

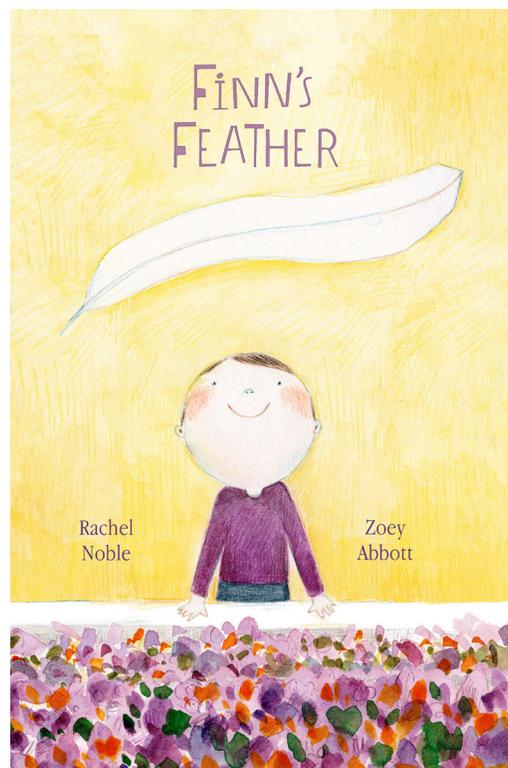


# ENCHANTED LION BOOKS

## *Finn's Feather*

Written by Rachel Noble  
Illustrated by Zoey Abbott

Teachers Notes prepared by Enchanted Lion Books



## Overview

Finn knows his brother is gone.

But he also knows that Hamish sent the beautiful white feather on his doorstep. Finn runs to show his mother the feather from Hamish, but she only gives him a big hug.

In school, Finn's teacher responds similarly. Why isn't anyone as excited as he is? Finn sits quietly, cradling the beautiful, amazing feather.

"Why did Hamish give it to you?" asks his friend, Lucas.

"Maybe he wanted to say hi?" wonders Finn. "Maybe," Lucas says. "Or maybe he wanted you to have fun with it?"

*Finn's Feather* is a story about resilience and memory—about a child, his brother, and a friend who meets him where he is.

# Themes

- **Friendship**
- **Imaginative Play**
- **Empathy**
- **Resilience**
- **Grief & Memory**

Finn's Feather explores the themes of friendship, empathy, resilience, memory, grief and play. Finn finds the feather and immediately knows the feather is a gift from his brother. Finn is confused when both his mother and teacher don't show excitement over the feather. However, with the help of his friend Lucas, he learns this precious gift has more in store for them all. The feather brings Finn fun, adventure, and friendship. And through it all, he learns the value of memory and that connectedness to someone you have lost is something you can never lose.

Lucas is a wonderful friend to Finn. He understands the feather is precious to Finn but he also wants to make his friend happy, so he encourages Finn to play. Lucas supports his friend and through their time having fun together they deepen their sense of connection to each other and to Hamish as well.

Memory of a loved one is an important theme in Finn's Feather. When we lose someone special, we miss them. Sometimes we hold onto them by remembering them in certain ways. The feather that Finn finds on his doorstep is a source of connection to his brother. He cannot see him but he knows that he's there. He misses him but he will never forget him or stop loving him.

Sorrow and mourning over something that is lost forever is an important theme. It's important to remember that grieving is a normal and natural part of losing someone special in our lives. Finn loses his brother and that makes him sad. Finn also loves his brother and even though he can no longer see him, his love for him will always remain.

## Audience & Tone

Finn's Feather is aimed at an audience between ages 5 and 8 years old, or perhaps a little older, depending on learning level, and works both for independent readers and as a read aloud. It is as much a story of the lightness and celebration that unfolds from playing and being together with our friends, as it is a story about resilience in the face of grief. It is a book for every child, as it supports empathy, imagination, and camaraderie.

