

ISBN 0744596920

Cold Paws is a polar bear who has trouble making friends because of his intimidating size so he feels cold inside and out and plays his flute to overcome his loneliness. His music is heard by a child who follows him and makes various overtures of friendship. This picture book is beautifully illustrated in watercolour, ink and pastel and is suitable for 4- 8 years. Helen B.

*Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*

Mex Fox, illustrated by Julie Vivas

Scholastic 2009 (25th anniversary mini edition)

ISBN 9781862918191

Young Wilfrid lives next door to an old-peoples' home, and his best friend is Miss Nancy Alison Delacourt Cooper, because she has four names like him. When Miss Nancy begins to lose her memory, Wilfrid seeks the help of the other residents to find it. This is a joyful book, showing the value of relationships over the generations. Annie.

*Diary of a Wombat*

Jackie French, illustrated by Bruce Whatley

Angus & Robertson 2003.

ISBN 9780732286620 (board book edition)

Wombat maintains a diary from one Monday to the next and we learn just how naughty but endearing a wombat can be. She sleeps a great deal, scratches regularly and upsets the humans with his demands and just when the humans think they have her under control she changes his mind! By the end of the book she has decided that 'humans are easily trained and make quite good pets'. She then digs a big new hole under the house so she can be closer to them. It is doubtful however, that the friendship will be reciprocated! The wombat, Mothball, has a baby who finds a friend in *Baby Wombat's Week*. Helen V.

---

*Zou and the Box of Kisses*

Michel Gay

Gecko Press 2011

ISBN 9781877467745

A new book from Gecko by a renowned French author/illustrator that is a sequel to *Zou* which is also available from Gecko Press. Zou finds that, when you are a friend to others, you make friends. Through sharing his paper kisses, given to him by Mum and Dad when going to holiday camp, with other lonely little zebras he is no longer lonely because he has so many friends. Many children will identify with this enchanting story. Libby.

*Blue Chameleon*

Emily Gravett

Macmillan 2010

ISBN 9780230704244

Although the chameleon appears to fit in anywhere none of the other creatures he encounters want to be friends. A quirky picture book for pre-schoolers. Helen B.

*Monkey and Me*

Emily Gravett

Macmillan 2007

ISBN 9780230015838

A little girl and her toy monkey pretend to be different animals in this celebration of imagination and play. Subtle colours and soft line drawings makes this a treat for the eye as well as the ear. Great fun to read aloud, especially as it encourages audience participation. 2+. Annie.

*Mr Muggs the Library Cat*

Dave Gunson

Scholastic New Zealand 2008

ISBN 9781869438333

Mr Moon, the head librarian, doesn't want a cat in the library, but the staff explain that Mr Muggs is good at catching rats – which he demonstrates. However, Mr Muggs and Pablo, the rat, have a deal: Mr Muggs 'catches' Pablo – thus proving his usefulness, and

---

helps Pablo to food. Together they read books and act out stories each night. The illustrations have many things to look out for – the authors' names and changes in perspective, for example. Slightly sophisticated humour for 4+. Annie.

*Tally Cat Keeps Track*

Trudy Harris, illustrated by Andrew N. Harris

Millbrook Press 2011

ISBN 9780761344513

Tally McNally is an alley cat who loves to tally. He keeps track of all sorts of contests – who is the tallest, who climbs the most trees, and more. When the results are counted up, Tally is always the winner. One rainy day, Tally competes to be the 'wettest cat' but his competitive streak gets him into trouble. It is up to his friends to save him, but will they? This is a fabulous story of Tally, who learns the value of counting on his friends. In the back of the book there is an explanation of tallying and what each line represents and how we can count by fives. The eagle-eyed reader can discover how sneaky Tally scrunched some of his cans to make his tally higher and make it look like he was taller. 4-8. Tina.

*Duck & Goose*

Tad Hills

Schwartz and Wade 2006

ISBN 9780375836114

This brightly coloured picture book has themes of getting along and sharing. A young goose and a duck each lay claim to what they think is an egg. When they realise they are sitting on a ball not an egg they abandon their differences for the pleasure of playing. 2+. Helen B.

*Best Friends for Frances*

Russell Hoban, illustrated by Lillian Hoban

Harper and Row 1969, Harper Collins (I Can Read 2) 2009

ISBN 978006443008

The picture books about Frances, the little badger, have entertained at least two generations of children and are now available as easy readers, with a few modifications. Frances's

---

friend Albert has a no-girls baseball game and Frances, who has previously spurned her little sister's friendship, discovers that sisters can also be friends. Helen B.

*Toot and Puddle*

Holly Hobbie

Hachette 2000

ISBN 9780750028271

A true case of opposites attract. Toot loves to travel, and Puddle loves to stay home. But, wherever they are – they stay in touch, and they know their best friend will always be there for them. Annie.

*Limelight Larry*

Leigh Hodgkinson

Hachette 2010

ISBN 9781408301838

Larry is a peacock who wants to be in the limelight. As his book – brilliant and all about him, of course – continues, various animals intrude. Larry is not impressed. This is **his** book after all. So he shows off – in a 'fabulous foily surprise' – but then realises that showing off without an audience isn't much fun. A romp for those who have knowledge of traditional stories, in order to get the jokes. The use of typography, fonts, and design add to the wacky charm. 4+. Annie.

*Up and Down*

Oliver Jeffers

HarperCollins 2010

ISBN 9780007263844

The boy and the penguin, who first befriended each other in *Lost and Found*, are having a rough patch – like friends do. The penguin wants to fly, the boy tries to convince him that penguins don't. But it doesn't go down too well. The penguin, in a snit, runs away. But, in fulfilling his dreams, he learns the value of true friendship. 3+. Annie.



---

*Henry and Amy (Right Way Round and Upside Down)*

Stephen Michael King

Scholastic 2000

ISBN 9781863889988

Whatever Henry does, it turns out wiggly. But Amy is always perfect. Henry doesn't want to be always wiggly. And Amy doesn't want to be always perfect. So, together, they are perfect friends. Annie.

*Two Peas in a Pod*

Chris McKimmie

Allen & Unwin 2010

ISBN 9781742373041

Marvin and Violet are neighbours and have been best friends since they were babies, like two peas in a pod. But then Violet moves away. A quirky story about everyday stuff that kids will identify with. Loose child-like illustrations using all sorts of media, making for a visual feast and an authentic childhood experience. 4+. Crissi.

*Hill & Hole*

Kyle Mewburn, illustrated by Vasanti Unka

Puffin Books 2010

ISBN 9780143504535

A glorious whimsical picture book full of texture, colour and ideas to think about. Hill and Hole are best mates who love being themselves, but also long to experience the world from each other's point of view, so they ask Mole to help. Things don't work out the way they expected so they have to find another solution. To be enjoyed as much for the textural artwork as for the story. 4+ and illustration-loving adults. Crissi.

