

The Super Adventures of
OLLIE and BEA

Wise Quackers and
Bats What Friends Are For
Renée Tremé

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Format: Paperback

Recommended for: 4 to 7 year olds

Themes: Friendship, differences, humour, graphic novel

Applicable to learning areas: English language, literacy and literature

Summary

Ollie (an owl who wears glasses) and Bea (a bunny with very big feet) will delight young readers in this super sweet and funny full-colour graphic novel series that celebrates friendship and the differences that make us special.

Book 3: Ollie has a mystery to solve, and Bea suspects FOWL play!

Ollie is OWL grown up and doesn't play with stuffed toys – but then where did Bea's toy go? It might take a DUCKtective to help QUACK this case!

Book 4: Some-BUNNY is missing! HOO could it Bea?

Ollie makes a BAT-tastic new friend, but Bea's not very HOPPY about it. Can Ollie show Bea that there's OWLways room for one more friend?

'There's a warmth to these stories where friendship and resilience triumph alongside many laughs. The books may be light on text, but they are absolutely packed to the brim with jokes and puns, making them ideal for fans of the Elephant and Piggie series who are ready to add a few more words to their reading. As Ollie and Bea would say, these books are a "hoot"!' – Kim Gruschow

Suggestions for Classroom Discussion and Application

Before Reading

[If your class is familiar with earlier books in the series you may not need to do the following exercise. If students are not familiar with the earlier books you can introduce them to the series with either book three or four, as the stories are entirely standalone.]

Hold up the cover of book three or four to show your class and run your finger along the book's title, reading it out loud. Now ask the following questions:

- [Pointing to the owl on the cover] What kind of animal is Ollie? [Once it is established that he is an owl, ask] Owls have particularly good eyesight normally, so can you see anything that might be a little unusual about Ollie?
- [Pointing to the bunny on the cover] What kind of animal would you say Bea is? [Once the class says a bunny or rabbit, ask] What things can you tell me about bunnies?
- How can you tell Ollie, the owl, and Bea, the bunny, are friends in this story?
- Do you think this is going to be a funny or serious story?
- A PUN is a joke that plays with words that sound alike or have more than one meaning. Can you find a PUN in the story's title? [Read the title slowly again.]

Comprehension Questions

Wise Quackers

1. Why doesn't Ollie want to play with Duckie when Bea first suggests it? (page 6)
2. What game do Ollie and Bea like to play? (page 7)
3. When Ollie starts playing with Duckie he imagines they are both super.... (page 13)
4. How does Ollie lose Duckie? (pages 14–15)
5. What other objects does Ollie lose trying to 'rescue' Duckie from the tree? (pages 17, 23, 29)
6. Why doesn't Bea get mad with Ollie when she discovers what happened to Duckie? (page 46)
7. Describe one of the stories that Ollie's friends tell to explain why Duckie is in the tree. (page 45)
8. How do Ollie, Bea and their friends finally get Duckie (and all the other objects) out of the tree? (pages 58–59)
9. Why would it have been much better if Ollie had been honest with Bea in the first place about losing Duckie?
10. What does Ollie learn about being a good friend in the story?



Bats What Friends Are For

1. Why do Ollie and Kimmee become friends? (pages 6–9)
2. Why does Ollie think Kimmee doesn't have to try hard to make new friends? (pages 10–11)
3. True or False: Kimmee is a very encouraging friend when Ollie first starts to skateboard? (pages 18–19)
4. What mystery do Ollie and Kimmee agree to solve together? (page 23)
5. According to Ollie, what is a 'clue'? (page 24)
6. What does Kimmee mistake Bea for when they first meet? (pages 28–29)
7. Why was Bea not nice when she first met Kimmee? (page 58)
8. What superpower does Bea decide Kimmee has after they become friends? (page 62)
9. Who are Kimmee's friends? (pages 60–61)
10. What lesson do you think Bea learned about making new friends in this story?

Funny Puns

- A **pun** is a joke that plays with words that sound alike or have more than one meaning. Open up *Wise Quackers* on pages 4–5 and explain why *DUCK-UMENTARY*, *Cheese and QUACKERS!* and *We are totally STUFFED. Especially Duckie.* are puns. In *Bats What Friends Are For*, Kimmee's jokes are often puns. Choose three of your favourites and explain why you think they are funny.

