



THE PERFECT MATCH

By Katie Pike Brooks
(Based on a true story)

"Love one another"
(John 13:34).

Maggie loved things that matched. She wore her dark hair in two matching braids almost every day. Her purple backpack matched her purple notebook perfectly. And she carefully sorted her food into piles of matching colors at lunchtime.

One day after lunch, Maggie walked out to the playground. She was about to join her friends when she saw someone sitting alone by the slide. It was a girl with long, blonde hair.

Maggie sat down next to the girl. "What's your name?" she asked.

"Anna," the girl whispered. She sniffed and wiped her eyes.

"What's wrong?" Maggie asked.

"No one will play with me," Anna said, looking up sadly at Maggie.

Then Maggie saw that Anna had pretty green eyes. Maggie knew another girl who also had green eyes and blonde hair. The two girls would match perfectly!

"I know someone who can play with you!" Maggie told Anna.

"You do?" Anna asked with a hopeful smile.

"Yes! Sarah from my class." Maggie pointed to a girl jumping rope. "See her over there? She would probably play with you."

"Oh," Anna said. Her face melted back into a frown.

Maggie didn't know what to do next. "Well . . . I'll see you later," she said, standing up and walking over to her friends.

But Maggie couldn't forget Anna's sad eyes. That night at dinner, she told her family about what happened.

"She needed someone to play with?" Mom asked.

"Yeah," Maggie said, "but she wouldn't go ask Sarah to play, even though they both have blonde hair and green eyes."

Dad looked over at Maggie. "Why didn't *you* play with Anna?"

Maggie's mouth fell open. "Because—because—Sarah and the girl matched!"

"Hmm," Mom said as she wiped the baby's face. "Do you remember what Jesus says about how we should treat other people?"

"We should love them?" Maggie said. Mom smiled and nodded.

"It doesn't matter whether our body looks the same as someone else's," Dad said. "It doesn't even really matter if they think the same way we do, or believe in the same things. The most important thing is that our actions match what Jesus taught."

Maggie felt a warm tingling in her body, and she knew that Dad was right. "I'll remember that," she said.

The next day at recess, Maggie looked for Anna. She found her sitting alone by the sandbox.



"Hi," Maggie said.

"Hello," Anna said quietly.

"Do you want to come play with my friends and me?"

Now Anna looked up! Her green eyes sparkled brightly as a smile spread across her face.

"Really?" she asked.

"Really!" Maggie said, helping Anna stand.

This feels like a perfect match, Maggie thought as the two ran off together. ●

The author lives in Utah, USA.

WHEN CHOOSING FRIENDS

What DOESN'T Matter

- What they look like
- How much money they have
- How smart they are
- Whether their family is like yours
- How popular they are
- What other people say about them

What DOES Matter

- That you treat them with kindness, even if they seem different
- That they respect you and are kind to you
- That they don't pressure you to make wrong choices