



# Worst of Friends: Thomas Jefferson, John Adams and the True Story of an American Feud

*Suzanne Tripp Jurmain , Larry Day (Illustrator)*

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John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were good friends with very different personalities. But their differing views on how to run the newly created United States turned them into the worst of friends. They each became leaders of opposing political parties, and their rivalry followed them to the White House. Full of both history and humor, this is the story of two of America's most well-known presidents and how they learned to put their political differences aside for the sake of friendship.

## Worst of Friends: Thomas Jefferson, John Adams and the True Story of an American Feud Details

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Author : Suzanne Tripp Jurmain , Larry Day (Illustrator)

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# **From Reader Review Worst of Friends: Thomas Jefferson, John Adams and the True Story of an American Feud for online ebook**

## **Elizabeth says**

This is one of those books I had to read for work, but I would have read anyway because it is historical (so one of the reasons I'm writing this review is so I can remember what I thought about it when it is time to talk about it at work!). I really liked this book, partially because I really like the story of how John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were so close, grew apart, and then came back together in the end. This story is written simply so that you don't have to have any previous knowledge of the time period to understand the book, or the politics behind Adams' and Jefferson's split. The illustrations are beautiful, colorful and take up the majority of the pages making the story that much more interesting for young kids. The only thing that I wish the author would have included is the fact that when they died they believed the other still lived and said so before they died.

Additionally, the story is not only important because of the history, it is important because it shows kids that you can remain friends even if you disagree with each other. Granted, while talking about things you passionately disagree about you might say hurtful things, that doesn't mean you can't be friends. Embrace each other's different point of views and agree that you each have a right to your opinions much like Tom and John did at the ends of their lives.

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## **Danette says**

Read with Naomi and Julia.

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## **Kate Hastings says**

Grades 2-5. An interesting look back on two of our founding fathers who were great friends and then had a falling out over different ideas about presidential power. This would be a good book to present during a unit about the constitution, presidents or political parties. Also a great tie into character development surrounding themes of respect and tolerance.

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## **Andrea says**

Politics brought John Adams and Thomas Jefferson together. It also tore them apart. In *Worst of Friends*, Suzanne Tripp Jurmain captures the deep friendship between them, the political differences that severed that friendship and the eventual reconciliation.

Larry Day's illustrations complement Jurmain's writing beautifully. They capture both the seriousness and the humour in this tale. Facial expressions reign supreme whether they are facing off across a table or young children are gazing at their statues. The insults they hurled at each other makes it clear that politics have never been polite. "Vain, suspicious, irritable, stubborn, and wrong" John and "weak, confused, uninformed,

and ignorant” Tom may have been founding fathers, but they were not universally admired! Their personal conflict was rooted in deep political differences over the role of the federal government and impacted the governing of the United States to this day.

A good read anytime, *The Worst of Friends* by is a particularly worthwhile read during an election year for adults as well as children. I just hope it doesn't lead to any street fights between classrooms divided between Team Tom and Team John.

Reviewed at RovingFiddlehead KidLit. Part of #nfpb2012

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### **Crystal says**

I would appreciate the liberties taken with the illustrations (kids and pudding all over ships in laundry tub) if the book was written solely for humor, but they don't seem altogether appropriate in a book that seems to be about facts. If read for the theme of friendship, I like the book, but if read for historical reasons, not as much.

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### **Kirsten Murphy says**

Resources and author's note at the front

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### **Kris Patrick says**

Typically I'd drool at a kids' book that marries American Revolution with adorable pen & watercolor illustrations but I didn't get the point...

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### **Katherine says**

Genre: Juvenile nonfiction, american history

Format: Print

Plot: Follows the friendship of Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, from their presidencies through their retirement and death.

Readers advisory:

Review citation: SLJ 2011

Source: Children's Core Collection

Recommended age: 6-8

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### **Edward Sullivan says**

A colorful, entertaining introduction to the tumultuous friendship between John Adams and Thomas

## **Molly says**

I love this 5th-grade level story, “Worst of Friends: Thomas Jefferson, John Adams and the True Story of an American Feud” by the author Suzanne Jurmain! It is rare to hear an informational text or nonfiction genre that discusses on a very personal level the relationship and the characteristics of two prominent figures in our history. In this case prominent enough to be critical to our independence from Great Britain which is important to teach for grade five. In this story, we start off learning about how strong John Adams and Thomas Jefferson’s friendship was prior to their feud. This feud, later on, stemmed from their inability to agree on a government. Originally both men were in agreeance with the state of the colonies and wanted to convince other colonists as well as King George to liberalize them. This is where the story becomes high quality. As a citizen of the United States, we all want the same thing, equality, freedom, and a great country that is safe and offers an opportunity for our children to be successful. Likewise, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson sought to achieve these same things.

In the beginning of the story, the two characters Thomas Jefferson and John Adams are mentioned as extremely different from one another (like ice cream and pickles as the story stated). However, they didn’t let these differences keep them from becoming best friends and creating something great (The Declaration of Independence). Unfortunately, in the beginning, the two are still incredible friends. as the story says, however, we see that later they let their differences separate them. The point that we learn from this story is that even as citizens that are very different, we can all come together with different opinions and become great friends with great opinions. This is something Thomas Jefferson wrote explicitly to John Adams after rekindling their friendship which had been nonexistent for eleven years. This is also an excellent theme that becomes uncovered at the end.