*When We Were Alone in the World*

Ulf Nilsson, illustrated by Eva Eriksson

Gecko Press 2009

ISBN 9781877467349

A warm, funny story about brotherly love and friendship. Big brother, aged six, is learning to tell the time. The clock says seems to say it is time to go home but Dad was not at school at home

---

time. Something terrible must have happened to Mum and Dad. Big brother must look after little brother now. He picks him up from pre-school, goes home, and builds a house for him to look after little brother for the rest of their lives. Another precious gift for New Zealand children from Gecko. 4+. Libby.

*The Cardboard Piano*

Lynne Rae Perkins

Greenwillow 2008

ISBN 9780061542657

This picture book shows that friends do not have to share everything but can have different interests and still be friends. Debbie is taking piano lessons and makes a cardboard piano so her friend can play duets with her, only to have it returned as Tina is not interested. Debbie is hurt but they make up and continue to be friends. 4+. Helen B.

*Yo! Yes?*

Chris Raschka

Orchard Books 1998

ISBN 0531054691

Two lonely boys, one confident and other shy, meet on the street and negotiate a friendship in 34 words! The book smacks of real life; skateboards and baggy pants, differing backgrounds, the fear of being friendless and the quest for fun. This Caldecott Honor Book is a wee cracker and will be greatly enjoyed by all ages. Helen V.

*Sylvia and Bird*

Catherine Rayner

Magi Publications 2010

ISBN 9781845068561

Sylvia is a dragon – possibly the only one in the world. She and Bird become friends, but Sylvia wants to find another dragon, someone like her. Friendship doesn't always depend on being the same – a lesson Sylvia learns. Ink and watercolour illustrations add luminosity and dreamlike qualities to the text. 3+. Annie.

---

*Albert & Lila*

Rafik Schami, illustrated by Els Cools and Oliver Streich,  
translated by Anthea Bel

North-South Books 1999

ISBN 0735811822

The animals in the farmyard are happy and polite to each other. But the pigs don't play with the chickens, and the chickens don't play with the pigs. Albert is a white pig – and none of the other pigs play with him. Lila is an old chicken, who has been chased away by the rooster. The two form a strong friendship, and work together to get rid of the fox, who comes and terrifies the chickens. A lovely tale of unexpected friendship. 4+. Annie.

*Dog and Bear: Three to Get Ready*

Laura Vaccaro Seeger

Roaring Brook Press 2009

ISBN 9781596433960

This picture book contains three stories about friends who help each other in difficult situations such as when Bear has a bucket stuck on his head. There are two others stories about these friends - *Dog and Bear: Two Friends, Three Stories*, and *Dog and Bear: Two's Company*. 2+. Helen B.

*The Mountain Who Wanted to Live in a House*

Maurice Shadbolt, illustrated by Renee Haggio

Duck Creek Press (David Ling) 2010

ISBN 9781877378423

A subtle story that has been beautifully illustrated in a muted earthy palette by Haggio. The mountain is lonely and out in the wind and rain, but when he strides, with a 'woho woho' sort of sound, towards the town in order to live in a house, the townsfolk flee. All except Thomas, who eventually comes up with a suitable solution. A read aloud story for 3+ that will send imaginations soaring. Kerry.

*Evil Weasel.*

Hannah Shaw.

Jonathan Cape 2008.

---

ISBN 9780224070911.

Weasel excels at cunning tricks which have made him very rich but have also horrified his friends. When no-one comes to the party he throws to demonstrate his wealth he is horrified to discover he is bad at being a friend and sets out to make amends. 3+. Helen B.

*Hello, Sailor*

André Sollie, illustrated by Ingrid Godon

Macmillan Children's Books 2003

ISBN 0333992903

Matt lives in a lighthouse, keeping watch for ships, but especially for Sailor, who has promised to return home. None of Matt's visitors believe that Sailor will return. On Matt's birthday he has a party, but still waits for Sailor – who returns late that night. The next morning, Matt's friends arrive and there is no Matt – so they begin to wait for him. This book raised some controversy when it was first released in English, as it has been seen to have homosexual overtones. However, I feel that this has more to do with the English title, and an over-reading of the text, as I have always read it as being about a strong friendship. 5+. Annie.

*The Puppet Box*

Moira Wairama, illustrated by Bruce Potter

Scholastic 2007

ISBN 9781869438005

Winner of the Storylines Joy Cowley Award 2006

Rua is very shy during his week at kindergarten, so his teacher introduces him to the puppet box. After a week of slowly integrating into the class, a new pupil arrives and Rua is the perfect person to introduce her to the box. Annie.

*Are You Ready to Play Outside?*

Mo Willems

WalkerBooks 2009

ISBN 9781406322200

One of the many irrepressible Elephant & Piggie books. This fun tale shows that friends are there for you – not matter what happens. Oh, and elephants make fabulous friends. Hunt down all

---

the books featuring these two, and you won't regret it. 4+. Annie.

*City Dog, Country Frog*

Mo Willems, illustrated by Jon J. Muth

Hyperion 2010

ISBN 9781423103004

This beautiful picture book about the friendship of two very different creatures is set against a background of the changing seasons. There is sadness in the loss of a friend but also the message that old friends live on in memory and there is always the possibility of new friends. 2+ Helen B.

*Your Pal Mo Willems Presents Leonardo the Terrible Monster*

Mo Willems

WalkerBooks 2008

ISBN 9781406312157

Leonardo is a terrible monster. He's too small. He doesn't have enough teeth. How can he scare anybody! Then he meets Sam, who is scared of everything. And Leonardo discovers that being a terrible monster might actually make him a great friend. Annie.

## Primary ages

*Tim and Charlotte*

Edward Ardizzone

Scholastic 2002 (originally published Oxford University Press 1951)

ISBN 9780439010382

Tim and his best friend Ginger rescue a young girl, Charlotte. When Charlotte's guardian takes her away, Charlotte pines for the fun and games she had with the boys. A classic. Annie.

*Ivy + Bean.*

Annie Barrows, illustrated by Sophie Blackall

Chronicle Books 2007

ISBN 9780811849098

Ivy and Bean are neighbours, and not friends. They've always

---

know there was NO way they could be friends. Until, that is, Bean has to hide from her sister, and Ivy helps her out. A great introduction to a pair of unlikely friends. 7+. Annie.

*Bob's Best-Ever Friend*

Simon Bartram

Candlewick Press 2009

ISBN 9780763644253

In this sequel to *Man in the Moon* Bob is looking for a best friend to help him with his inter-galactic missions but doesn't know where to find one. His best friend turns out to be an inter-galactic dog, who has been following him all the time. 5-8. Helen B.

