

A selection of great books which are appropriate for use with primary school children (Key Stage 1, some books are also appropriate for Early Years). These books can be used to talk about different families and to address and challenge gender stereotypes.

## CELEBRATING DIFFERENCE AND DIVERSITY

### **Giraffes Can't Dance**

by **Giles Andreae**



█ Gerald the giraffe longs to dance,

█ but his legs are too skinny and

█ his neck is too long.

At the

█ Jungle Dance, the warthogs

█ waltz, the chimps cha-cha, and

█ the lions tango. 'Giraffes can't dance,' they all jeer when it's

Gerald's turn to prance. But with some sound advice from a wise cricket, Gerald starts swaying to his own sweet tune.

Published by Orchard Books, ISBN 0439287197

### **I Am Living in 2 Homes (I Am Book)** by **Garcelle Beauvais**

Jay and Nia are  
the children of  
two worlds and  
two homes.  
Follow the twins  
from I Am  
Mixed as they both address  
the  
difficulties of having  
parents who are no longer together  
and discover the benefits of having  
two very different homes to explore  
and enjoy. Published by Stranger Kids,  
ISBN B00JKGDP98

## The Different Dragon

by Jennifer Bryan

This story 'The Different  
Dragon'  
is about a little  
boy named  
Noah  
that is being read a  
bedtime story  
and he ends up meeting  
a dragon  
in it. The dragon is trying to be  
something that other  
people and his friends expect him to  
act and be like, but he is the total  
opposite of what they expect him to  
be and Noah is trying to help him by  
talking to him and convincing him  
that being different or unique is ok  
and there will always be people or  
friends out there that like you for  
whom you are. Published by Two Lives  
Publishing,  
ISBN 0967446864

## Mister Seahorse

by Eric Carle

A stunning picture book from  
Eric  
Carle about Mister Seahorse  
and  
other 'male mothers',  
with  
special acetate pages that hide  
fish behind rocks and reeds. As  
he floats through the sea,  
Mister Seahorse meets a Mr  
Stickleback, Mr Tilapia, Mr Kurtus  
and many other fish fathers caring for  
their eggs and babies in the most  
surprising ways. *(Also appropriate  
for Early Years)*  
Published by Puffin, ISBN 0140569898

## Friends

by Kathryn Cave

■ Once I was lost in the  
wood, in  
■ the wood, and you found  
me.  
■ Once I was afraid of the  
dark,  
■ of the dark and the creatures  
■ that hide there. You didn't  
laugh and it wasn't so  
bad with you at my side there. A tale  
of friendship and the importance of  
being there for one another through  
good times and bad. *(Also  
appropriate for Early Years)* Published  
by Hodder Children's Books  
ISBN 034065600X

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## Something Else

by Kathryn Cave

Something Else  
tries to be like  
everyone else.  
But everything  
he  
does shows  
how different he is.

Then one night, something  
shows up. Has Something Else  
finally met

someone just like himself?

Published by Mondo Publishing,

ISBN 1572555637

## Cock-A-Moo-Moo

by Juliet Dallas-Conte

Poor Rooster has  
forgotten how  
to crow. Cock-a-moo-  
moo?

Cock-a-oink-oink?  
Rooster can't

seem to get it right. When  
all of  
the other animals make fun  
of

him, Rooster  
loses hope. Will he ever  
remember how roosters  
crow? One night, a surprise visitor  
arrives, it's Fox. Can Rooster save the  
day and remember what to say?  
Parents will delight in reading this  
enchanting tale, and children will crow  
and oink along to the tale of the  
rooster trying to find his identity in a  
confusing world.

*(Also appropriate for Early Years)*

Published by Little, Brown Books for  
Young Readers, ISBN 0316605050

## The Other Ark

by Lynley Dodd

The rain is fast  
approaching  
and Noah wants to  
set sail.

