



# A Year with Marmalade

*Alison Reynolds , Heath McKenzie (Illustrator)*

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This is a story about friendship.

It's about losing old friends and making new ones.

It's about change, which isn't always a bad thing...

When Maddy's family relocate for a year, she must leave behind her cat, Marmalade, and her best friend Ella.

The story of the growing friendship between Marmalade and Ella is set against a backdrop of the changing seasons.

## A Year with Marmalade Details

Date : Published August 1st 2012 (first published July 1st 2012)

ISBN :

Author : Alison Reynolds , Heath McKenzie (Illustrator)

Format : Hardcover 32 pages

Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Animals, Cats

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## **From Reader Review A Year with Marmalade for online ebook**

### **Diane says**

A Year With Marmalade is a sweet kids book about friendship. Ella and Maddy are best friends, but one day Maddy announces that she has to go away for a year and asks Ella to take care of Marmalade, her cat. Ella is very very sad, and at first Ella and Marmalade both seem in a funk about the change that has taken place since Maddy has gone away.

As the seasons change, so does Ella and Marmalade's relationship. In fall and winter he warms her feet as she reads by the fire and keeps her warm at night in bed. In summer Marmalade keeps her clothes safe at the beach, by sleeping on them while she swims. He is her bike basket companion as well and much much more.

Told over that one year period that Maddy is gone, as the seasons change and new things happen, A Year With Marmalade, is wonderful story about life's changes, friendship, and the power of pets to transform our lives.

I loved this sweet story and the ending is perfect as well. The illustrations are not overdone and actually use minimal colors, yet to study the drawings on each page you will notice how expressive and well-thought out that the drawings are....perfect really.

Anyone who has had a best friend go away will relate to this book, but even if you haven't I am sure you and your little ones will love this book. It's going to be a favorite kids book of 2013 I think.

5/5 stars

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### **Anne says**

A wonderful book. Colourful and fun. A great aid for parents and teachers to help touch on many subjects relevant to children and the changes they go through. This book approaches those subjects in a fun and gentle way.

Beautifully written and illustrated I highly recommend it to all parents and my daughter will be using it as a teaching resource.

I hope to see it in every school library.

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### **Dolly says**

This book details the experiences of a young girl named Ella who takes care of her best friend's cat, Marmalade, for a year. The story takes the reader through each of the seasons, with Ella and Marmalade spending lots of time together (mostly outside).

I love that Ella was such a good friend to Maddie and was willing to take on such a big responsibility, and that she was so active and caring. We loved the ending, too.

The illustrations are marvelous, with lots of white space and color used to enhance and emphasize more than just fill in the scene. I thought it was interesting that Ella and Maddie are always kept in just black and white while Marmalade always has color.

Overall, it was a nice story about friendship and the seasons changing throughout the span of a year. We enjoyed reading it together.

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### **Angela Sunde says**

Read my interview with the illustrator of *A Year With Marmalade*, Heath McKenzie, on my blog.  
<http://angelasunde.blogspot.com.au/20...>

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### **Shelli says**

The simple illustrations in this sweet picture book are stunning. I would have loved nothing more than to grab a sketchbook and attempt recreating some of the pictures. Ella and Maddy are neighbors and best friends. Maddie's family is leaving for a year and Ella is asked to take care of their cat Marmalade. Marmalade could never replace the hole that is left in Maddie's absence, but she does help pass the time. This book reminded me of childhood and the specialness of friendship. Nice read aloud or book to give to a child who's friendship you value.

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### **Pam says**

A sweet story about learning to have fun when a friend moves away.

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### **Melanie says**

Ella and Maddie are best friends. When Maddie has to move away for a year she brings her cat, Marmalade, to Ella and asked her to care for him while she was gone. Both cat and girl are sad at Maddie's leaving. Marmalade has absolutely no interest in the activities that Ella does and Ella is sad that Marmalade won't interact. Eventually the cat comes around and begins to enjoy Ella's company. And when Maddie comes back they all play together.

A sweet story of adapting to change.

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### **Tasha says**

One autumn, Maddy told Ella that she is going away for a year and asked her to take care of her cat, Marmalade. Both Ella and Marmalade cry and cry when Maddy leaves. Ella can't find anyone to play in the leaves with her, pick and munch apples, or stomp in puddles. Then one frosty morning, Ella wakes up to find her feet warm and Marmalade sleeping on her bed. As winter arrives, Ella and Marmalade get closer and closer. Spring comes and the two work together in the garden and head to the beach together. Maddy returns with the autumn, but what will happen now with Marmalade?