*Quin Majik and the Marvellous Machine*

Fleur Beale, illustrated Philip Webb

Mallinson Rendel 2008

ISBN 9781877423239

Quin Majik and his parents move to a street occupied almost entirely by control freaks, (well it is called Tidy Street). Determined not to follow the rules Quin enlists the help of the boy over the road, who is only too willing to embrace a bit of dirt and mess. The speed with which the boys rebuild machines and transform the landscape makes a funny story with an underlying message about the need for individual freedom. Follow the rest of the series to see Quin's friendships develop with the neighbourhood children. 7+. Helen B.

*An Electrifying New Year in the Life of Ozzie Kingsford*

Val Bird, illustrated Rebecca Cundy

Random House NZ 2009

ISBN 9781869791568

The third book in the series, so look out for them (four in all so far). Ozzie and his friend, Fletch, decide to build an Electricity Storage Machine. They need to use things from dad's workshop and the vacuum cleaner so here's hoping the experiment works otherwise both parents won't be happy! You can imagine with Ozzie, nothing is ever straightforward and nothing goes to plan. Visually appealing for 7–10 year olds. Rosemary.

---

*Cloud Busting*

Malorie Blackman

Random House 2005

ISBN 9780440866152

Sam's mum makes him befriend Davey, much to his disgust. When Davey saves Sam, they overcome their initial resistance and form a really close bond. That, of course, doesn't mean that Sam wants to actually be seen with Davey in public, but when it's just the two of them, Davey's pretty cool to be around. Told in verse, from Sam's point of view, this friendship story twists the expected, as Davey is the bully who has made Sam's life hell. 9+. Annie.

*Ramona's World*

Beverly Cleary

Morrow 1999, Harper Festival 2010

ISBN 9780061894077

This is the final of several stories about Ramona Quimby and her family, and the most recently published. The story opens with Ramona's determination to find herself a best friend. The Ramona books depict a secure and happy family life without the trauma depicted in many more recent books and are still very popular with 8+. Helen B.

*No Talking*

Andrew Clement

Simon & Schuster 2007

ISBN 9781416909842

The boys and girls at Lakeview Elementary don't get on and they are one of the noisiest classes ever. When one of the loudest boys discovers Ghandi spent one day a week in silence he decides to do the same and then challenges the girls to a 'no talking' contest. As the students work together on finding new and ingenious ways of communicating and responding to teachers, parents and each other their relationships become far more important than winning or losing the contest. Thought provoking, funny and a great read aloud 8+. Helen S.

---

*Through Thick and Thin*

Shirley Corlett

Scholastic NZ 2005

ISBN 1869436954

Matt and Caleb have been friends forever – and so have their families. The two boys need to figure out what is important to them, when their families are ripped apart due to a shared tragedy. Misunderstandings compound the problem until the two boys come together and decide to bring their families together again, taking drastic action to do so. Annie.

*Friends: Snake and Lizard*

Joy Cowley, illustrated by Gavin Bishop

Gecko Press 2009

ISBN 9781877467257

Snake and Lizard, the unlikely friends from the eponymous first book, return in this inter-linked tales. Like all friends, they have their ups and downs, and their secrets. You know, those little things you don't really want even your best friend to know about, just in case it affects your relationship. Warmly humorous, and just warm all over really. Annie.

*Bink & Gollie*

Kate DiCamillo and Alison McGhee, illustrated by Tony Fucile

Candlewick Press 2010

ISBN 9780763632663

Bink is tiny, Gollie is tall and they don't always agree with each other but they know how to compromise and remain best friends throughout the three short stories which make up this picture book/easy chapter book. The format is more like a chapter book, the text contains some sophisticated vocabulary which would be a challenge to beginning readers and the illustrations are essential to the story so read it yourself and enjoy the dialogue and share it with 6-9 years olds. Helen B.

*Henry and the Flea*

Brian Falkner

Mallison Rendel 2003



---

ISBN 0908783779

Republished by Walker in 2007 as *The Flea Thing*.

Daniel wants to be a Warrior. Not when he's an adult – but now, while he's 12. An unrealistic dream you'd think. But, Daniel has a secret. In the Warriors, and nicknamed the Flea, he is befriended by Henry, a gentle giant. A gentle story about dreams, reality, and friendship. Annie.

*Stella Star*

Brigid Feehan

Scholastic NZ 2005

ISBN 1869436741

Winner of the Storylines Tom Fitzgibbon Award 2004. Stella loves directing – putting on plays for friends and family. Unfortunately she learns that she can't control their actions in real life. When her best friend and neighbour Jonathan disappears, Stella realises what true friendship means. 9+. Annie.

*Up on Cloud Nine*

Anne Fine

Random House 2006

ISBN 9780552554657

Ian sits beside the hospital bed of his best friend, Stol, remembering and creating a Stol biography. As the biography takes shape, Stolly's life and issues are revealed, as is the strength of the bond between the boys. 9+. Annie.

*Miss Happiness and Miss Flower*

Rumer Godden

HarperCollins 1960, 2002

ISBN 9780330456326

Eight-year-old Nona has been orphaned and sent to live with cousins, She is un-used to being part of a large family and finds it difficult to adjust until she and her cousin are sent two Japanese dolls. Nona becomes engrossed in building them a suitable house, and in the process becomes friends with a number of adults, including a bookseller and a dress maker. The sequel, *Little Plum*, is also a story of friendship as Nona and Belinda try to become

---

friends with the girl next door who also has a Japanese doll. Although these stories were written for a different generation girls of 8 up should still relate to the likeable and believable characters. Helen B.

*Hollie Chips*

Anna Gowan

Scholastic NZ 2010

ISBN 9781869439316

Winner of the 2009 Storylines Tom Fitzgibbon Award. Hollie and her mother have moved to Puriti Road; they love their new house but the neighbours all seem miserable and keep to themselves. When Hollie overhears plans to build a dog-food factory nearby she decides to take action to bring everyone together. She makes friends with them one by one with clever tactics and hard work, helping them each to find things to enjoy in their life. She has trouble convincing her new friends there's trouble afoot but Hollie's determined the villain should get just what he deserves. 8-11. Crissi.

*Dear Max*

Sally Grindley, illustrated by Tony Ross

Simon & Schuster 2006 (first published Orchard 2004)

ISBN 1416903925

Max is nearly ten when he writes to his favourite author, D.J. Lucas. Thus begins a correspondence between the two as they agonise over their writing, and Max worries about the bully in school and his continuing hospital appointments. There's a sequel, *Bravo Max*. A wonderful story of friendship via letter, and across generations. 8+. Annie.