There are still lots of animals  
queueing to get on to the Ark  
but it's absolutely jam packed. Noah  
has to ask his friend, Sam Jam Balu  
to take the other Ark and all the rest  
of the animals. So he valiantly  
starts gathering hip-hopping hippos,  
mad kangaroosters and flying  
flapdoodles - not to mention the  
dithering dingbats and sabre-tooth  
mice! But no sooner has San Jam  
Balu finished his task than the Other  
Ark is well and truly grounded. *(Also  
appropriate for Early Years)* Published  
by Puffin, ISBN 0141500182

## Tyrannosaurus Drip

by Julia Donaldson

Everyone knows  
that  
tyrannosauruses are big  
and  
scary, so when a placid  
duckbill  
dinosaur's egg ends up in the  
wrong nest confusion is sure to  
ensue! When the baby  
dinosaur hatches out, he's so out of  
place that his grisly big sisters call him  
Tyrannosaurus Drip. Poor little Drip:  
all he wants is a quiet life munching  
on water weed. *(Also appropriate for  
Early Years)* Published by MacMillan UK,  
ISBN 1405090006

**Welcome to Lizard Lounge** by Laura Hambleton

Lizard thinks all lizards are the same until he arrives at Lizard Lounge and meets new reptile

friends with different names and qualities – Gecko, Iguana, Gila Monster, Salamander and Komodo Dragon. Together they discover what makes them special. Published by Milet Publishing, ISBN 1840593903

**The Toothless Tooth Fairy** by Shanelle Hicks

Bella had it all. The hair, the dress, and the smile. One day, her most important asset was missing, her tooth! Will Bella find the perfect tooth in time for the contest? Will Zelda, the meanest of the fairies, destroy Bella's chances of winning the crown? Take a journey onto Cloud Nine as Bella searches for a new tooth only to discover the tooth, I mean truth, behind her true beauty. Published by Mirror Publishing, ISBN 1612251404

**Priscilla and the Pink Planet** by Nathaniel Hobbie

Priscilla lives on a planet where everything is pink.

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“Pink, pink, pink!” she cries with fright. “Pink to the left and pink to the right!”

Priscilla dreams of seeing the world in other colours and ends up teaching the Great Queen of Pink that diversity leads to true beauty. Told in lyrical verse, here is a clever read-aloud that's sure to become a modern classic.

Published by Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, ISBN 0316735795

**It's Okay to Be Different** by Todd Parr

This book is great because it talks about how we are all

different. It's Okay to be Different, is a book that helps young children understand that there are no two people exactly alike and that it is okay to be who you are. It helps children learn to embrace the differences in the world around them and be proud of themselves and their families. It is a great book to read at the beginning of the school year or for social emotional

development.

Published by Little, Brown Books for  
Young Readers, ISBN 0316155624

## Colour Me Happy

by **Roddie Shen  
and Ben Cort**

This host of  
vibrant colours  
and  
humorous  
illustrations help  
toddlers explore and learn to  
express a range of emotions.  
Small children will fall in  
love with the adorable kitten as they  
turn the pages of this colourful book.  
Encourages children to explore and  
understand their feelings with simple,  
rhythmic text – perfect for even very

young children and a joy to read  
aloud.

*(Also appropriate for Early Years)*

Published by Pan Macmillan, ISBN  
0230741681

## Together

by **Jane Simmons**

Have you noticed how  
being  
with your best friend  
makes  
your day that little bit brighter?  
Mousse and Nut love playing  
together – but can they really  
be friends when they're so  
different? Of course then can!  
Published by Orchard (NY), ISBN  
1846162882

## EMOTIONAL LITERACY

### Truelove

by **Babette Cole**

Truelove is a dog who  
has had  
his wet, loveable nose  
put out  
of joint by the arrival of a  
new  
baby in the house. He tries his  
best to attract his  
owners' attention, but finally gives up  
and leaves home. Soon he falls into  
bad company and is forced to return  
shamefaced. His owners are  
delighted to see him – and his slightly

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dodgy new friends, of course. The  
text is made up of a series of  
aphorisms about love, while the  
illustrations depict the little dog's own  
experiences. The combination is  
sometimes ironic, sometimes sincere  
but it is always hilarious and the book  
is full of warmth and understanding.  
Published by Red Fox, ISBN 0099433052

### Claydon Was a Clingy Child by Cressida Cowell

Claydon goes  
everywhere with  
his mother: sky-diving,  
skateboarding, skiing and  
more.

