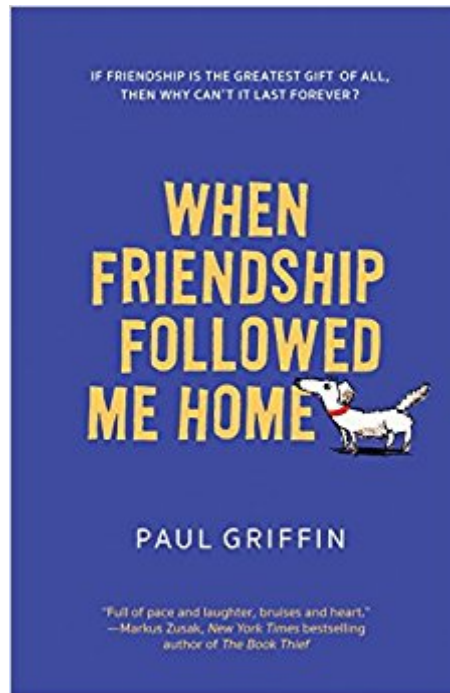




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# When Friendship Followed Me Home



## Synopsis

"If you have middle schoolers who are too young to fully grasp *John Green's The Fault in Our Stars* and love dogs, give them this sweet tearjerker." *School Library Journal* "In this beguiling tearjerker, a foster kid's luck slowly changes after he befriends a scruffy pup he finds outside the library." *People magazine* Ben Coffin has never been one for making friends. As a former foster kid, he knows people can up and leave without so much as a goodbye. Ben prefers to spend his time with the characters in his favorite sci-fi books until he rescues an abandoned mutt from the alley next-door to the Coney Island Library. Scruffy little Flip leads Ben to befriend a fellow book-lover named Halley *yes, like the comet* a girl unlike anyone he has ever met. Ben begins thinking of her as *"Rainbow Girl"* because of her crazy-colored clothes and her laugh, pure magic, the kind that makes you smile away the stormiest day. Rainbow Girl convinces Ben to write a novel with her. But as their story unfolds Ben's life begins to unravel, and Ben must discover for himself the truth about friendship and the meaning of home.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 0590 (What's this?)

Paperback: 272 pages

Publisher: Puffin Books; Dgs Rep edition (July 18, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0147510066

ISBN-13: 978-0147510068

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.7 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 86 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #28,304 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #17 in *Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Adoption* #40 in *Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Death & Dying* #52 in *Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > Books & Libraries*

Age Range: 10 and up

Grade Level: 5 and up

## Customer Reviews

Gr 5 *Twelve-year-old Ben, a science fiction fan with low self-esteem after years*

of foster care, meets a stray dog outside the Coney Island Public Library. Flip, with his big eyes and propensity to lick everyone's mouth, in turn helps Ben get to know a girl who is fighting cancer, and her family. When Ben's life gets turned upside down again, Flip remains. This is a "kitchen sink" book; it has bullying, adoption, homelessness, death, abuse, and cancer. However, the optimism of the protagonist combined with the positivity lent by the presence of this loving canine makes this book somehow less hard-hitting than the author's usual YA dramas. Griffin never throws too much at readers at once, taking his protagonist through each successive challenge, and the dialogue remains consistently light and free of overt emotion. References to science fiction and middle grade literature abound, and there's some serious admiration for dogs, librarians, and Jacqueline Woodson's *Feathers*. The weakest part of this novel is the convoluted science fiction story Ben and the aforementioned girl unspool throughout. The plot-within-a-plot is written by these two imaginative kids with unfettered fancy, with the same quality of a child's writing. If readers can get past those sections, however, the relentless pull of Ben's slow character growth through his drama and the big loving doggy presence will pull misty-eyed readers to the very end. VERDICT If you have middle schoolers who are too young to fully grasp John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars* and love dogs, give them this sweet tearjerker. —Rhona Campbell, Georgetown Day School, Washington, DC --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

A New York Times Book Review Editors' Choice  
A People magazine Popular Pick  
A Summer 2016 Kids' Indie Next Pick  
A Publishers Weekly Best of Summer Pick  
"[T]his bittersweet, well-paced book left me with faith that people can feel discarded, as though everything they love will be taken from them, and still end up whole, if they are touched by love of friendship."  
—The New York Times Book Review  
"Griffin writes beautifully about family, friendship, belonging, and loss in a story that is sure to leave every reader with at least a tear in his or her eye, if not a pile of soggy tissues." --Examiner  
"If you have middle schoolers who are too young to fully grasp John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars* and love dogs, give them this sweet tearjerker."  
—School Library Journal  
"The dialogue between Ben and Halley is snappy and smart (think John Green for middle-graders), and the sci-fi story the two friends write together reveals the emotions behind their wit." --BCCB  
"Full of pace and laughter, bruises and heart. Paul Griffin is the sort of writer you're torn between telling the whole world about and keeping all to yourself."  
—Markus Zusak, author of *Printz Honor Winner The Book Thief*  
—Friendship is an absolutely beautiful, heart-expanding book. I cried, but more than that I felt this giant balloon of love for everyone. This story

convinced me all over again that love and imagination are life's biggest magic. It'll make you want to grab hold of everyone important to you and lick them on the nose.

