

Learning the importance of true friendship

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There are many degrees of how any of us would classify our friends. We can be friendly with someone without being a close friend. We can be closer friends with others, creating a desire for their company from time to time. Then there are the friends that we feel closest to of all — those that we deeply respect, have affection for, trust, and yearn to share our time and life with.

It's normal and healthy to have friends that fit into all of those categories, but ultimately most of us seek to have a deep friendship with someone. There is great joy in that kind of sharing and trust, but it doesn't happen simply because we want it to. It happens, in part, because of the friend we are in return.

Sometimes we all need to be reminded of what it takes to be a friend, and today's reviewed books highlight that in three distinct ways with great messages found in great books, for children and adults alike.

Books to Borrow

The following books are available at many public libraries.

"The Snow Goose" by Paul Gallico, illustrated by Beth Peck, Alfred Knopf, 46 pages

Read aloud: Ages 8-9 and older.

Read yourself: Age 10 and older.

Philip, a lonely hunchback artist, lives in seclusion in an old lighthouse by the English Channel. Frith, an innocent, shy village girl, befriends Philip, and slowly but with certainty overcomes her fear of Philip's grotesque shape and learns to see the beauty of the person within.

The snow goose, saved from death by Frith and nurtured back to health by Philip, proves to be the truest and most courageous of friends. It is the snow goose who aids Philip in his daring rescue of Allied soldiers stranded on the beaches of Dunkirk during World War II — a moment of tremendous courage for Philip, Frith and the snow



Books to borrow, books to buy

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goose.

The words of Paul Gallico flow like music and are perfectly complemented by Beth Peck's lush and moving illustrations. Love, friendship, courage, heroism — these are but a few of the traits so beautifully woven throughout this story. Nothing short of a masterpiece, "The Snow Goose" is meant for all ages, meant to be read many times over.

Librarian's Choice

Library: East Bridgewater Public Library, 32 Union St., East Bridgewater
Library Director: Jane A. Finlay
Children's Librarian: Anne Vantran
Choices this week: "My Big Sister/Brother" by Valorie Fisher; "Chasing Vermeer" by Blue Balliett; "Only Emma" by Sally Werner

Books to Buy

The following books are available at favorite bookstores.

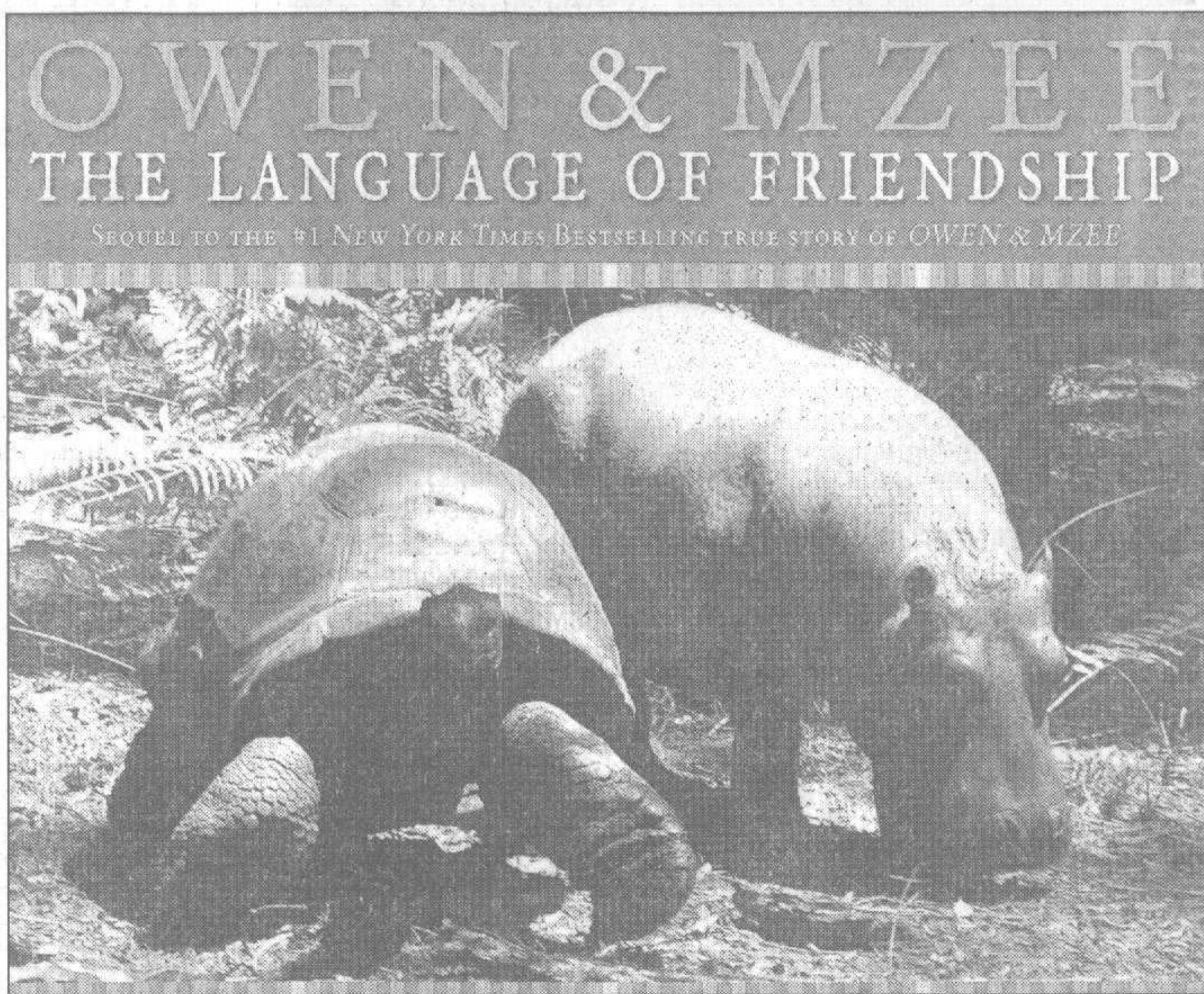
"Owen & Mzee: The Language of Friendship" by Isabella Hatkoff, Craig Hatkoff, and Dr. Paula Kahumbu, photographs by Peter Greste, Scholastic, 2007, 36 pages, \$16.99 hardcover

Read aloud: Age 6-7 and older.

Read yourself: Age 8-9 and older.

The sequel to the bestselling story of "Owen & Mzee," this true story chronicles the first remarkable year of the friendship of a young orphaned hippo named Owen and a 130-year-old tortoise named Mzee.

Their friendship seems unlikely to hu-



mans, yet these two friends are inseparable, fiercely loyal to one another, and obviously accepting of their outward differences. Add to that the language they have developed to communicate with one another and you've got a powerful and important story that teaches a great deal to young and old alike.

"Duck, Duck, Goose" written and illustrated by Tad Hills, Schwartz & Wade Books/Random House, 2007, 40 pages, \$15.99 hardcover

Read aloud: Age 3 and older.

Read yourself: Age 7-8.

Duck and Goose are best friends, and they enjoy doing all sorts of things together.

When a new duck, Thistle, moves into the neighborhood, Duck is delighted. Thistle is a powerhouse of energy, is good at everything, and she makes sure everyone knows it. And while Thistle's talents (and boasting) impress Duck, Goose grows tired of all the competitions Thistle puts forth, and eventually Duck tires of it, too.

A gentle and charming reminder of friendship on several levels, this choice is first rate.

Nationally syndicated, Kendal Rautzhan writes and lectures on children's literature. She can be reached via e-mail: kendal@sunlink.net.