He thinks it is safer but  
one day

he decides that maybe, just  
maybe, life might be

better not clinging to his mother's leg.

This delightful new title from a star  
author is a hilarious yet sympathetic  
look at one child's growing sense of  
independence. Published by Hodder &  
Stoughton,

ISBN 0340757248

## No Matter What

by Debi Gliori

A parent fox and a child fox  
live

in a house together. They  
are

named 'Large' and  
'Small'.

Small has a temper tantrum  
which overturns furniture and  
knocks paintings out of

alignment, and when Large asks

what's wrong, Small expresses worry  
that Large doesn't love Small at all.  
Large assures Small this is not the  
case. May provide reassurance for an  
insecure or anxious child that their  
parents' love for them is  
unconditional and constant, despite  
the circumstances. It sensitively  
reinforces the message that love  
carries on, even after someone dies.

Published by Bloomsbury, ISBN 0747563314

## Aaaarrgghh! Spider!

by Lydia Monks

All Spider wants is to  
be a

family pet. But the  
family

whose house he lives in  
are

terrified of him. Whenever he  
tries to show them what a great  
pet he would make, they simply  
cry, 'Aaaarrgghh! Spider!'. Themes  
of tolerance and misunderstanding  
make key discussion points for  
children in this book.

Published by Egmont Books (UK),  
ISBN 1405210443

## This Is Our House

by Michael Rosen

George says the  
cardboard

house is his and no  
one else

can play with it. But

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when

some of George's friends give  
him a taste of his own

medicine and claim the house as  
theirs, he has to agree that it should  
be for everyone to play with. (*Also  
appropriate for Early Years*) Published  
by Walker, ISBN 1406305642

## Frog in Love

by Max Velthuijs

Frog is worried  
because his  
heart is  
beating too fast,  
could  
he be in love? But who is  
he in  
love with? This enchanting  
mini-book will delight children  
of all ages and strike a  
chord with anyone who  
knows what it is to be in love.  
Published by Henry Holt and Co.  
(BYR), ISBN 0805076549

## Jennifer Jones Won't Leave Me Alone

by Frieda Wishinsky

Jennifer Jones is in love  
and  
she doesn't care who  
knows it.  
But the object of her  
affection  
sure does. He's embarrassed by  
the love poems, the terms of  
endearment, the cute  
little red heart stickers, and especially  
the laughter and snickers from his  
classmates. He wishes that Jennifer  
Jones would just move away, and  
one day, she does. There's no more  
sickening stickers, no more silly  
poems, and no more fun. Does he  
actually miss Jennifer Jones?  
Published by Lerner Publishing  
Group ISBN 0876149212

## CHALLENGING GENDER NORMS AND STEREOTYPES

### The Princesses Have a Ball by Teresa Bateman

The story is a  
fractured fairy  
tale, based off of the  
twelve  
dancing  
princesses. In the  
original story, the  
princesses  
wear out  
their shoes night after night  
by going dancing at the ball. This  
story is not quite the same. The  
princesses in this story still wear out  
their shoes every night but it's not by  
dancing; it's by playing basketball!

These princesses love to get out on  
the court every night and  
play so long that their shoes wear  
through. Published by Albert  
Whitman & Company, ISBN  
0807566284

### Be Who You Are

by Jennifer Carr

Hope was born in a boy's  
body,  
but has always felt like a  
girl  
inside. Hope's family supports  
him  
when he says he no longer wants  
to be called a boy or dress like a

boy; 'Always remember to be who you are. Remember that we love you, and we are so proud of you.' (p. 17). Hope's parents find a group for families like theirs. With their support, Hope expresses a desire to be addressed as 'she', and then to be named 'Hope'. Based on the author's experiences with her children. Published by Authorhouse, ISBN 1452087253

## Oliver Button Is a Sissy

by **Tomie dePaola**

This is a great one  
for the  
beginning of the year  
or if

there's  
bullying or  
teasing going  
on in the classroom.

The little  
boy is confident about  
being  
himself, even though  
he's teased for being a sissy  
because he likes dancing rather than  
sports. At the end, it's not Oliver that  
changes but his family and the  
people around him. This book lends  
itself well to making schema  
connections because most students  
have had the experience of feeling  
different from others and/or being  
teased.

