

by jerry spinelli

Friendship isn't always sunny-side up.



"I don't even like eggs," David said.

"It's not just the eggs," said his grandmother.

"So what is it?" He no longer bothered to trim the surliness from his voice when speaking to her.

She thought for a moment. "Well, the activity. Participating." Her fists gripped the steering wheel. Her face was locked straight ahead. She was a rotten and terrified driver. "Making friends."

Make friends. Make friends. Same old garbage. "I don't want to make friends."

"Everybody needs friends."

"Not me."

"We all do, David. We're all human."

"I'm not."

"No?"

"No."

“What might you be, then?”

“A moose.”

He knew she wanted to give him a look, but she dared not take her eyes from the road. She settled for a sigh and a purse of the lips. “Now you’re just being silly.”

He let it hang there: “silly.” He said nothing. Unreplied to, the word would get bigger and bigger, filling the car, suffocating her, forcing her to open her mouth and take it back, swallow it. That would be her punishment. Maybe then she would turn around, take him home, let the Easter Egg hunt go on without him. It wasn’t even her idea anyway, it was his dad’s. They could tell him the hunt was called off, or they got there too late.

She opened the window on her side. She said, “Would you like your window open?”

He did not answer.

“David?”

“No.”

“Want the radio on?”

Question time. Try to get him to say yes.

“No.”

“Are you ever going to smile again?”

"No."

"Are you a boy?"

"No."

Drat. Tricked. Didn't she know that tricks only made him hate her more? Wasn't the trick his mother had played on him enough? More than enough? Did the world have to go on playing tricks on him?

Houses, street corners went by. This was all his life had been since April 29 of last year: a ride to somewhere he did not want to go.

They were stopping, pulling to the curb at the end of a line of cars. "We'll have to walk from here. Looks like a good crowd," she said, her voice all peachy cheery, like nothing had ever happened. She came around to his side. She opened the door. He stared straight ahead.

"David? Ready?"

"No."

"They're going to start in ten minutes."

"Good for them."

She reached in. She touched his shoulder.

"Davey —"

He jerked away. "My name is David."

He spoke to the beautiful face.

"Are you sleeping?"

The eyes did not open.

He could not decide if he wanted them to open.

The humped eyelids with their glittery purple
were like tiny twin eggs, bird's eggs.

"Are you going to say something?"

The mouth did not move.

"You're dead, aren't you?"

The beautiful face was as still as the trees.

He was not afraid.

This is the first time David and Primrose meet, and despite their differences they hesitantly form a tight but tumultuous bond.

This powerful novel by Newbery Medal-winning author **Jerry Spinelli** has much to say about friendship, loss, and recovery.

★ "Elegant and memorable." —*Kirkus*

"A" —*Entertainment Weekly*