•Rebecca Stead, author of Newbery Award winner *When You Reach Me* "Some books change the way you see the world. Some change the way you breathe. This book will leave you breathless. This is Paul Griffin's best book yet and that's really saying something."

•Patricia McCormick, author of National Book Award Finalist *Sold* "When Friendship Followed Me Home is both a beautiful book, and an honest book; it is, in fact, beautiful because it is honest. We see the pain of loss, and the glory of community. We see love in its many forms, and we witness the truth that love goes on despite all barriers. Cheer for Ben and Halley: it is kids like these who are our hope."

•Gary D. Schmidt, author of *Okay for Now* "Entrancing, magical, tragic, and uplifting."

•Kirkus Reviews, starred review "As in his young adult books, Griffin (Adrift) handles hard topics with penetrating insight and honesty, while balancing painful moments (and there are many) with levity."

•Publishers Weekly, starred review "This is a multi-tissue read...Griffin's characters are unique and charmingly multidimensional. Readers looking for a deep read will take to this story as quickly as Flip takes to Ben."

•Booklist

I wish I could give more stars to this book. I highly recommend it to readers who want a "Fault in our Stars" type story without the sexual content. Ben has experienced a life of hard knocks but finally has a mom who loves him and is finding his place in middle school when a dog and a girl turn his life upside-down. Flip the dog shows us the world of Read to Rufus, a reading program for struggling learners and Halley becomes the friend we all wish we had when growing up. Prepare to smile and cry as you read this book and ignore anyone who says the the "book in a book" aspect is poorly done. That inner book is clearly written by tweens so it isn't supposed to be excellent; it's supposed to show you the thoughts of two best friends.

I loved Paul Griffin's YA books *Orange Houses* and *Stay With Me*; this latest middle grade book was so powerful, funny, sad, and I think it should be read by everyone! Ben is a foster child who has found his forever home with the therapist who helped him through a rough patch. One day he finds a dog who changes his life, makes him try new things, and meets many new wonderful people through his association with this perfect little ambassador. As Flip and Ben navigate life and their bond, they meet Halley who urges Ben to use flip as a therapy dog; Flip helps reluctant readers become better readers. Halley and Ben become fast friends, write novels, and give Flip belly rubs.

Halley has a wonderful mom (librarian extraordinaire) and great dad (Master Magician). As Ben falls in love with this family, there is heartbreak ahead; how will Ben and Flip fare with all the bumps in the road life throws at them? Definitely a favorite for me; realistic with good doses of happiness and sadness and special characters you truly love; highly recommended!

From the characters' names to their strong voices, this novel will pull you in quickly. It's the kind of writing that sinks into your soul. I already know I will read it over and over. I want more Ben, Flip, Halley, Tess and the Lorentz family. I just finished and I want to go back to page 1 and start again. This novel is real, and really brilliant. You will love Ben Coffin with every ounce of your being. You'll wish you could be his friend. And you'll wish you could rub Flip's stomach. Read this book and the words will make you laugh, cry, then laugh again. This is magical perfection.

I ordered this book due to a recommendation from a friend. I finished it within 2 days. I thoroughly enjoyed it. The characters were described in such a way that I felt like I knew them. I loved the way the kids have such a great imagination. I feel like that is not as abundant anymore and it should be, it is just a good book! I would recommend this to anyone and everyone.

I absolutely loved this book. In fact, I loved it so much that I used it as a summer book club choice for my graduating fifth graders. There are so many enduring themes . . . friendship, loss, courage, trust, creativity. I will be using this book in my classroom this year to generate meaningful writing and discussion. Great read!

Parents you will want to read this one too. Some kids may not be ready for the content. My daughter had to read this for reading club this summer.

This was a book I bought for a teenager to read. I read it too out of curiosity and can only say how thrilled I am that I read this. It's beautifully written and it is the most wonderful story about friendship and love and acceptance and family and really,,,all the important things in life. The best is that it's such a great read. It's pleasure and heartwarming and happy and bittersweet.

ENJOYED THE BOOK. I DONATED THE BOOK TO A LIBRARY IN MEDFORD , WI AFTER RI READ IT.

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