Published by HMH Books for Young  
Readers, ISBN 0156681404

## When Kayla Was Kyle

by **Amy Fabrikant**

Kyle doesn't  
understand why  
the other kids at  
school call  
him names. He looks like other  
boys, but doesn't feel like  
them. Can Kyle find the words  
to share his feelings about his  
gender and can his parents help him  
to transition into the person he was  
born to be? When Kayla Was

Kyle is a picture book children of all  
ages will want to read because it  
addresses the increasingly emerging  
ideas around gender diversity.

Published by Avid Readers Publishing  
Group, ISBN 1612861547

## The Sissy Duckling

by **Harvey Fierstein**

Let's just say that  
Elmer's  
not your run-of-the-  
mill  
duck. He likes to decorate  
cookies, enjoys building  
sand castles instead  
of forts, and would rather put on  
puppet shows than play sports. Being  
different is fine for sweet Elmer, he's  
as happy as a duck in water doing  
everything he loves. Published by  
Simon & Schuster Books for Young  
Readers, ISBN 1416903135



## Bill's New Frock

by Anne Fine

One morning, almost as if  
in a  
dream, Billy wakes up to find  
that  
he has turned into a girl!  
His  
mother casually dresses him in a

pink dress and sends him off to  
school, where he realizes  
how differently girls are treated. A  
unique story that will serve as a  
springboard for discussions among  
young readers. (*Also appropriate for  
Key Stage 2*) Published by Egmont  
Books Ltd,  
ISBN 140520060X

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## I Am Jazz

by Jessica Herthel and  
Jazz Jennings

Jazz loved pink  
and dressing  
up as a mermaid and  
didn't  
feel like herself in  
boys'  
clothing. This confused her  
family, until they took  
her to a doctor who said that Jazz  
was transgender and that she was  
born that way. Jazz's story is based  
on her real-life experience and she  
tells it in a simple, clear way that will  
be appreciated by picture book  
readers, their parents, and teachers.  
Published by Dial Books, ISBN  
0803741073

## Jacob's New Dress

by Sarah Hoffman, Ian  
Hoffman

Jacob loves playing  
dress-up,  
when he can be  
anything he  
wants to be. Some kids at school  
say he can't wear 'girl' clothes,  
but Jacob wants to wear a  
dress to school. Can he convince his  
parents to let him wear what he  
wants? This heartwarming story  
speaks to the unique challenges  
faced by boys who don't identify with  
traditional gender roles. Published by  
Albert Whitman & Company, ISBN  
0807563730

## Jump

by Michelle Magorian

Every Saturday, Steven  
watches  
his sister at her ballet  
class –  
jumping and dancing – and he  
longs to join in. But his mother  
says that real boys  
don't dance; they play games like

basketball. However, there's one skill that you need for both ballet and basketball and fortunately for Steven, it's the thing that he loves doing best.

Published by Walker Books Ltd,  
ISBN 0744589614

## **Tough Chicks**

**by Cece Meng**

From the moment Penny, Polly, and Molly hatch from their eggs, the whole farm knows they are truly tough chicks. They wrestle worms, rope roosters, and are often found under the hood of the tractor. All the other animals and even the farmer himself tell Mama Hen to make her chicks good. 'They are good!' Mama Hen replies. But could her chicks be too loud, too independent, and too tough? Lively

language and bold illustrations capture all the fun and humor of this delightfully different farmyard romp that's also a resounding endorsement for letting girls be girls (even if they're loud and tough and like to play with tractors.)

Published by Clarion Books, ISBN  
0618824154

## **The Paper Bag Princess**

**by Robert Munsch**

The Princess Elizabeth is slated to marry Prince Ronald when a dragon attacks the castle and kidnaps Ronald. In resourceful and humorous fashion, Elizabeth finds the dragon, outsmarts him, and rescues Ronald, who is less than pleased at her un-princess-like appearance. Published by Annick Press, ISBN 0920236162

## **Free to Be...You and Me**

**by Marlo Thomas**

Running Press is proud to offer this beloved 1974 children's classic. It's the original,

innovative book that celebrates diversity, challenges stereotypes, and encourages kids to be themselves in a joyful, positive manner, through a collection of songs, poems, and stories to be read aloud and shared with new generations.

