



Best Friends

By Jacqueline Wilson

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Gemma and Alice have been best friends since they were both born on the same day in the same hospital. It doesn't matter that Gemma loves soccer while Alice prefers drawing, or that Gemma is always getting into trouble while Alice is a model student and daughter. But when Alice has to move, their friendship is put to the test. They call each other and write letters, but they're used to seeing each other every day. Can Gemma bear to celebrate her birthday without Alice? Can she stand it when Alice starts making new friends? And with Alice living hundreds of miles away, will they ever see each other again?

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 3–6—Gemma has always been a high-energy handful, and Alice has always been quiet and orderly—but those differences haven't stopped them from being best friends since the day they were born. Nothing will tear these two apart—except Alice's parents, who are making her move to Scotland. Gemma tries to cope, but she's overwhelmed by sadness and her fear that Alice might abandon her in favor of a new best friend. Her attempts to keep it together are complicated by her persona non grata status with Alice's parents. It takes a road trip and an incident with Alice's snooty new friend Flora to convince her that a best friend can move away without being lost forever. Wilson blends the spunk of Ramona Quimby with the impulsiveness of Joey Pigza, with the resulting disasters being about what one would expect. Gemma's emotional outbursts are understandable (if theatrical); she walks the fine line between grief-fueled temper and melodrama. If there are unsympathetic characters here, they are the girls' mothers: Gemma's mother's attempts at reassurance are to tell her daughter that she'll make new friends and will forget all about Alice; Alice's mother is pleased that the move separates the girls as she considers Gemma a bad influence. Readers will appreciate the reassurance that it's perfectly okay to feel sad and angry when a friend moves away.—*Brandy Danner, Wilmington Memorial Library, MA*

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From [Booklist](#)

When Alice's family decides to move to Scotland, 500 miles away, Gemma is devastated. Although completely different from each other, the girls have been best friends for as long as they can remember. They even share a birthday. Alice, always the girly-girl, enjoys the turmoil that surrounds Gemma, who barrels through life. Wilson, a former British Children's Laureate, once again shows her understanding and respect for her young readers' feelings and abilities. Most of the older characters assure the girls that they will soon recover and find new friends; others, including Gemma's grandfather and supportive brothers, respect the friends' grief and help them stay in touch. It is the girls themselves, though, who find ways to reassure each other that their friendship will last. A page of small cartoons illustrating important events introduces each chapter. Believable, sympathetic characters; recognizable home and school situations; and plenty of humor (including some of the cake-in-the-face sort) will ensure that this becomes, like Wilson's other titles, a popular read for middle-grade girls. Grades 4-7. --Kathleen Isaacs

Review

“Wilson is doing something important and rare. She's so good, it's exhilarating.” *Philip Pullman*

“Wilson blends the spunk of Ramona Quimby with the impulsiveness of Joey Pigza, with the resulting disasters being about what one would expect. . . . Readers will appreciate the reassurance that it's perfectly okay to feel sad and angry when a friend moves away.” *School Library Journal*

“While stories about best friends separated by moving are plentiful, Wilson's British fillip makes this one original, with Gemma's strong first-person voice and personality and Sharratt's black-and-white drawings in strip-style sketches before each chapter teasing the reader and forecasting the next turn of events.” *Kirkus Reviews*

“Believable, sympathetic characters; recognizable home and school situations; and plenty of humor (including some of the cake-in-the-face sort) will ensure that this becomes, like Wilson's other titles, a

popular read for middle-grade girls.” *?Booklist*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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