*Owen & Mzee: The True Story of a Remarkable Friendship*

Isabella Hatkoff, Craig Hatkoff and Paula Kahumbu, photographs by Peter Greste

Scholastic 2006

ISBN 9780439829731

This is the true story of a friendship between Owen, a baby hippo orphaned in the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami, and Mzee, a slightly

---

grumpy 130-year-old tortoise. Photos of their relationship went viral, sharing their story worldwide. Heart-warming. Annie.

*Stig of the Dump*

Clive King

Puffin 2010

ISBN 9780141329697

Originally published in 1963. Barney falls into a chalk pit in the dump. There he meets Stig. Stig lives in the dump, in a cave decorated and furnished by rubbish. As Barney visits Stig, he learns how to create useful things out of what surrounds them. When their two worlds collide, as others discover Stig, Barney has to decide who and what to tell. 8+. Annie.

*Jennifer, Hecate, Macbeth, William McKinley, and Me, Elizabeth*

E. L. Konigsburg

Aladdin 2007 (35th anniversary edition)

ISBN 9780552554657

Elizabeth is the new girl at school, and lonely, until she meets Jennifer. And Jennifer is decidedly different. She's a witch. Sometimes it's not easy being friends with a witch – especially when you're also an apprentice. Elizabeth struggles with their friendship – is it really a friendship? 8+. Annie.

*Frog and Toad are Friends*

Arnold Lobel

HarperTrophy 1979

ISBN 9780064440202

A collection of warm tales of two friends and their everyday activities. A classic beginning to read book. Annie.

*Alvin Ho: Allergic to Girls, School, and Other Scary Things*

Lenore Look, illustrated LeUyen Pham

Schwartz & Wade Books 2008.

ISBN 9780375839146.

Alvin Ho is preparing for second grade. The problem is, he can't speak in school. He opens his mouth, but nothing comes out. The only person at school who understands him is Flea. Which is a

---

problem – because Flea is a girl. Things are not good in Alvin's world. Not a laugh-out-loud read, but this tale of childhood will inspire a few chuckles as Alvin deals with being seven. Keep an eye out for other books about Alvin and his friends. 6+. Annie.

*Letters to Lesley*

Janice Marriott

Omnibus 1989

ISBN 1862911304

Twelve-year-old Henry is a Wellington boy with a very poor opinion of females in general and his mother in particular. Ever since his father left, Henry's mother has suffered from 'enthusiasms', which either in their arrival or their sudden dispatch (or both) involve Henry in embarrassment and humiliation. Furthermore, they almost always interfere with his New Year's Resolutions (NYRs) to: *1. Have peace and quiet, 2. Get rich, and 3. Marry my mum off so she's not my responsibility so much.* When Henry's teacher sets him up with a motherless pen pal in Auckland, the two of them hatch up a scheme to solve all of their problems – with some very surprising results. 10+. Sanya.

*Slowcoach Turtle*

Kyle Mewburn, illustrated by Heath McKenzie

Little Hare Books 2010

ISBN 9781921541230

While looking after a pet turtle, Tilda learns a little patience and is also reconciled with her best friend Nat. Great for 7-10 year olds, with fun black and white illustrations throughout the book. The third book in 'Pop Hooper's Perfect Pet' series, but fine read by itself. Allister.

*Secret Letters 0-10*

Susie Morgenstern

Viking/Penguin 1998

ISBN 0670880078

At the beginning of this delightful tale Ernest, 10, is living with his elderly grandmother and housekeeper. He has never known his parents and gloominess, tedious routine, loneliness and old

---

fashioned dictates rule his life. His grandmother treasures a letter written in code by her father during WWI, which is brought out every Sunday and puzzled over. A new girl at school, Victoria, appoints herself Ernest's social organiser and introduces him to the real world of friends, fun, TV, telephones and outings. She has 13 brothers who provide him with an instant family. Ernest receives his first letter and writes to his long lost father. The reply is a letter for every day of his life with his father finally realising he can handle meeting his son at last. And the mystery code of the old letter is solved too. Good for 8+, independent reading at 9+. Set in France. Angela.

### *Dog*

Daniel Pennac, translated by Sarah Adams

WalkerBooks 2009

ISBN 9781406322743

Half drowned at birth, abandoned on a rubbish tip and chased by dog-catchers; Dog's had a tough puppyhood. He decides it's time to find and train himself an owner. This is a tale of a dog's life, from his point of view, and his journey to be accepted as part of a family. A funny and touching story of adventure, survival and friendship; hinting at the commitment required in owning a pet and the shared love and happiness an animal can bring. 8+. Tina.

### *My Friend Percy & the Sheik*

Ulf Stark

Gecko Press 2006

ISBN 0958272018

The second book about Ulf and his best friend Percy, told in a series of inter-linked vignettes. This time, Ulf's father has invited a real-life sheik over for dinner; Percy might have to move; and Ulf wants to hypnotise Marianne so he can kiss her. Although their lives may be lived in Sweden, some experiences – and worries – are universal. Although the text itself isn't that challenging for this age group, some of the language and situations make this more suitable for 9+. Annie.

### *Storm Boy*

---

Colin Thiele

New Holland 2002 (40th anniversary edition, originally published in 1963)

ISBN 9780007145737

Many of us will have a soft spot for this classic Australian novel – along with Gallico's *Snow Goose* – and probably for the same reason: lasting sadness upon watching / listening to dramatised versions. Storm Boy rescues three pelican chicks, forming a lasting friendship with Mr Percival, the last survivor. When Mr Percival is killed by poachers, Storm Boy is devastated. A haunting insight into life on the edges of Australian society. 8+. Annie.

*Charlotte's Web*

E. B. White, illustrated by Garth Williams

Penguin 1993 (Puffin Classics edition; originally published in 1952)

ISBN 9780140364491

No list of books about friendship would be complete without this classic tale of cross-species friendship and love. Charlotte is a true friend to Wilbur, as is Templeton, for all his grumpiness. Truly terrific and radiant. 8+. Annie.

*Fox*

Margaret Wild, illustrated by Ron Brooks

Allen & Unwin 2010 (10th anniversary edition)

ISBN 9781742373195

Magpie has a seared wing and Dog is blind in one eye but their trust in one another is inviolate until one day Fox, 'with his haunted eyes and rich red coat' arrives to test the friendship. This book is exceptional for its mixed media art work, the scratchy pen and ink font and for the pathos emerging in a brief but impeccably developed plot. This is truly a sophisticated picture book and a lump in the throat is guaranteed. Helen V.

## Intermediate ages

*BFF: Best Friends Forever*

Judy Blume

---

Delacorte 2007

ISBN 9780385734073

A bind-up edition including *Just as Long as We're Together* and *Here's to You, Rachel Robinson*.