Published by Running Press, ISBN  
0762413069

ISBN 0906500915

## Mummy Never Told Me

by Babette Cole

What are tummy buttons for,  
and

how do they get there?

What

does the tooth fairy really look  
like? Why do grown-ups have  
hair in their ears and

up their noses, but sometimes  
none on their heads? Why do  
Mummy and Daddy lock you out  
of their bedroom, and where do  
they go at night?

Babette Cole explores these  
questions and many more with her  
wonderfully sharp text and riotously  
funny illustrations.

Published by Red Fox, ISBN 0099407132

## Worm Loves Worm

by J.J. Austrian

You are cordially  
invited to  
celebrate the wedding  
of a  
worm and a worm. When  
a

worm meets a special worm and  
they fall in love, you

know what happens next: They get  
married! But their friends want to  
know, who will wear the dress? And  
who will wear the tux? The answer is,  
it doesn't matter. Because Worm  
loves Worm.

Published by Balzer + Bray, ISBN  
0062386336

## If I Had a Hundred

Mummies by Vanda

Carter

A little girl  
imagines what it  
would  
be like to have 100  
mummies,

eventually deciding that she is  
happy with just the two she's got.

Published by Onlywomen Press,

## ABC, a Family Alphabet

Book by Bobbie Combs

Have fun with the kids,  
moms,  
dads and pets in this  
delightful

book that celebrates LGBTQ  
families as it teaches young  
children the alphabet.

Published by Two Lives Publishing,  
ISBN 0967446813

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## Jack & Jim

by Kitty Crowther

When Jack, a  
blackbird,  
ventures out of

the woods to  
see the ocean for the first time,  
he meets Jim, a gregarious  
seagull. They fly  
together all day, and become fast  
friends. But when they visit Jim's

village, their fun ends. They are met with stares and rude remarks. The other seagulls don't like Jack because he looks different. Then Jim discovers that Jack can do something no other seagull can – he can read! It is the strength of Jim and Jack's friendship – and the remarkable power of story – that eventually opens the minds and changes the hearts of the village seagulls.

Published by Disney-Hyperion,  
ISBN 0786806141

## Hello, Sailor

by Ingrid Godon

Matt lives in a lighthouse. He watches the sea every day for ships and for his friend, Sailor. Rose and Felix say Sailor is never coming back, but

Matt won't give up hope. Surely Sailor will come back for Matt's birthday? This gentle story of hope and friendship, complemented by Ingrid Godon's subtle illustrations, is a beautiful picture book for all children and one that might also be used to discuss the subject of same-sex relationships.

Published by Macmillan UK, ISBN  
0333992903

## Our Twitchy

by Kes Gray

Twitchy and his parents live in a burrow and munch on carrots, just like any bunny family. But when Twitchy wonders why he doesn't look like his parents, the answer surprises him. How can the three of them truly be a family if they're not really the same? With lots of love (and plenty of carrots) Twitchy's parents show him that they are indeed a family after all. This sweet, funny adoption story will appeal to children and parents alike. Published by Henry Holt and Co., ISBN 0805074546

## Picnic in the Park

by Joe Griffiths

Tells the story of Jason's birthday picnic and his guests.

In so doing, it introduces children to a range of family structures, including two and one parent families; adoptive and foster families; gay and lesbian families; and step families; and more, showing a diverse range of adults and children. Using the device of a birthday picnic in the park, each page shows a new set of guests coming to the party. Each one brings food and presents!

*(Appropriate for Early Years)*

Published by British Association for Adoption & Fostering, ISBN  
1905664087

## **Dad David, Baba Chris and Me** by Ed Merchant

Seven year old Ben leads a pretty ordinary life, save for the fact he has two dads (Baba Chris and Dad David) who adopted him. The book goes on to express the emotional turmoil, due to his fear of rejection and concern for his birth parents, which Ben experiences after his adoption. Ben gets teased and bullied at school because he has two dads. David and Chris go on to explain how two fathers are able to love the same way a mom and dad would. *(Also suitable for Key Stage 2)*  
Published by British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF), ISBN 1905664893

