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***Violet Mackerel's Pocket Protest* by Anna Branford** illustrated by Sarah Davis

Publisher: Walker Books

RRP \$24.99

This is the sixth book in the delightful series about the challenges Violet Mackerel encounters in her everyday life. She's a resourceful, thoughtful young girl with a love of nature and small things.

Violet has her own quirky way of coping with problems - she works out a theory with a flow chart leading to a hopeful outcome. Unfortunately, her plans often go awry with twists and turns bringing new dilemmas and discoveries.

Violet is upset when her favourite oak tree in Clover Park has a sign nailed to it: Tree Removal. With her best friend, Rose, they decide to stage a protest. However, they don't have much time or any money to rally support. Together, the friends think of an ingenious way to alert the community to the threat to the oak tree.

The realistic story underscores the hope of youngsters who want to make a difference, yet often lack the resources or voice to reach the decision makers. The girls' persistence and optimism has a surprising result. The subplot of Violet's mother and helpful step-father is an integral part of the tale.

Sarah Davis's ink and pencil illustrations are beautiful. Homely scenes, lively young faces, and the caring, sometimes anxious, expressions of the adults all complement the story. The endpapers are dotted with butterflies, leaves and acorns.

The hardback series celebrates the simple things in life, and the potential of young people to have a positive effect on the people around them.

Reviewed by children's book author Jean Bennett

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