Stephanie, Rachel and Alison help each other through the ups and downs of life, including separations, self-doubt and bullying.

Blume's attention to character development and interaction is to the fore in these novels. Annie.

*The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*

John Boyne

David Fickling Books 2006

ISBN 9780385751537

Every young person needs to read this book. The beginning is almost ordinary as Boyne describes Bruno's reluctant move from to the country where everything about the small house he found there seemed to be the opposite of the large and beautiful home and all the friends he had left behind in Berlin. Through Bruno's bedroom window and beyond the garden he is sees a large fence and beyond that are groups of children in their pyjamas. What happens next is about adventure, friendship, loyalty and daring. The conclusion is shocking but the story, and the truth it reveals, endures long after the book has been put away. Helen V.

*Saving Sam*

Susan Brouker

Harper Collins 2009

ISBN 9781869507435

Nobody really wants either Ben or the dog with no name but Uncle Joe and Aunt Ida have reluctantly taken them both, along with Ben's older brother Sam, into their home. The dog, a pure bred German shepherd is as frightened and lonely as Ben but together they form a friendship which saves Ben from heartbreak, the dog from being put down and, ultimately, Sam from death. The theme and setting will be familiar to many New Zealand children and the plot ensures an engrossing and exciting read for animal loving 10 to 14 year olds. Helen V.

---

*Because of Winn-Dixie*

Kate Di Camillo

Walker Books 2000

ISBN 0744578299

A story about the friendship between India Opal Buloni and the stray dog she finds down at the grocery shop. Opal names the large and rather smelly stray with the big smile Winn-Dixie after the name of the shop where she found him. Because of Winn-Dixie Opal makes friends with some very surprising people and even persuades her father to tell her ten things about her mother, who left when Opal was only three. In fact all the stories and good things that happen to Opal over the summer are because of Winn-Dixie. This is a Newberry Honor Book for 2001 and as the author says 'the book is (I hope) a hymn of praise to dogs, friendship and the South.' Helen S.

*Addie Accident*

Shirley Corlett

Scholastic NZ 2010

ISBN 9781869439712

Addie (11) is always having accidents, or causing trouble for those around her. She escapes to the empty property next door and Imagination Land where there are no bullies and disasters that plague her real life. One day she finds a strange new friend there, Hapless Hubert. They try to cast a spell to rid them of their bad luck and in the process Addie learns how to think before she acts and take responsibility for her actions, evolving into a more mature and likeable girl with real friends. 8-12. Crissi.

*Dog Tucker*

K. Drinkwater

Scholastic NZ 2009

ISBN 9781869438937

This is Devlin's last hope. Having run away from many foster homes, and with no chance to return to his mother and siblings, Devlin is now staying with Uncle George, a distant relative. On George's farm Devlin finds a friend – a old racehorse. This heart-breaking first novel is testament to the power of animals, and the



---

friendship and healing they provide. Annie.

*The Project*

Brian Falkner

Walker Books Australia 2010

ISBN 9781921529795

Luke and Tommy discover the most boring book in the world but its appearance is deceptive, it really hides some very important secrets. But they are not the only people interested in the book; there are now some very dangerous characters in pursuit of the boys and they're about to go on an unbelievable journey where have to work together to save themselves and the world as we know it. An exciting and fast-paced action adventure containing some interesting ideas about history. 11+. Crissi.

*Jonty and Choc*

Vince Ford

Scholastic NZ 2010

ISBN 9781869439385

Jonty and Choc are best friends and are sure they'll continue to be friends at intermediate school next year, but during the holidays they find a mysterious lump of something at the beach which Choc finds it irresistible and it has a strange effect on him. When school starts they are in different classes drawn to new friends and activities, all exacerbated by the strange lump that just might be valuable. Told in colloquial language and examining issues of loyalty and bicultural relationships. 9-12. Crissi.

*Jaguar Warrior*

Sandy Fussell

Walker Books Australia 2010

ISBN 9781921529290

Atl is a temple slave in Aztec times and has been shut in a box, ready to be sacrificed. When a battle breaks out the priest releases him, sending him to another city to seek help. As he flees he is joined by a girl, and later they rescue a young boy who joins them in their flight. But the captain of the guard is in hot pursuit and the children will have to work together, in spite of their differences, if

---

they are to succeed in their mission. Historic information is seamlessly blended into this dramatic adventure. 9-12. Crissi.

*See Ya, Simon*

David Hill

Penguin 2002

ISBN 9780143318026

Originally published Mallinson Rendel 1992

A New Zealand classic, winner of the Storylines Gaelyn Gordon Award.

Simon and Nathan are best friends. They have lots of things in common. But, there's something Simon has that makes the difference. Simon has muscular dystrophy. Over the years, Nathan has watched his friend's physical condition deteriorate, so he knows that Simon's days are limited. A truly beautiful story of friendship. Annie.

*The Whale Rider*

Witi Ihimaera

Penguin 2009 (first published 1987 by Heinemann)

ISBN 9780143011408

This book was about the ways of the past colliding with the customs of today. In an isolated part of New Zealand a young girl's relationship with her great-grandfather was in difficulties because of his rejection of her. It was Kahu's craving for her Koro's love that motivated her to ride a Southern Right whale that had ancient connections to her whanau's past. She rode the whale to safety thus saving her whanau and the whale and in the process gained the love and respect of her beloved koro that she so desired.

Wayne.

*Alabama Moon*

Watt Key

Farrar, Straus and Giroux 2006

ISBN 9780374301842

This is a great survival story and won the E.B.White Read Aloud Award in 2008. Moon is 10-years-old and has been brought up by his anti-government war veteran father, deep in the Alabama

---

woods. He can fend for himself but has no idea how the outside world works and when his father dies he is quickly picked up by the authorities and put in a boys' home. He soon escapes back to the woods accompanied by some new friends and a couple of police bloodhounds and with the beginnings of some new ideas about the world. There is a positive ending as Moon gradually learns to trust other people and think for himself. This is well worth hunting down. 10-14. Helen B.

*Secret Friends*

Elizabeth Laird

Hodder Children's Books 1997

ISBN 0340664738

When Lucy started at her new school Rafaella was the first person she met. The two girls walk home from school together and enjoy each other's company. Back at school Lucy soon realises that this friendship will cost her acceptance with the 'in' group and feels bad as she invented the nickname that everyone is tormenting Rafaella with. The two girls stay secret friends; however subsequent events mean Lucy never has the opportunity to change this. In this short novel the theme of friendship and standing up for a friend is conveyed well. Helen S.

