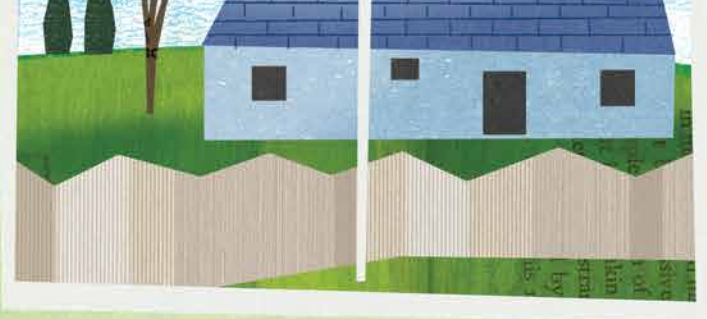


# Best Friends Always



Dear Evie,

I do not like our new house. I wish we'd never moved to this town. And I wish I still lived next door to you. What am I supposed to do all summer in this strange place? Just sit around?

Your Best Friend, Kayla

P.S. The moving van doesn't get here until tomorrow. We have to sleep on the floor tonight. Mom says it'll be just like camping, but I doubt that.

Dear Evie,

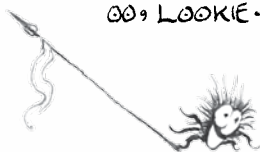
I loved getting your letter! Now I'll answer your questions. First, do I like my new room? No, I don't! Sure, it's bigger than my old one. But the people who lived here before painted the walls green. I feel like I'm inside a giant celery stalk! Mom says I can choose a new paint color, but I'd rather have my old room back. In fact, I'd rather have my old life back!

Your Seeing-Green Best Friend, Kayla

THAT STEED  
WAS MY BEST FRIEND...

OOO LOOKIE...

A BANANA!  
EVEN BETTER!



by Mary Kay Morel

Art by Joung Un Kim

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Dear Evie,  
I forgot to answer the second question. Here goes: no other kids live on my street. At least, I don't see any.

Your Lonely Best Friend, Kayla

Dear Evie,  
Count me wrong! A girl lives in the blue house next door. Her name is Cordelia. Cordelia's mom brought us chocolate chip muffins yesterday. That's how I met her. She's O.K., but I like you better.

Your Muffin-Eating Best Friend, Kayla

P.S. Don't you think Cordelia is a funny-sounding name?

Dear Evie,

Mom and I went to the paint store. I picked out a color called Shell Pink. Then we painted all weekend. My room looks much better! Cordelia loves it, too! We sat in here this afternoon, reading books and playing board games.

Your Tickled-Pink Best Friend, Kayla

P.S. Cordelia told me that her name means "sea jewel." Doesn't that sound pretty?





Dear Evie,  
 No, Cordelia is not my new best friend. We just play together. After all, she lives next door. You're still my best friend—and don't forget it!  
 Your Very Best Friend Always, Kayla



Dear Evie,  
 You've been riding your bike to the park with Jenna? Wow! I always thought she acted mean. Maybe I was wrong. Maybe she's really nice. Is she your new best friend?  
 Your Best(?) Friend, Kayla

Dear Evie,  
 Sorry I forgot to write last week. Cordelia and I bicycle to the park every day. Someone hung an old tire from a big beech tree there. We like to swing on it in the afternoons.  
 Your Tire-Swinging Best Friend, Kayla  
 P.S. I'm glad you still consider me your best friend.



Dear Evie,

I guess it's been ages since I've written. Cordelia and I caught a frog in her backyard yesterday. Just a little one. We put him in an old fruit jar with some leaves. We wanted to keep him there. But he looked really sad, so we let him go. I'm sorry Jenna's family left on vacation. You probably feel bored and lonely without her. I hope they get back soon!

Your Frog-Freeing Best Friend, Kayla



Dear Evie,

I can't believe our old school already started this week! You have to sit next to Troublemaker Hendley? At least Jenna will sit on the other side of you! My new school doesn't begin until the end of this month. I still don't know who the teacher will be. My stomach hurts every time I think about it.

Your Concerned Best Friend, Kayla





Dear Evie,  
I'm going camping with Cordelia's family at Yellow Springs State Park. We plan to pitch a tent and sleep out under the stars! We're also going fishing on her family's boat. I can't wait!  
Your Excited Best Friend, Kayla  
P.S. I hope there aren't any bears in the park. . . .



Dear Evie,  
Maybe you're right. Maybe Cordelia is my best friend now. But I count you as my best friend, too. Can't a person have two best friends? Wait a minute! Cordelia can be my new best friend here. And maybe Jenna can be your new best friend there. But we should still be best friends, too. We can be First Best Friends. I think that sounds more important than just being a best friend. What do you think?  
Your First Best Friend, Kayla



Dear Evie,

I'm glad you decided that being a First Best Friend is best of all. I feel that way, too. By the way, my new teacher, Miss Brookston, tells really funny jokes. Yesterday she asked us to write a mystery story. I wrote about some girls who move into an old house and find a green ghost hiding inside. I put Cordelia in my story, and Jenna, too. But you and I were the main characters who solved the mystery. After all, we are First Best Friends!

Your First and Best Friend Forever, Kayla

P.S. The green ghost turned out to be a friendly one.