This book is a smart mix of waiting for a friend to return and seasons. Along the way, there is also the chance to make a new friend too. The dance of the seasons moves the story along nicely, creating a timeline along which readers can see the relationship between Ella and Marmalade growing and changing.

It is the illustrations that make this book more than just a book about friendship in a crowded picture book market. McKenzie combines black and white line drawings with bursts of color. Marmalade is always shown as a pop of orange, while the human characters remain black and white. The effect has an appealing lightness.

A picture book about moving, friendships and change, this lovely little picture book would make a nice addition to units on seasons as well. Appropriate for ages 3-5.

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### **babyhippoface says**

Ella's best friend, Maddy, has to go away for a whole year. She asks Ella to take care of her cat, Marmalade, while she's gone. Ella and Marmalade pass the year on the frozen pond, reading by the fireplace, planting a flower garden, and swimming at the beach as they await Ella's return. When autumn comes again, so does Ella, and now the two best friends are a trio that includes Marmalade. In what I think is a terrific ending, Ella's daddy builds a cat-flap in the fence between the two girls' houses just the right size for Marmalade, and the girls, too.

The simple story of friendship is sweet and Heath McKenzie's illustrations are an absolutely perfect companion. The black-and-white line drawings feature big, round eyes on the girls and Marmalade, and curls of hair and branches. While Marmalade is always in full color, only portions of the other images are stamped with vibrant colors that emphasize each season.

I'm pretty sure my daughter would call the pictures "super cute!"

This book clearly shows the changing of the seasons throughout the course of a year and would fit nicely into a classroom unit on the seasons. I think I would have students list the activities that Ella and Marmalade did during each of the seasons.

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### **Stefanie Halliday says**

A very simple book, but the illustrations are phenomenal. McKenzie does amazing things with very simple lines and images. The text placement and layout is also very much a part of the telling of the story. When one friend (Maddy) moves away for a year, the other (Ella) takes care of her cat. For such a short book, it does a

great job of showing that the relationship between the Ella and the cat isn't instantaneous.

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### **Amy Brown says**

Gorgeous artwork with a sweet story!

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### **Jeremy says**

"A Year With Marmalade" is the story of how a Maddy's best friend Ella goes away for a year, leaving her pet cat (Marmalade) in Maddy's care. At first Maddy is upset, but soon Marmalade becomes a comfort to her.

Given that Reynolds usually writes books with very clear cut lessons/messages involved (Teddy Shares, Let's Save Water, etc), this sort of book isn't a surprise. At a glance, "A Year With Marmalade" seems like a perfectly good book for comforting your child when their friend goes away for a while.

However, it's probably a little too specific to be that helpful to most children. Not only does her friend Ella come back, but Maddy is also given a cat to keep her company in the meantime. I feel like most of the time, friends move away permanently and are given no consolation like a cat. So it's really only useful in very specific cases.

Mind you, I am only thinking about this from the perspective of a book vendor. Reynolds doesn't have to write a book that's useful for me to recommend to parents. It just seems a waste to sell a book with a message, if the message doesn't really apply to most kids.

The reason I am so hung up on the message as a selling point is, is that the book really isn't that interesting otherwise. It's probably not going to sell very well on its own. The illustrations are nicer than in most of her books, I will say that!

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### **The Styling Librarian says**

A Year with Marmalade by Alison Reynolds – What do you do when your best friend moves away for a year? What do you do when your best friend leaves her cat with you for that year? Read what happens through the year and beautiful seasons as well with the beautiful character Marmalade. I loved simply getting to know the character and watching how she makes a new friend through the year. Hopeful, happy book.

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### **Rachel says**

A tale of friendship. Ella's friend leaves with her family for a year, but leaves her cat Marmalade with her. Their shared loss slowly turns into shared friendship. They take comfort in one another, and play together, and when Maddy finally returns they all have fun. From the beginning it is known that Maddy will return, so the impact of their loss is not as great as it could have been, but the bond that forms between them is evident

thanks to the wonderful illustrations. The children are drawn simply in black and white, while most else has colour. Their big eyes help to express the range of emotions they feel. Also, the words mimic the events: fonts change for weather, the words fall with the apples, show emotions by being bigger and bolder, etc. All in all it may not be the best fleshed out story, but everything else about it is of a high quality.

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### **Paige M says**

I like the use of color and black line drawings most. The story feels a bit sad, though it really isn't.

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