*Hidden Talents*

David Lubar

Saint Martin's Press 2003

ISBN 9781406312157

Martin's been sent to a school full of misfits. The group he ends up with are all losers. Well, they hate the tag, but they're beginning to believe it. Until Martin figures out they all have some special, hidden, talents. Talents of the psychic kind. Fun. Annie.

*Tamburlaine's Elephants*

Geraldine McCaughrean

Usborne Publishing 2007

ISBN 9780746090930

Historical fiction requires a painterly eye for landscape, a fierce imagination for the elaboration of plot and lyrical attention to

---

characterisation. This book has it all as we surge across Mongolia and the Indian subcontinent in pursuit of great riches with Tamburlaine and his ruthless warriors. Rusti knows he doesn't quite belong but it is not until he forms an unlikely friendship with Kavi and the captured elephants that he begins to understand how different from the marauders he really is. This is a book of sheer genius. Enough said – just read it with or to children in the 10 to 14 year age band. Helen V.

*The Agony of Alice*

Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

Atheneum 1985, Simon & Schuster 2007, Atheneum 201

ISBN 9781442423633

This is the first book written in the Alice series which covers a number of issues including dating, sex, relationships, families and friendship. Alice is a motherless girl and her struggle to deal with the problems of growing up, without a mother's support and advice, form the basis of these books. Alice's three best friends, and the way their friendship changes as they grow older, are an important part of Alice's story. There are now 23 books in the series, which includes 3 prequels, but this was the first one written and introduces Alice at age 11. As she grows older the books introduce themes more suitable for older readers so be aware that there is good reason for some titles being found in Junior Fiction in your local library, and others in Teen or Young Adult. A number of titles will be reprinted this year with new covers. Helen B.

*A Bridge to Terabithia*

Katherine Paterson

Penguin 1995 (Puffin Modern Classics edition, originally published in 1977)

ISBN 978014036618

Leslie invents Terabithia, an imaginary land where she and Jess can be all they wish. Here they can escape the realities of their lives. When Leslie is killed, trying to get to Terabithia, it is the strength of their friendship and shared history that enables Jess to carry on, alone. Annie.

---

*Maniac Magee*

Jerry Spinelli

Little Brown 1999

ISBN 9780385734653

Jeffrey Lionel Magee's story is an award-winning one – and one everyone should read, at least once. After his parents die he is sent to live with an aunt and uncle whose marriage is disintegrating, with him in the middle. Having had enough, he runs. And he keeps running. Along the way, he crosses invisible boundaries between races and neighbourhoods, making friends as he goes. And earning the nickname, Maniac. A true modern fable. Annie.

*When You Reach Me*

Rebecca Stead

Text Publishing 2009

ISBN 9781921656064

If you've ever read *A Wrinkle in Time* then this book is for you (and even if you haven't). It's a story about friendships why they inexplicably break down and the dynamics of family and school relationships. Miranda, in Grade 6, is helping her mother prepare for a game show when she receives several mysterious notes which accurately predict her future.

Miranda met her best friend, Sal, when their single mothers both moved into their apartment building in the same weekend. They have been inseparable ever since – through kindergarten and school, walking out and walking home – until the day Sal gets punched by a strange boy and elects to shut Miranda out of his life. Miranda is not just upset but can't understand why her friend has closed his door on her and then another mystery joins the first one. Miranda starts finding notes left in strange places, quite clearly for her, and she begins to realise that whoever the person is who is leaving them, they know a lot about her life; not just the past, but things that haven't even happened yet. Miranda is forced to extend her circle and explore some new avenues in order to figure out what is going on.

This story unravels both mysteries in a clever and engaging way that never under-estimates the reader. The characters are unusual

---

yet very real and it has something that's a seeming rarity in fiction – a 'mum's boyfriend' who is both a delight and a solid ally of the story's young protagonist. Wrap this up with humour, a mind-bending storyline and some real wisdom about friendships and you have a winner.

This is a profound story which unfolds beautifully about the possibilities of time travel. It won the Newbury Medal in 2010 and reads aloud well. Wayne & Sanya.

### *White Boots*

Noel Streatfeild

Collins 1951, HarperCollins Essential Modern Classics 2008

ISBN 9780007270026

The post-war setting and middle class British values of this story will read like historical fiction to modern children but the story of Harriet, sent to skating to improve her health, and her subsequent friendship with rich and spoilt skating star Lalla will still ring true. This new edition is introduced by Cathy Cassidy. 'It explores the themes of jealousy, loyalty and dependency within a friendship...Friendship is something that matters to all of us, whatever our age, but it takes hard work and determination to make a friendship strong, as Harriet and Lalla find out.' 10+. Helen B.

### *The Ant Colony*

Jenny Valentine

HarperCollins 2009

ISBN 9780007283590

Sam has run away from home and finds himself living in a dilapidated, old house alongside a rather disparate group of people. Sam just wants to be alone but 10-year-old Bohemia who lives upstairs with her rather feckless mother is looking for a friend. Each chapter is narrated in turn by one of these characters, so we get to know the house and the people who live there through their eyes. Sam has his own secrets and seems intent on punishing himself for something while Bohemia has learnt to manage her life with very little help from her mum. This is a story very much about friendship between different ages and learning to help each other

---

(a bit like ants). In the end it is the resourcefulness and determination of Bohemia that is the catalyst for a change that seems to signal better times for everyone at 33 Georgiana St. A welcome gift for Jacqueline Wilson fans. Helen S.

*Flipped*

Wendelin Van Draanen

Alfred A Knopf 2010 (film tie-in edition)

ISBN 9780375863479

When Bryce moves into the neighbourhood Juli looks at his blonde hair and blue eyes and flips. She determines to be his friend and eventually girlfriend. Bryce however just wishes Juli would leave him alone. In alternating chapters each relates the same incidents from their own perspective as they move from second to eighth grade. Then Juli overhears a conversation and discovers Bryce isn't quite the person she thought and about the same time Bryce starts to think a girl who keeps hens, sits in trees and cares about her family might be worth knowing, but is it too late for their feelings to be flipped? 10+. Helen S.

*Sammy Keyes and the Cold Hard Cash*

Wendelin Van Draanen

Yearling Books 2009

ISBN 9780440421139

In this, the 12th book in the always engaging series about intermediate school-aged sleuth Sammy Keyes, the mystery falls right in her lap – well, on her fire escape. Sammy, by force of circumstance living illegally with her Gran in a council-run low-income retiree's condominium, accidentally frightens an elderly man on the fire escape as she makes her illicit way home for the night. Realising he's having a heart attack, she tries to help him but instead finds herself receiving what turns out to be his dying wish – that she 'get rid of' the huge bundles of cash he has in his pockets. When, after his death, she discovers the cash is still where she threw it for him, she is faced with a huge moral dilemma. Where did he get so much money? Does 'getting rid of it' include finally being able to help out her Gran and her best friend Marissa? What should she do about money that isn't really hers to spend? In this,

---

another fast-paced and enjoyable read about this sassy young heroine, Sammy's relationships with her steadfast friends sees an interesting shift as she becomes (however temporarily) a young woman of means. This entire series is highly recommended for readers aged 10-13. Sanya.

