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***Rent a Bridesmaid* by Jacqueline Wilson illustrated by Nick Sharratt**

Publisher: Doubleday

RRP \$35.00

Jacqueline Wilson has a talent for tuning into young girls' hopes and dreams, and then spinning them into good stories. Often her main character has worries at home that cause anxiety, and involve unexpected twists and turns on the way to a solution.

In *Rent a Bridesmaid*, Tilly is a shy girl who lives with her Dad and hides the fact that her mother abandoned them both when she left home to travel. When out-going Matty comes to her school, Tilly is overjoyed that Matty wants to be her best friend.

The two girls are a delightful contrast in personalities, and Tilly blossoms under Matty's friendship. Yet she still wishes that her mother would return home to her and her father. She dreams of being a bridesmaid at their wedding and having a happy family life at last.

Tilly is shocked when tomboy Matty is asked to be a bridesmaid at a family wedding, and doesn't want to be part of the bridal party. Afterwards, Matty has a bright idea as to how Tilly can walk down the aisle behind a bride - perhaps even several brides! The ensuing events are comical and heart-warming.

The author tells a good tale with humour and flair, although an over-abundance of detail about food and cooking seems excessive at times and holds up the flow of the story. Nevertheless, Jacqueline Wilson fans will be delighted with this latest junior novel from the acclaimed writer.

Author's website:

www.jacquelinewilson.co.uk

Illustrator's website:

www.nicksharratt.com

Reviewed by children's book author, Jean Bennett

