

# Friends for Keeps series

AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR NOTES  
www.emmaquay.com

## Jump Over the Puddle

## Yummy Ice-Cream

## Let’s Play House

Written by Emma Quay  
Illustrated by Anna Walker  
Published by Scholastic Press, June 2009

### An author note from Emma Quay:

I met Anna Walker at a picture book creators’ weekend organised by the Australian Society of Authors in 2006. I was already familiar with Anna’s work as a commercial illustrator for greetings cards and magazines, however I had not seen her wonderfully endearing drawings for young children. She showed the group some gorgeous character drawings and dummy books.

I introduced Anna’s work to Ana Vivas, the publisher at Scholastic Press, and they soon formed a firm friendship and productive working team. In the meantime, I decided I would like to write some texts for very young children for Anna to illustrate. Over the following year I developed several stories about three friends, Panda, Sheep and Owl.

I wanted the texts to be simple, age-appropriate, to explore familiar situations and to gradually build up a clear picture of the different characters of Panda, Sheep and Owl. I also wanted there to be humour. Each story would centre around a minor conflict between the friends, and its unsentimental resolution.

I was lucky that Anna Walker and Ana Vivas loved the texts. The first three books in the series, *Friends for Keeps*, were commissioned in late 2007, entitled *Jump Over the Puddle*, *Yummy Ice-Cream* and *Let’s Play House*.

Anna had many creative ideas for the characters, backgrounds and collage elements, and she, Ana Vivas and I worked closely together to decide on the look of the books—meeting to discuss roughs, concepts, and fabric swatches. It must have been a challenge sometimes, to have another illustrator give feedback on her work, but Anna took it all in great humour. I am thrilled with the way she has depicted the friends. Her pictures make me laugh out loud, and yet they have such charm and gentleness.

I enjoy the fact that Anna’s illustrative style is very different to mine. I wrote the stories specifically for Anna to illustrate, so never considered how I might illustrate them myself. Anna’s characters are built up

of coloured shapes, pieced together to make endearing and believable characters, with a kind of ‘sophisticated naivety’ about them. My own illustrations are predominantly line-based; Anna’s Panda, Owl and Sheep have no drawn outlines at all.

Anna Walker, Ana Vivas and I are currently working on three more books in the series, which are scheduled for publication in mid 2010.

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### Illustrator notes from Anna Walker:

The first time I read the texts for *Friends for Keeps* out loud, my children and I were all laughing. It was a delight to develop images for words that were so appealing even before there were pictures.

Whenever I sit down to draw Panda, Sheep and Owl, I find myself smiling, thinking about the way their individual personalities play out in the stories. Panda is bossing everyone around, Sheep is nervously looking at a game wanting to join in but a bit shy, and most amusing is little Owl who is very funny, without meaning to be!

From the beginning I wanted the feel of the books to be simple, friendly and fun. I hoped to use fabric collage but was not sure it would work. I created a few colour roughs, and after many trips to the fabric shop, lots of cutting and pasting, I finally created a background for Panda, Sheep and Owl that I was happy with.

As author, illustrator and editor, we made a great team—all contributing to make the books what they are. It is very exciting seeing Panda, Sheep and Owl taking their journey into the big wide world.

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### Anna Walker’s illustrative technique:

Coloured inks and collage.

You can visit Anna Walker’s website at [www.annawalker.com.au](http://www.annawalker.com.au)

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### ***Friends for Keeps*** teachers’, librarians’ and play-leaders’ notes:

For teachers’, librarians’ and play-leaders’ notes and activity ideas, visit the [teachers’](#) page on Emma Quay’s website:

[www.emmaquay.com](http://www.emmaquay.com)