



REAL FRIENDS

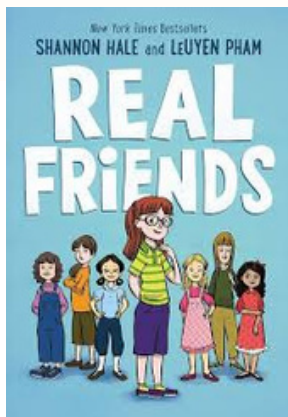
by Shannon Hale and LeUyen Pham

Discussion Guide



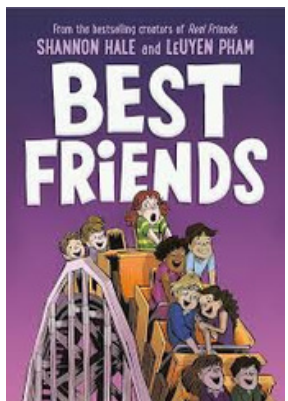
This best-selling graphic novel series chronicles author Shannon Hale's childhood struggles with changing friendship groups from elementary school through middle school.

Real Friends



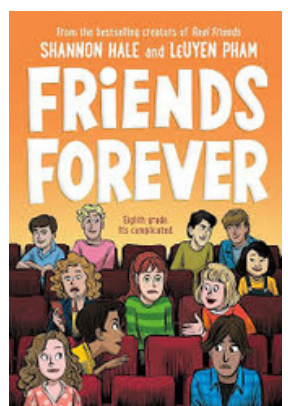
This book follows Shannon through her experiences starting school and navigating different friendships in kindergarten through fifth grade with most of the emphasis on third, fourth, and fifth grade. Cliques form early and Shannon especially struggles with the pressures of being included in a group. The stress causes Shannon to develop anxiety and mild OCD. One of the book's highlights is Shannon gaining confidence as she gets older and befriends new people.

Best Friends



As Shannon enters her sixth-grade year, she experiences a rollercoaster of emotions as she transforms from child to preteen. The book chronicles her experience trying to navigate what to say and do in order to fit in with her friends while also trying to be true to herself.

Friends Forever



Though Shannon begins junior high feeling confident, her old fears and insecurities quickly return. With continuing friendship struggles, confusing crushes, and low self-esteem, Shannon's anxiety and OCD spiral into a depression. Ultimately, she uses positive self-talk to build her confidence and becomes more accepting and forgiving of herself.

Discussion Questions

- What does being a real friend mean?
- What's a situation when a friend made you feel uncomfortable? How did you handle it?
- What can you do if you are feeling left out of a group?
- Words hold so much power. Can you think of any times when someone used words that uplifted you or made you feel down?
- Have you ever said something to a friend you wish you could take back?
- Why is gossiping dangerous?
- Is it okay for friendships to change? Why or why not?
- How can you set up healthy boundaries with others?
- What are some things that make you feel anxious? What are some ways to cope with these big feelings?
- Has reading this book made you change the way you think of others or yourself?