



# THE Butterfly Bunnies

Written by Anna Pignataro

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## Teachers' notes

When Abby Star moves to St Ives she is sad and lonely but then a miracle happens. Eve Knight lives right next door and soon the girls become best friends. One day they make a clover wish and everything changes.

Pandora, The Butterfly Bunny appears and asks for their help. Can Abby and Eve help Pandora find the key to spring before it's too late or will they all be stuck in wintertime forever?

Come into Abby's tree house where magic always happens and follow Abby and Eve into the world of The Butterfly Bunnies.

### A note from the author

When I was little I often lost myself in books about imaginary places that ordinary children would go to. I spent long hours drawing pictures and writing dramatic plays for my friends, cousins and I to perform in front of long suffering parents. These were quite elaborate productions with costumes, a musical score and incredibly creative sound effects!

Not much has changed really except that it is my daughter producing the plays now. (well most of the time anyway!)

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I still draw and paint everyday but now loose myself in my own stories. I love trees and am very influenced by weather and the natural world.

Mostly I create picture books so The Butterfly Bunnies is my first chapter books series for young girls. It's something I've always wanted to do and in speaking to parents on book tours it was obvious there was a real need for more lightly plotted girls' chapter books written for the 6-9 age group.

I like the idea of creating two ordinary girls who quite miraculously meet and become best friends. To help them cope with problems they may have in their own lives, I introduced another world where they go to meet new friends and in helping solve their dilemma, they help themselves.

I loved giving the girls their own characters, flaws and all and really liked putting in that person at school we all know, the bully or the know it all, that makes Abby and Eve's days just that little bit more colourful.

I based the characters of Abby and Eve on my daughter and her friend. They did live doors down from each other in real life. They are the opposite of each other physically, which made the illustrations more interesting.





Young girls are always going to have so many issues to deal with. Whether it is something at school, something about themselves, growing up, or fitting in. I chose to put these issues into stories that girls can relate to and mixed in a little magic.

I use the magical element to bring wonder and hope and the possibility that life and experience can go beyond the physical world. I emphasise the idea that belief in something special that can't be seen is just as important as the tangible.

I also added elements of rhyme and song to encourage word play and imagination.

The magical world of the Butterfly Bunnies, Butterfields is much more theatrical than the real world. The problems faced there although much more dramatic, have a similar connotation to the lives of Abby and Eve.

Each Butterfly Bunny has its own character, its own special talent and in each book this encourages Abby and Eve to dig deep into their own characters to find solutions and hidden qualities of their own.

#### A note about the illustrations.

I wanted to exaggerate Abby and Eve's features because I didn't want a too realistic girl. More importantly this allows me to over accentuate

their facial expressions and body attitudes. It makes for a more stylised interpretation of a character and adds to certain moods like humour, sadness and surprise.

The Butterfly Bunnies are a mixture of a butterfly, a person and a rabbit. Really, they are how I imagine a butterfly to be really up close but with a bunny ear hat on. I love drawing rabbits! They pop up everywhere in most of my books.

The internals are done with pencil; I enjoy drawing in pencil and hope to do a completely black and white, pencil picture book one day.

I find working in pencil to be both challenging and freeing.

For the covers and colour picture of Abby and Eve I used watercolour, gouache, pencil, fine liner and collage.

This is a very similar technique to most of my picture book work and it's safe to say I am more widely known as a watercolourist.

Ultimately I hope these books will inspire young girls to be courageous, joyful, adventurous and creative. Most importantly to know, like and be themselves; to make the most of their unique qualities and special talents.





### Before reading

Look at the cover and think about what the story might be about.

Given the title *Butterfly Bunnies*, what genre do you think this book is?

Turn over to the back cover and look at the picture of the two main characters. What do you imagine they are like by looking at them?

### After reading

When Abby arrives in St Ives she is sad and lonely. What happens to change this?

Why do you think Abby and Eve become such good friends?

Have you ever felt like Abby feels at the beginning of the story?

Why do you think the Butterfly Bunnies choose Abby and Eve to help them?

What do you think Abby and Eve learnt from their visit to Butterfields?

How do you think the world of Butterfields connects to Abby and Eve's world?

### Art and literacy activities

Draw your own map of Butterfields.

The illustrations in *Butterfly Bunnies* still leave a lot up to the imagination of the reader:

Can you imagine what the houses look like? Pick a character and come up with your own interpretation of what their house may be like.

What do you think the main street of Butterfields may look like? You may even want to make a miniature model.

Write a diary entry from one of the main characters.

What do you think the newspaper in Butterfields would be like? Can you make up a Butterfields newspaper...perhaps with an article that interviews some of the characters. It would be great to see an article written from the point of view of the Grizzly Moth Hare.

*Butterfly Bunnies* has some lovely rhymes in it. Can you come up with your own rhyming spells?