*Dacey's Song*

Cynthia Voigt

Atheneum 1982, Harper Collins 2007

ISBN 9780007100163

This is the sequel to *The Homecoming*, in which a family of four abandoned children eventually find their grandmother. *Dacey's Song* continues their story as they settle in and learn to make friends. As they have previously been shunned by other children because of their home circumstances they are not used to having friends and Dacey is inclined to react to overtures of friendship with suspicion and hostility. This is a heart-warming and absorbing story in which Dacey and her whole family learn to give and take and accept the friendship which is offered to them. Newbery Medal 1983. 11+. Helen B.

*A Girl Called Harry*

Philippa Werry

Scholastic 2010

ISBN 9781869439705

Harry (real name: Harriet Jasmine Emerald Florence Mabey McDonald) is in year eight. New girl Mallory, joins their class and Harry's best friend Jessica latches on to her and suddenly Harry's on the outside of their little group, made worse when Harry's mum gets a job working for Mallory's father. Harry blames Mallory for her woes but eventually sees she might be wrong and they both need a sense of humour to work things out. A great view of the difficulties children deal with at this age. 9-12. Crissi.

*Best Friends.*

Jacqueline Wilson, illustrated by Nick Sharratt

Random House 2008

ISBN 9780440868514



---

Alice and Gemma have been best friends forever (since the day they were born) even though they are not one bit alike. Gemma is outspoken, energetic and loves soccer while Alice is always neat and is very good at drawing. Told from Gemma's perspective the story of their lives, friendship and response to the news that Alice is moving with her family to Scotland is both humorous and touching. The girls have always thought they will be together forever and they struggle, particularly Gemma to come to terms with the decision that has been made. A story of friendship, change, making new friends and keeping old ones. Helen S.

## Teens

### *Bass Ackward and Belly Up*

Elizabeth Craft and Sarah Fain

Little Brown 2007

ISBN 9780140366181

Four friends reassess their career choices – including the ultimate sin of NOT going to college. Their separate stories weave together, each with distinct voices, in this tale of friendship and support.

Annie.

### *Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes*

Chris Crutcher

HarperTempest 2003 (originally published 1993)

ISBN 9780060094898

Moby and Sarah Byrnes – always Sarah Byrnes, never just Sarah – are best friends. They're both outcasts: Moby, real name Eric, because of his size (hence the nickname), Sarah because of her burns. As Moby starts to trim down, thanks to swimming, he worries he will lose Sarah Byrnes' friendship, as she can never change. As they negotiate the changes in their relationship, Sarah Byrnes' history comes to the fore, a time when she will really need her friends. Many of Crutcher's novels contain story friendships, particularly among the dispossessed, particularly *Stotan*. Annie.

### *Someone Like You*

---

Sarah Dessen

Hachette 2009

ISBN 9780340997482

Halley and Scarlett are best friends. In this, their senior year at high school, they need each other more than ever. Halley's in love for the first time, and under pressure to lose her virginity. Scarlett's boyfriend has just died in a motorcycle accident, just as she finds out she is pregnant. Both need each other – and this causes strains upon their relationship. But true friendships can withstand great pressure. Annie.

*An Innocent Soldier*

Josef Holub

Scholastic 2007

ISBN 9780439627726

Holub tells the story of 16-year-old farmhand, Adam, who is enlisted in the Wurttemberg division by his master, in the place of the farmer's own son who has received his conscription papers. He forms a friendship with another young boy of noble birth. It's 1812 and they are part of Napoleon's Grande Army journeying to Moscow and then surviving to be one of the 300 Wurttemberger soldiers to return from the 15,000 that set out less than a year earlier. This grand tale of friendship portrays the hardship and futility of war. Kerry.

*The Whole Business with Kiffo and the Pitbull*

Barry Jonsberg

Allen & Unwin 2004

ISBN 9781741141122

Calma tells the story of her best friend, Kiffo, and his escalating confrontations with their new English teacher – the Pitbull. Kiffo's had a hard life, and the Pitbull can't appreciate him, nor make allowances. As things deteriorate, Calma continues to document the unfolding tragedy. Annie.

*Stoner & Spaz*

Ron Koertge

Walker Books 2002

---

ISBN 9780744590555

'Whoever said no man is an island has never been to the Rialto on a Friday night,' wisecracks Ben Bancroft, nicknamed Spaz due to the cerebral palsy that particularly affects one side of his body. Ben has been raised by his grandmother since his father died and his mother cut out on him years ago. He does his duty by his wealthy and conventional gran, whose ambitions for him involve Stanford University and Harvard Business School, and who still involves herself in the intimate details of his life at age 16. Alone both at school and home, Ben escapes to the local movie theatre whenever he can, watching movies over and over to soak up the details of their language and construction.

It is here that Ben has an unexpected encounter with drugged-up tough-girl Colleen Minou, known at school as Stoner, which develops into an unusual but rewarding friendship for both of them. While the ending is far from happily ever after, this witty and somewhat gritty tale, is an uplifting one of young people seeing possibilities and making choices for themselves. Recommended for ages 15+, particularly for fans of *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. Sanya.

### *Silent to the Bone*

E. L. Konisburg

Walker Books 2006 (originally published in 2000)

ISBN 9781877135514

Connor proves he is a true friend to Branwell after Branwell becomes an elective mute, following an incident with his baby sister. Branwell isn't speaking, so no one quite knows what happened on that day. But Connor is really close to Branwell, so close he can *hear* what Branwell's shouting on the inside. Suspenseful and tense, this is an emotionally challenging read. Annie.

### *Crusade*

Elizabeth Laird

Macmillan 2007

ISBN 9780330456999

*Crusade* is a telling of the Third Crusade of the late 12th century

---

which operates as a vehicle to explore the uneasy relationship between Islamic and Christian cultures. Adam is a god-fearing serf from the midlands of England whose mother has died unshriven and who is convinced her only chance of reaching heaven is if he is able to acquire some soil from the holy city of Jerusalem to scatter on her grave. Adam joins many other serfs who have put themselves into the service of Crusader Knights on the Pope's assurance that returning Jerusalem to Christian rule is the work of God and that any who die in the attempt are guaranteed their place in paradise. Salim is a Muslim boy, the younger son of a merchant, who in the face of imminent invasion of his city of Acre by an army of Crusaders, is apprenticed to a Jewish physician known to his father, who is leaving the city for his home in Jerusalem. On the journey the doctor and his boy are waylaid by Mamluks and find themselves in the personal service of the Sultan Saladin, at the front line of the conflict. As the boys' paths inexorably cross, their experiences of each other run counter to the prejudices each held of the other's people. Adam, in particular, comes to learn that these marauding Infidel he came so determined to repel value peace and beauty and are learned in many fields. His friendship with Salim will change his perspective forever. This is an enjoyable adventure, recommended for readers aged 12-15. Sanya.