## **Mommy, Mama, and Me** by Lesléa Newman

Rhythmic text and illustrations with universal appeal show a toddler spending the day with its mommies. From hide-and seek to dress-up, then

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bath time and a kiss goodnight, there's no limit to what a loving family can do together. Shares the loving bond between same-sex parents and their children. *(Appropriate for Early Years)*

Published by Tricycle Press, ISBN 1582462631

## **Daddy, Papa, and Me** by Lesléa Newman

Rhythmic text and illustrations with universal appeal show a toddler spending the day with its daddies. From hide-and-seek to dress-up, then bath time and a kiss goodnight, there's no limit to what a loving family can do together. Share the loving bond between same-sex parents and their children. *(Appropriate for Early Years)*

Published by Tricycle Press, ISBN 1582462623

## **King and King** by Stern Nijland, Linda de Haan

Once there lived a lovelorn prince whose mother decreed that he must marry by the end of the summer. So began the search to find the prince's perfect match and lo and

behold, his name was Lee. You are cordially invited to join the merriest, most unexpected wedding of the year. King & King is a contemporary tale about finding true love and living happily ever after, sure to woo readers of any age.

Published by Tricycle Press, ISBN 1582460612

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King & King soon discover that there's no adventure more wonderful than starting a family of their own.

Published by Tricycle Press, ISBN 1582461139

## And Tango Makes Three

by Justin Richardson, Peter Parnell

In the zoo there are all kinds of animal families. But Tango's family is not like any of the others. This illustrated children's

book

fictionalises the true story of two male penguins who became partners and raised a penguin chick in the Central Park Zoo. Published by Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, ISBN 0689878451

## The Family Book

## King & King & Family

by Stern Nijland. Linda de Haan

Join newlyweds King Lee and King Bertie on their journey into the noisy jungle. The kings are greeted by wild animal families, but the royal travelers suspect that something more significant awaits them in the trees.

by Todd Parr

All families are unique and that is what makes your family special. That is the message this book is trying to explain to children with its big, bold colours and large, easy text. With contrasting ideas on opposing pages the book is easy to read and it gets its message out loud and clear.

Published by Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, ISBN 0316155632

## Emma and Meesha My Boy: A Two Mom Story

by Kaitlyn Taylor Considine

This is a delightful story of little girl with two moms as she learns how to be nice to her cat. Follow along as Emma gets in trouble trying to play with Meesha Kitty and cheer as she learns to treat him with care. *(Suitable for Early Years)*  
Published by

TWOMOMBOOKS.com ISBN  
1413416004

## One Dad, Two Dads, Brown Dad, Blue Dads

by Johnny Valentine

Two children – one  
with blue  
dads, one from a  
more traditional  
family – compare notes in this  
light hearted book about parents  
who are different. In the  
end, of course, they discover that  
blue dads aren't really that different  
from other dads. Except for one thing.  
Published by Alyson Books, ISBN

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mock the silly law and get  
it taken away. Published  
by Alyson Books, ISBN  
1555831990

## Spacegirl Pukes

by Katy Watson

Young spacegirl is  
especially  
lucky to have two mothers  
and a  
very curious cat nearby  
when  
rocket troubles and nausea begin.  
Published by Onlywomen Press,

ISBN 0906500877

## Tadpole's Promise

1555838480

## The Duke Who Outlawed Jelly Beans

by Johnny Valentine

This is a series of fairytales  
that  
depict diverse families  
through  
fun and engaging stories. For  
example, in one story the Frog  
Prince leaves his mean  
parents to live with his rescuer,  
Nicholas. In another, a Duke states  
that all families must have one  
mother and one father, to which the  
children in the land

by Jeanne Willis

Where the willow tree  
meets  
the water, a tadpole met  
a  
caterpillar. They gazed into  
each other's tiny eyes, and  
fell in love. 'I love  
everything about you,' said the  
caterpillar. 'Promise you'll never  
change.' And foolishly the tadpole  
promised... But we  
all know that tadpoles don't stay  
the same, and neither do  
caterpillars. Will they still be able to  
love each other?  
Published by Atheneum Books,  
ISBN 0689865244

Compiled by Rachael Burdon, blurbs and covers from [www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com)