## Provides curriculum support for:

- English & Language Arts
- Visual Arts
- Critical Thinking
- Emotional Awareness

## Classroom Discussion Ideas

1. Before reading the book, look at the cover and title. What do you think this book might be about?
2. Have you ever found a feather? What did you do with it? How did it make you feel to discover a feather? What kind of fun can you have with a feather? Have you found other things with which you've had fun?
3. Once you've read the book, look carefully at each page—how is each character feeling? What is it in the drawing (eyes, posture, eyebrows, mouth, hands, eyes) that makes you think that? There are many ways to describe feelings and many words. Which words do you know that describe feelings?
4. We all have friends, but what does it mean to be a friend? How do friends help us in our lives? Why do we need friends? What makes a good friend? Is Lucas is a good friend to Finn?
5. If you see someone who looks sad, how can you be a friend to them? What are the different things you could do to comfort them?
6. Look at the adults in this story. Why do you think they don't get excited about the feather? If you were Finn's mother or teacher, what might you have said or done when he showed you the feather?
7. How do humans communicate? What would happen if we only had language, and no intonation or expression—meaning no tempo or volume to our words, and no body language? Try saying something you care a lot about to your friend, but say it like a robot. How does that sound and feel? Do your words mean the same thing without expression? Now add body language to your robot voice. Next, add dynamics to your voice and facial expression. Describe and discuss the differences.
8. What does it mean to listen to someone? How do you feel when someone listens to you? How does it feel when you are saying something and the other person isn't listening to you? How do we show people that we are listening to them?

9. Try writing this story from Lucas's point of view. What do you think he might have been thinking when Finn showed him the feather?
10. How did you feel before reading *Finn's Feather*, when you were looking at the cover and guessing what the book was about? How do you feel after reading the book and learning Finn's story?
11. Imagine you are the author of *Finn's Feather*. Is there anything you would have told differently?
12. When an illustrator gets a story, they must make many decisions about how they are going to make the pictures to go with the words. Do the pictures in *Finn's Feather* show the same things as the words? Are there things in the pictures that aren't in the words? How do the pictures and words work together?

## Activities

1. In *Finn's Feather*, the feather is described as perfect, white and amazing. Go and find an object, hold it in your hands and describe it. Use all of your senses to describe the object. Now use your imagination to think of different ways you could play with it.
2. Write a letter to someone you love, or even to an object that means something to you. [Teachers, consider creating a display wall of your students' letters.]
3. Draw your own ending to the story. How could the visual ending have been different? The illustrator chose to have Finn make a pen out of the feather and write a letter to Hamish. What other endings could you imagine? Try drawing a new ending. How else could you show that the feather was still amazing?
4. Think of a time you have felt an emotion—angry, sad, happy, etc. What helped you with this? What did you do when you felt that way? Write a descriptive paragraph or a poem about when and why you felt this way. Then illustrate. [Teachers, consider creating a display wall of your students' poems and illustrations.]
5. In groups, adapt the book for a performance. Devise a script and act your adaptation out for your class.



## Author Bio

Rachel Noble worked as a radio presenter, producer and journalist before becoming an author. Rachel has five children, including her son Hamish who passed away in 2012. Rachel has found that writing about her feelings has always helped her and writing for children makes her happy. She lives in Queensland, Australia. You can find out more about her at:

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



## Illustrator Bio

Zoey Abbott lives in Portland, Oregon. She has worked as a graphic designer, bookmaker, greeting card sales rep, and an ESL teacher in Japan. Finn's Feather is Zoey's second illustrated book. You can find out more about her at:

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



## A Note from the Author

This book was written for children who may have lost someone important and special in their lives. But I believe that every child may read the story and take something important away from it—something about what it is to feel things, be kind, have a friend, and remember important people and experiences. Finn is a child who has an emphatic belief that he is still connected, and he knows the strength of this connection and reaches out without thought of embarrassment or fear. That's what I want for all children who are experiencing loss or any other sense of isolation. To remember the connectedness and to reach out without fear.

Our family has lost someone special but we have done many things to honour and remember him. We've planted trees, picked up feathers, listened to favourite songs, read favourite books, written cards and letters and taken photos of rainbows. This helps us remember and cherish his memory.

Sending rainbows and feathers,

Rachel

