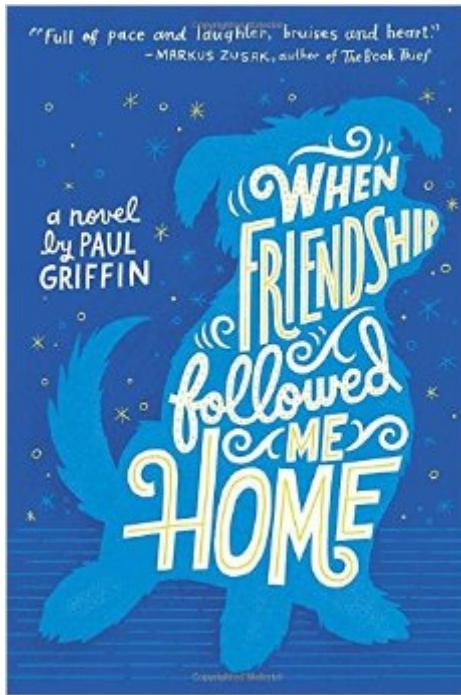


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# When Friendship Followed Me Home



## Synopsis

A breathtaking middle-grade novel about happiness, loss, and an unforgettable dog named Flip. This story convinced me all over again that love and imagination are life's biggest magic. • "Rebecca Stead, author of Newbery Award winner *When You Reach Me* • 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. Paul Griffin's breathtaking middle-grade debut will warm your heart as much as it breaks it. • "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*

## Book Information

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Age Range: 10 and up

Grade Level: 5 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

Abandoned at a police station shortly after birth, Ben Coffin has bounced from foster home to foster home. Adopted at the age of ten by his then 65-year old therapist, he finally feels as if he has a home. "I was ten when she took me in." • Read in conjunction with his rescue of Flip, Benâ™s story seems to parallel that of the abandoned dog. In "When Friendship Followed Me Home", Paul Griffin has written a touching and, sometimes, funny novel for readers ages 10 and older. Characters throughout "When Friendship Followed Me Home" • depict various segments of individuals in todayâ™s society; each is identifiable and may be relatable to young readers.

Benâ™s Mom " Tess Coffin - lost her wife Laura before she met Ben, but she still mourns for and misses her long-time partner. Tessâ™s sister Jeanie is the polar opposite of her sister; she is "Proper" • and business-like. Her live-in boyfriend Leo operates an on-line business selling used golf equipment. He is an alcoholic. Flipâ™s original owner is now homeless, financially ruined by a chronic illness and unable to afford care, food, or a home. Benâ™s best friend Chucky Mull has numerous little sisters and a loving mother " his father never makes an appearance. Angelina Caramello and Ronda Glomski are the "mean girls" •, but as the story progresses Angelina begins to show a different side of her personality. Damon Rayburn is a bully; his older brother may be a gang member. There are indications the two come from an abusive home. Halley Lorenz is a courageous "tween who is battling a potentially fatal disease. The Lorenz family, while having some unusual characteristics " the father earns his living as Mercurious, a magician - is a loving, traditional family.

When Friendship Followed Me Home thoroughly surprised me with its depth, fine writing, and heart. Unique and compelling characters tell a surprising little story of friendship, family, and most of all love in a manner that is so life affirming and inspiring that I can't wait to recommend it to all of our young library patrons. I was expecting a story about a dog, and there is a rather remarkable one in this book. Flip is the glue that holds young Ben Coffin together when he loses his adoptive mother. Flip serves as best friend and writing partner with Halley, the Rainbow Girl who steals Ben's heart and encourages him to dream of bigger things. Ben takes a difficult journey with Flip as he discovers the true source of his magic and struggles with grief and his own notion of forever. This is a sad and hopeful book filled with well developed characters and important insight. The drama is never heavy handed thanks to the authentic voices the author gives his characters, and with that charming dog running around throughout these pages, it keeps the story on the lighter side of tragic, even though there's plenty of sadness to go around. There are lots of responsible, yet flawed adults trying to do the right thing, and mostly succeeding. You have to love a librarian who makes the best chocolate chip cookies, and the reading program Flip and Ben institute at her library is in itself an inspiration that will hopefully encourage other young dog owners. When Friendship Followed Me Home offers up the quality drama that made The Fault in Our Stars such a huge hit, only this book targets a younger audience. Halley and Ben share their first kiss, and the story portrays kids just beginning to be attracted to the opposite sex.

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