

The best friends are the ones you make yourself.

About the Book

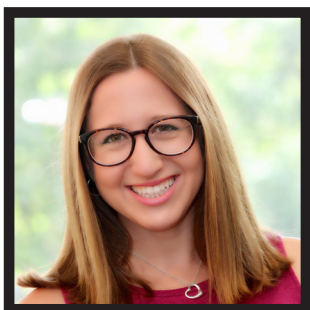
Twelve-year-old Jade wishes her family would leave their no-name Colorado town already—everyone else does, including every friend Jade's ever had. But thanks to her dad's cancer diagnosis, they're not going anywhere. So she makes a friend who won't ever leave her: Zoe, the best best friend anyone could imagine, who lives in the pages of her notebook.

When an experiment gone horribly right brings imaginary Zoe to life, Jade is thrilled. But the strange power she wields over Zoe scares Jade, as does Zoe's increasing popularity. Is it okay to have a friend who *has* to do what you want? Is Jade really ready to share Zoe with the world?



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About the Author



Abby Cooper has been a kindergarten teacher and a K–8 library media specialist. She is now a full-time author of books for children. She has written two novels: *Bubbles* and *Sticks and Stones*. Abby lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

About Tiveda, Colorado

- How does Jade feel about Tiveda, Colorado? How do her feelings change over the course of the book?
- Tiveda is a transient town; lots of people move away. Have you ever said good-bye to a friend who moved? Have you ever been the friend who moved away? What was that experience like?
- What's so special about Tiveda Pond? Is there a place in your town like this pond?

About the Characters

- Read through chapter one. What are your first impressions of Jade? What do you think her main challenges are going to be?
- What are your first impressions of Zoe? What do you think her main challenges are going to be?
- Jade's brother, Bo, seems to make friends easily. How does Jade feel about that? Do you have siblings who are good at something that you struggle with? Are you good at something that your sibling(s) aren't?
- Each person in Jade's family deals with her dad's cancer diagnosis and treatment very differently. What do you think of their coping mechanisms? What are some ways that you have dealt with a painful situation or feeling?
- We don't really know much about Gresham "Clue" Gorham until chapter twenty-seven. Pause before this chapter and discuss Clue. What do you know about him? Read the chapter together, separately or aloud. How do your feelings about Clue change with this new information? What do you think of the decisions he's made?

About Friendships

- In chapter seventeen, Jade describes the Sparkles, who ". . . never seemed to want to include [her] . . ." Have you ever felt shut out of a group? Have you ever been in a group that shut someone else out?
- Wearing something sparkly is a "group thing" for the Sparkles. Have you been in or observed a group that has a "group thing"? What did you think of this "group thing"?
- In chapter twenty-two, Clue tells Jade, ". . . I chose you because I knew you were writing about someone you really wanted to be a part of your life. I thought you wanted a friend. But yesterday you made it seem like all you want is someone to control." (p. 170–171) Is Clue right? What do you think of Jade's power over Zoe and how she uses it? Can someone really be your friend if they have power over you?

About Writing

- "I put *Oppservations* at the top. This was the beginning of my list of observations about something opposite, like how your best friend could suddenly become not so friendly when you did something she didn't like, even if it wasn't your fault." (p. 11) As a group, come up with some of your own oppservations and discuss them. Why do you think these "opposite things" happen? Do you have a favorite oppservations from the book?
- What is Jade's relationship with her notebook like? What does keeping a notebook do for her?
- Mrs. Yang gives Jade a lot of writing advice throughout this book. Do you have a favorite piece of advice? Is there a teacher or other person in your school that you feel close to the way that Jade feels close to Mrs. Yang?
- Do you like to write? Why or why not? Has reading this book changed how you feel or think about writing?