



## Reviews for Books by Alexis O'Neill

### ESTELA'S SWAP

This is a warm, nicely paced story about sharing and bartering that's filled with sensory descriptions of the vibrant open market. The textured acrylics capture the hum and bustle of the stalls, but the colorful scenery doesn't overwhelm the story; Sanchez paints the characters in sharp focus, so that they pop out against the blurred, evocative background scenes. A good starting point for classroom discussion across the curriculum.

- *Booklist*

O'Neill subtly weaves details of trades and bargaining into the fabric of her story to give readers a tangible taste of swaps or flea markets. Sanchez uses richly colored, bright acrylics to render the energy and bustle of a Swap Meet in his full-bleed illustrations. The text is skillfully incorporated into the illustrations and the focus on each spread remains firmly on the plucky heroine. All in all, a wonderful bargain.

- *School Library Journal*

This well-crafted tale featuring a Mexican-American father and children will be wonderful for reading aloud to individuals or to groups.

- *Kirkus Reviews*

### LOUD EMILY

A rollicking tale with a likable heroine that attests to the irrepressible nature of children.

-- *School Library Journal*, Starred Review

O'Neill crafts a charmer ... Emily's quest to find her place in the world, without altering herself in the process, will encourage anyone who has ever felt different

from the crowd.

-- *Publishers Weekly*, Starred Review

An appealing nautical tale ... O'Neill's language has a roll and verve that captures her young heroine's spirit perfectly.

-- *Kirkus Reviews*

Part tall tale, part stage show. . . this hero is a small child and she's powerful.

-- *Booklist*, Boxed Review

Alexis O'Neill makes sailing terms fun for kids to say — and shout.

-- *Newsweek Magazine*

## **THE KITE THAT BRIDGED TWO NATIONS**

Memorable and dramatic.

- *Kirkus Reviews*

Told in poetic free verse, the book details the young narrator's emotional journey as he prepared for the engineer-sponsored contest by making a kite he named "Union." The boy's account is filled with robust scientific observation and inquiry. The rich language and the evocative oil paintings make these subjects of history and civil engineering come alive. The back matter is particularly helpful in unraveling the fact from the fiction. For libraries looking to strengthen STEM-related units on engineering and 19th-century New York history, this is the perfect match.

— *School Library Journal*

O'Neill's spare text communicates both grandeur and dignity. Widener's full-page acrylic paintings closely follow the narrative, emphasizing the harsh winter landscape and giving a clear sense of the odds against spanning the gorge. An extensive author's note spells out what is known and not known about the story and supplies additional facts about the building of the bridge.

— *Booklist*

A well-told story with many curriculum links. [T]he style lends itself to a terrific read-aloud. Teachers can use this book to make curriculum connections in science, social studies and expressing emotion in narrative writing, to name a few. The illustrator, Terry Widener, did a wonderful job of evoking the setting and matching the words with pictures in a seamless union. There are historical notes, a timeline and many additional resources in the back.

— *Bookitkids*, *Amazon*

## **THE RECESS QUEEN**

Told in a rollicking rhyme, the story offers a lighthearted look at a serious topic in schools and on playgrounds everywhere - the bully. Katie Sue puts Mean Jean in her place in a surprisingly easy way - simply by being too new to know any better. In a nice twist, when confronted by Mean Jean, instead of backing away, the newcomer invites her to play. Both the text and the art are smart, sassy, and energetic. The text effectively dips, swirls, and slants around the action of the art, further marrying the two.

- *School Library Journal*

A schoolyard bully is enlightened by the new kid in class in this lively story about the power of kindness and friendship. O'Neill's text brims with fun-to-say phrases that fit a rollicking rhythm, and her assessment of recess dynamics feels authentic.

- *Publisher's Weekly*

O'Neill puts seemingly meek, new classmate Katie Sue up against aggressive Mean Jean, swaggering boss of the playground. But Katie Sue stands up to her with a cheeky, "How DID you get to be so bossy?" and pulls out a jump rope, inviting Mean Jean to jump along. Presto change-o, a friendship is born. Huliska-Beith's rubbery-limbed figures, rolling perspectives, and neon-bright colors reflect the text's informality as well as its frenzied energy. Young readers will be caught up by Katie Sue's engaging, fizzy exuberance.

- *Kirkus Reviews*

The ability to offhandedly deflate a bully, with neither animosity nor remorse, is my idea of heaven — and is high on my wish list for my daughters. This snappily told story of unwavering self-worth and the power of cheerful assertion gives us hope — and lots of laughs.

- *Just One More Book*

## **THE WORST BEST FRIEND**

[An] action-packed picture book about power plays in the schoolyard. A fun read-aloud.

- *Booklist*

The delivery in this volume provides plenty of zing.

-- *Kirkus*

With fun, frolicking language, and bold illustrations, Worst Best Friend presents realistic schoolyard dynamics with humor and fun. A perfect companion to *The Recess Queen*, also by O'Neill and Huliska-Beith.

- *Families Online Magazine*

Sunny school-yard action, frisky text and heaps of humorous details propel us through bliss, boastfulness, betrayal and back again in this spirited tale of friendship lost and found.

- *Just One More Book*

[A]well-done piece of literature shared out of the spirit of caring can help children contend with particular issues, and to know they are not alone. . . Loyalty is the baseline for this story about surviving the common pendulum swing of childhood friendships in this realistic but still cheerful playground drama.

- *Planet Esme*

Without even noticing it, kids will move from an incomplete view of what friendship means to a richer, more differentiated one.

- Dr. Jacqueline Golding, *Healing Stories*

In addition to its being a fun read, there are some wonderful lessons in this story for children about the importance of true friendship, the need for showing kindness, and even the fact that winning is not always the most important thing. . . I highly recommend it.

- *Stories for Children Magazine*

### **THREE IRISH TALES**

Many folktales have seen their way into oblivion - lost to the sands of time. I have always loved a good folktale and when one I have heard before is brought back to life with a different twist, I sometimes love it even more. Alexis O'Neill has managed to make these beautiful tales her own without changing their original intent.

– *Donna Weidner*

Reading this eBook reminded me of how much I loved the folktale genre as a kid. I think it's interesting how many folktales have common elements, just names and facts that put them in this country or that. Now I want to read more and more folktales! Three stories is the ideal length for this type of book; perfect for a misty Saturday afternoon...

– *Janet S. Wong*