*Chicks with Sticks (It's a Purl Thing)*

Elizabeth Lenhard

Puffin 2005

ISBN 0142406953

Four very different teenage girls discover friendship through a shared love of knitting. It's amazing how the world can be sorted, and support offered, while crafting. At least to those who don't craft in company. Knitting hints and patterns are an added bonus. First in a series. Annie.

*Will Grayson Will Grayson*

David Levithan and John Green

Text Publishing 2010

ISBN 9781921656231

---

This is a tender and honest portrayal of making connections with people during the difficult adolescent years. The story is about two boys who live in the Chicago area, both named Will Grayson, each with their own hang-ups. There is a marvellous secondary character who is a friend of one of the Wills, Tiny Cooper; gay and loving it to the point of writing and performing a musical of his life. He is the glue that binds the story together. 13+. Kerry.

*On the Jellicoe Road*

Melina Marchetta

Penguin 2010

ISBN 9780143011194

First published in 2006 by the author of *Looking for Alibrandi*. This is another coming of age story that explores relationships, family and identity. Taylor is 17, a boarder at Jellicoe School and a reluctant role model for other students. When she was little her father died and her mother left her on the side of the road. She has been cared for since then by her guardian, Hannah. When Hannah suddenly disappears all Taylor has to try and make sense of her past is a manuscript she left behind. This is a story about five friends who lived 20 years ago in the same area. The connections between the past and the present take some time to figure out (and some readers might be inclined to give up). However it is worth persisting as it is very satisfying when the connections are made. An intriguing plot, with interesting and believable characters teenage readers will identify with. Helen S.

*Finding Cassie Crazy*

Jaclyn Moriarty

Pan 2004

ISBN 9780330418034

Cassie, Em and Lydia are best friends at Ashbury High. When their teacher requires them to become pen friends with students at Brookfield High – home of psychos and drug-dealers (at least in Ashbury mythology) – events come to a head. Cassie's losing it, and the only one she can confide in, is her anonymous pen friend, who has his own issues. Annie.

---

*Big Mouth & Ugly Girl*

Joyce Carol Oates

HarperCollins 2003

ISBN 9780007145737

Although it may seem as those tales of unlikely friends – the popular one and the outsider – are commonplace, this hard-hitting novel proves they can be gems. Matt is ostracised by his classmates when his ‘big mouth’ creates a big problem. The only one on his side is ‘Ugly Girl’, Ursula. A true look into the pressures that can imperil teens. Annie.

*Nation*

Terry Pratchett

Random House 2009

ISBN 9780552557795

A massive storm comes and sweeps away all Mau has known – his family, his village – his nation – has gone. Daphne is the sole survivor of a ship, caught up in the storm and beached on Mau’s island. Together they form the beginnings of a new nation, as other survivors join them. Although this can be read by younger readers, the themes – some very subtle – deserve the attention and care of older readers. Annie.

*Saints of Augustine*

P. E. Ryan

HarperTeen 2008

ISBN 9780060858124

Sam and Charlie used to be friends. A year ago, Sam cut all ties. Now, he’s finding his secrets are harder to keep. Charlie has his own issues he’s struggling with. When they can no longer cope alone, they learn that their friendship is strong and can help them deal with their issues. 15+. Annie.

*The Teashop Girls*

Laura Schaefer, illustrated by Sujean Rim

Simon & Schuster 2010

ISBN 9781416967941

Annie and her lifelong friends, Zoe and Gemma, are beginning to

---

grow apart, as you often do in your teens. When Annie takes on a job at her grandmother's teashop, she works to keep the business going – and to rebuild her links with her old friends. A wonderful read, which includes quotations and recipes, amongst other treasures. Annie.

*My Worst Best Friend*

Dyan Sheldon

Walker Books 2010

ISBN 9781406304206

Gracie and Savannah are best friends who are growing apart. Savannah's bad side and characteristics come out, and she begins to involve Grace in her deceptions. Gracie finally realises that she needs to make a break with Savannah, and to relegate her importance in her life. Annie.

*The Whole of the Moon*

Duncan Stuart

Longacre Press 2002

ISBN 9781877135514

Circumstances can make friends from unlikely corners. Kirk is rich, sporty, has everything... including cancer. Now in the chemo ward of Starship Hospital, Kirk finds people he can identify with. Other teens undergoing treatment. With them, he can find his new place, and his new identity. Annie.

*Jerome*

William Taylor

Longacre Press 1999

ISBN 1877135291

Marco and Kate draw together after the sudden death of their mutual friend Jerome. Kate, in the US, and Marco, in New Zealand, correspond and share their feelings. As they do so, hidden truths are revealed. Hard hitting and powerful. Annie.

*Single Fin*

Aaron Topp

Random House NZ 2006

---

ISBN 9781869417840

Fin is into surfing, and forms a strong friendship with Mike, a fellow surfer. Fin struggles to survive after Mike dies, until he is adopted by Mike's Uncle Bobby. As Fin fights to find himself, it is the friendships he has built that sustain him. Annie.

*Girls in Love*

Jacqueline Wilson, illustrated by Nick Sharratt

Random House 2007

ISBN 9780552557337

First in a series about Ellie and her friends Nadine and Magda. Fun, scary, sad – just like life, really. This offering will not disappoint Wilson's fans, and is perfect to introduce her to newbies. Annie.

*I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This*

Jacqueline Woodson

Puffin 2010

ISBN 9780142417041

Marie befriends 'white trash' Lena – the only one of her school mates to do so. Drawn together by their shared experiences – both are motherless – Marie doesn't know what to do when Lena confides in her. Lena has done everything you're supposed to, when you're being molested, but has run out of options and hope. Lena decides the only way out is to take her younger sister and run. Although this sounds bleak, there is hope. And that's partly because of the strong relationship between the girls. Annie.

*How Not to Be Popular*

Jennifer Ziegler

Random House 2008

ISBN 9780385734653

Sugar Magnolia – Maggie – is sick and tired of making new friends. Her parents love moving about every year, but Maggie's tired. Tired of making friends and losing them. So, this time, she's figured out that, in order to survive, she has to make herself unpopular – so unpopular no one will want to be her friend. But her plans backfire. Annie.