A Fine Friend

- Ollie and Bea are very good friends but sometimes they need to learn lessons on *how to behave* as a friend. What qualities do you think make a very good friend? Make a list of words to describe your perfect friend and give examples of things that perfect friend might do in the school playground.

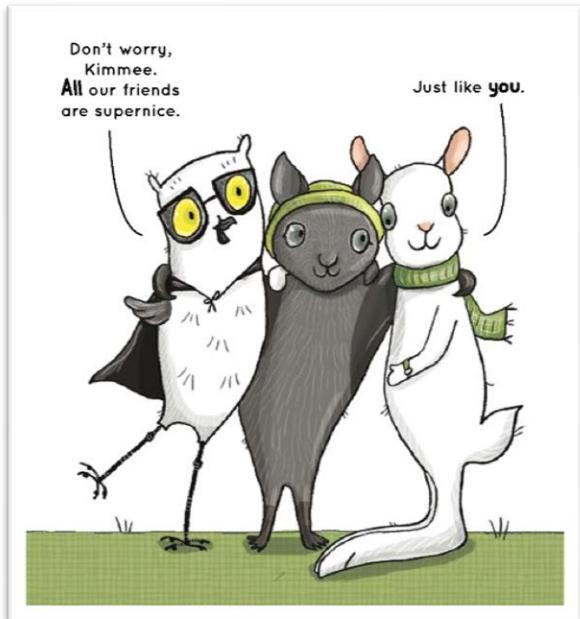
Visual literacy in Graphic Novels

- You don't always need words to tell you how a character is feeling. Renée Treml is very good at *showing* us how Ollie and Bea are feeling when she draws their faces and/or bodies. Find examples of Ollie feeling angry, sad, frustrated and happy in *Wise Quackers* and Bea feeling jealous, embarrassed and happy in *Bats What Friends Are For*. Explain what it was in each image that helped you recognise how that character was feeling? Come up with some different feelings – excited, tired, full of energy – and see if you can capture them in your own drawing.
- Words tell us a lot about what happens in a graphic story but the way words are **shown** on a page can tell us a lot, too. Turn to pages 44–45 of *Wise Quackers* and explain why some of Bea's words are in capital letters. Why are some words thicker and darker than others? Why are there bubbles as well as straight lines coming out of her friends' heads on the page opposite? Turn to page 45 in *Bats What Friends Are For* and look at the image of Bea falling off Kimmee's skateboard. How does the way the word **WHOAAAAA** is shown emphasise her losing control of the skateboard? Why are some words shown in white in both stories?

- **Lines** can communicate ideas about speed and direction in a graphic story. Turn to pages 14–15 of *Wise Quackers* and explain how Renée Treml shows us Duckie’s path when thrown in the air. Now compare this with the image in the bottom panel of page 22. How does she show Ollie’s backpack travelling in a circular motion?
- The term **panel** is used in graphic novels to describe each sequential image and its accompanying words. Panels are often similar in size but can be bigger or smaller at points, and sometimes different shapes as a special way to tell the story. Why do you think the panels on page 15 of *Wise Quackers* are large and tall, while on pages 56–57 they are smaller and wider? [Hint: look at what is happening in the story for clues.]

About the author and illustrator

Renée Treml is the author and illustrator of several successful picture books for very young readers, including *Once I Heard a Little Wombat*, *Sleep Tight, Platypup*, and *Wombat Big, Puggle Small*. She is also the creator of the highly engaging and funny junior fiction graphic novel *Sherlock Bones and the Natural History Mystery* and its sequel, *Sherlock Bones and the Sea-Creature Feature*. Renée has a degree in environmental science and a passionate love of natural history.



In the author’s own words

‘This story grew from the two main characters, Ollie and Bea, who started out as doodles in my sketchbook. Each character has a minor physical challenge: Ollie has terrible eyesight despite being an owl, and Bea has exceptionally large feet. I was a version of both of these characters as a child. I wore thick glasses with a fogged lens, a patch over one eye and heavy corrective orthopaedic shoes. I wrote their stories so that these characters can learn to overcome the same worries I had by finding friends who help bolster their inner strengths of courage, kindness and compassion.’

– Renée Treml