Helping your children choose books they will love

I reading

Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

Opening extract from

BFFs: Sink or Swim

Written by

Holly Robbins

Published by

Stripes Publishing

All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator

Please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk

For the Pixies: Gwen & Peter

STRIPES PUBLISHING
An imprint of Little Tiger Press
1 The Coda Centre, 189 Munster Road,
London SW6 6AW

A paperback original
First published in Great Britain in 2012

Text copyright © Belinda Rapley, 2012
Cover illustration copyright © Joe Berger, 2012

ISBN: 978-1-84715-238-1

The right of Belinda Rapley to be identified
as the author of this work has been asserted by
her in accordance with the Copyright,
Designs and Patents Act, 1988.

All rights reserved.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is
available from the British Library.

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not,
by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out,
or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior
consent in any form of binding or cover other than that
in which it is published and without a similar condition,
including this condition, being imposed upon the
subsequent purchaser.

Printed and bound in the UK.

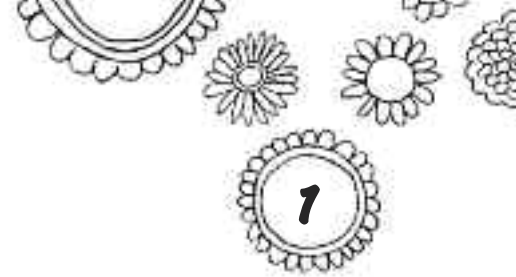
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Holly Robbins

BFFs

Sink or Swim

Stripes



I get a serious case of new school nerves (unlike my BFF!)

"Ellie! If you don't hurry up you'll miss the bus!" Mum called from the hall.

I grabbed my bag and hurried downstairs. It felt like a trillion butterflies had woken up inside me after a whole summer asleep. Normally I couldn't wait to get back to school after the summer holidays. But this year was different – because in three days' time I'd be starting a whole new school, not just a new term. My heart skipped a beat whenever I thought about it. And today me and Jas were having a trial run of the route to make sure we didn't get lost on Monday.

"I've printed out a list of the bus times for you,"

Mum said, waving a piece of paper at me as I yanked on my trainers. "Now, are you sure you know where you're going?"

"Um, I think so," I said, suddenly feeling uncertain.

"I can come with you, if you like," Mum offered, as I took the paper and stuffed it into my bag.

"No, it's OK, me and Jas will be fine!" I opened the front door and stepped out into the early September sunshine. "See you later!"

I half walked, half ran to the end of my road and round the corner to Jas's flat. Jas and I had been best friends since for ever, and did everything together. I was about to knock when the front door flew open. Jas's mum, Gloria, greeted me with Jas's little sister, Lulu, balanced on her hip.

"Now, Ellie," Gloria began, putting on her stern voice before I could even say hello, "you're more reliable than my head-in-the-clouds daughter, so I'm giving this to you. Don't lose it, you hear?"

She shoved a piece of paper at me. On it was a hand-drawn map of the route, detailing every post box and shop on the way.

"Right, thanks, Mrs Cole," I said, as I took the paper and popped it in my bag, next to Mum's timetable.

Jas appeared at the door, clutching a neon-pink bag.

"Hi, Ellie!" she beamed, grabbing my arm. "Right, let's go!" She kissed Lulu goodbye, then stepped past her mum.

"Remember to ask the bus driver where to get off," Gloria called.

"You've said that a hundred times this morning," Jas said, rolling her eyes dramatically and making me laugh. "We know what we're doing… Sort of!" she added to me, under her breath.

As we headed down the path, Gloria hurried after us.

"And make sure you sit downstairs where you can see the driver," she called out.

"Yes, OK, Mum!" Jas giggled, before whispering, "Quick, let's get out of here!"

We rushed out of earshot and made for the bus stop two streets away. Jas glanced sideways at me as I pulled out Mum's timetable and checked my watch.

"Nervous?" she asked. Jas could always tell what I was thinking, without me having to say a word.

"Maybe just a little," I admitted.

"Thought you might be. That's why I bought you this!" she grinned, delving into her bag. She pulled out the latest copy of *Fab Girl!*, my favourite magazine.

"We can have a flick through on the bus. Oh, and there's an article about 'starting new schools with confidence', too – thought it might come in handy…"

"Brilliant – thanks, Jas!" I beamed.

Introducing Jasmine Cole, aka Jas, officially the most thoughtful – and best – friend in the whole world! We met on our first day at nursery and have been inseparable ever since. We know each other inside out, which is why Jas could tell how terrified I was about starting a new school without me having to say a word.

We were almost at the bus stop when we heard frantic pedalling from behind. Suddenly a BMX whizzed past. The brakes squealed and the bike skidded sideways right in front of us, stopping us in our tracks. It was Jas's brother, Josh.

"You forgot your bus pass, loser," he said, flinging it towards Jas. I panicked for a second, convinced I'd forgotten mine, too. I scrabbled through my bag, my heart racing, until my fingers closed round it. From next Monday I'd have to remember it *every day*. The nerves about swapping the comforts of Woodview Primary for the scarily vast Priory Road Secondary were starting to kick in. BIG TIME. And losing my bus pass was ***fear number 1***.

"Oh, and for the record," Josh continued, sitting back in his saddle, one foot resting on the handlebars, "I know we're going to be on the same bus each day, but that doesn't mean you can act like you know me. I'll be with my mates and I can't be seen hanging about with Year Sevens. Clear?"

Jas tutted as she dodged round him, dragging me with her. "Like I'd be seen dead with you anyway!"

I felt my stomach flip. After being top of the school at Woodview, we were about to find ourselves bottom of the social pile at Priory Road, ignored and dismissed by every year above us. That'll be ***fear number 2***.

"And don't forget what Mum said," Josh shouted out. "Make sure you sit near the driver!"

He spun his bike round and sped off, laughing like a hyena.

Jas scowled after him. "When I get to Priory Road, Mum and Josh will *finally* have to stop treating me like a baby. I mean, I'll practically be a teenager."

"Jas, we're only eleven," I said, as the bus appeared round the corner and pulled up beside us. We jumped on, flashing our cards at the driver. Jas defied her mum's advice and raced up the stairs, with me in hot pursuit. "We've got two more years before we're thirteen…"