This book is multicultural and speaks to a broad audience of cultures because it is speaking to all American citizens today. Across a plethora of cultures, we will find different opinions, but I can’t say that all cultures appreciate their founding fathers for the work they have put in to improve their country. Across various cultures, freedom and rights aren’t at the level they should be. However, as a United States Citizen because our founding fathers Thomas Jefferson and John Adams gave us the freedom of speech it is up to us to stand up for our different opinions and make a change. It is also important to keep in mind like John Adams and Thomas Jefferson did at the end, that although we have different opinions that’s okay and we can still be friends and. All students of all cultures can be incredibly different. However, our different opinions can make our country even better and by accepting our differences and working together as one we can become a great country as a whole. This is important for us to acknowledge as these were the primary goals of our founding fathers as different as they were they did agree on that.

To teach these standards listed below I will have the students write a letter to both characters on how they thought Thomas Jefferson and John Adams impacted the future of the United States. We will keep in mind how hard it would be to have to travel from Great Britain to the United States and to talk to King George. I will ask questions like was that brave, intimidating, or life-threatening. I will ask how dedicated they were to travel so far. What were they looking to achieve and why was that so important? Lastly, I will have students create a rap with a group of 3 or 4 where they will include 4 important facts from the read aloud and will rap about how the relationship between the two was important. A cool fact that could be used is that it took them both 11 years before they could become friends again after John Adams was elected president and that they rekindled their friendship before they passed. Most importantly the two passed on the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence on the same day.

5.H.2 Understand the role of prominent figures in shaping the United States.

RI5.3 - Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.

Grades 3-5

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### **Karina says**

In a humorous kind of way, Suzanne Tripp Jurmain writes about the friendship of Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, with equally humorous illustrations by Larry Day.

Tom and John were the best of friends in a unique way. Both had drastically different personalities and characteristics, but nevertheless, they remained good friends; but things changed when they were discussing what the best way to run the country would be like. John said the president should "be the country's biggest, strongest boss..." and Tom disagreed saying that "a really strong and powerful president might break the country's laws and take away the people's freedom." This set them apart and they went their own ways, never talking to each other again. Both tried convincing people to be on their side as they were running for president. Tom was elected as president and John wasn't. They lived in different places, in different settings. Both raised children and enjoyed their life, but they never saw each other. Tom finally decided to write to John and their friendship continued through letters. Even in their differences, they respected each other.

A literacy strategy that could be used with this book in a classroom is a compare and contrast between Thomas Jefferson and John Adams - how they were different and how they were the same.

The book is written from the narratives perspective - which would be the author's (Suzanne T. Jurmaine).

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### **Crystal says**

I LOVED this book!! Party politics are not new, they are as old as our country. This is a great book for teaching kids lots of things:

1. You can still be friends with someone even if you have different opinions.
  2. Don't waste your life fighting about differing opinions!
  3. Presidents of our country are always vilified while in office, so it is important to get the real story and understand how complex people's opinions are.
  4. History is SO subjective.
  5. Current events are SO subjective.
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### **Megumi Shavers says**

This book is a nonfiction and is for children for the age group of P. This book did not win any awards. This

book is about Thomas Jefferson and John Adams being best friends and how their political views of how the United States should be ran ruined their friendship. However, they learned to put aside their political differences for their friendship. This story was humorous and I actually learned a lot about Jefferson and Adams that I didn't know before. The theme to this story is a good one that everyone can relate to whether young or old. The theme is that best friends or even friends will argue, but you shouldn't let that ruin your friendship. I would read this book to children during the elections, just so they can get an idea of what the presidential campaign is like. I also could read this book to talk about how friendships and how we should cherish the friends we have and shouldn't let fights get in the way of it. Lastly, I could use this book to talk about the American history and how some events came to play in our history and how important is it in shaping America today.

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### **Mickie says**

I don't usually add picture books to my good reads, but man this is such a great book. I love it. The feud between TJ and JA is legendary and so is their make-up and eventual death within hours of each other on July 4, 1826.

I loved how sweetly the book contrasted and compared the two men who both added much to the discourse of what makes a good government and more enigmatically, what makes a good American.

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### **Krista the Krazy Kataloguer says**

Jurmain tells here the story of the friendship between two of our founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, which changed into hatred, and how they eventually became friends again. What surprised me here was how different both men were, not only physically but in habits as well. It's sad that such a strong friendship, which developed because they agreed about so many things, should end because of a difference of opinion. I like the way Jurmain tells the story, and the touches of humor that illustrator Larry Day adds. Did John Adams really take his wig off, throw it on the floor, and stomp on it in anger when people called him names after he became President? And when Jefferson won the next election, did Adams really leave Washington in the middle of the night to avoid greeting and congratulating him? Thank goodness the two came to their senses in their old age and became friends again. And to cap it off, they died on the *same day*, July 4, 1826! Young readers will enjoy seeing a human side to this pair of famous men. Recommended!

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