



In a world where you just can stroll into the toy store and buy yourself a new best friend, would you? Helen does. Best friend Anja doesn't want to play with dolls, therefore Helen decides to replace her with a best friend who only wants to play with dolls: Her name is Dolly-Lisa. But something is not right with the new best friend ...

Hanne Buch

Illustrated by Camilla Billett

Best Friend in a Can



Best Friend in a Can

Hanne Buch



Best Friend in a Can

Original title: Bestevenn på boks

© English version, Figenschou Publishing 2022

First published in Norwegian in 2017

© Author: Hanne Gjerde Buch

© Illustrations and design: Camilla Billett

Translation: Ruth Perez Øian

Publisher and editor: Anitra Figenschou

Contact information: Figenschou Publishing, Publisher and editor: Anitra Figenschou,

Tromsogata 21, 0565 Oslo, Norway. E-mail: anitra@figenschouforlag.no

* Phone: +47 92606318

Visit: www.figenschouforlag.no

Please follow: [figenschouforlag](#) on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube

Unpermitted use of text and/or illustrations from this book is violation of the Copyright Act and it's not legal.

Please contact the publisher and we will help you to get the permission needed.



Illustrated by Camilla Billett
Translated by Ruth Perez Øian

"I would like a new best friend, please," I say.

"Well then, you've come to just the right place," says the saleslady.

"Come with me and I will show you the choices".

The saleslady takes me by the hand and leads the way past the teddy bears, lego and drawing supplies. It smells like cardboard boxes and paint. I have butterflies in my tummy. At long last, I am going to have the perfect best friend. Not like Anja who always has to decide what we are going to play.

We get to the back of the shop and stop in front of some shelves lined with tin cans in all the colors of the rainbow.

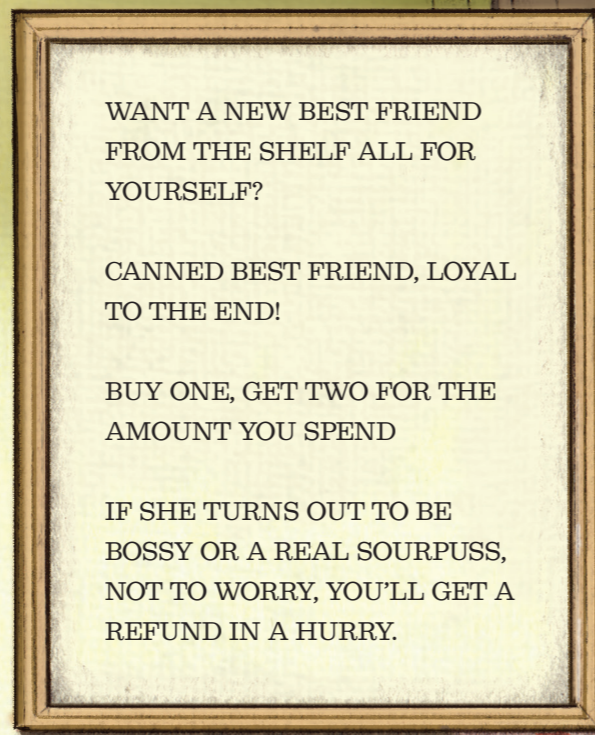
"Here they are!" the saleslady exclaims.

Hanging on the wall is an advertisement poster that reads:

"What sort of best friend would you like?" asks the saleslady.

"One that always want to play with me," I reply.

"We will find just the right one!" the saleslady says.





The saleslady takes down a blue can and says:

“This best friend is good at playing board games. She can play Monopoly, Parcheesi and The Lost Diamond. You will always have someone to play with you. Would you like her?”

“I like playing board games when I’m on vacation but I get quickly bored with them at home,” I reply.

“Then may I suggest another,” says the saleslady, taking down a can covered in polka dots.

“This best friend loves to get up to mischief. If you choose her, you will never get bored. It even comes with a free Whoopie- cushion”.

“I doubt my Mom and Dad would like me always getting into mischief,” I say.

“What about this one, then?” the saleslady says, taking down a black can. “This best friend knows lots of ghost stories. Just think how exciting that could be!”

“But what if I get so scared that I can’t fall asleep?” I say anxiously.

“Could you try to tell me exactly what sort of friend you are looking for?” the saleslady asks.

“I would like a best friend that never tires of playing with dolls,” I answer.

“Well then, I know exactly which one would suit you!” the saleslady exclaims. “I do hope we are not sold out, she is very popular ...”



The saleslady crouches down and searches on the bottom shelf. When she straightens up again, she holds out a yellow can and says:

“You were lucky! This is the last can we have.”

On the can, there is a picture of a sweet-looking girl with brown pigtails and with freckles on her nose. She looks a little bit like Anja, who is no longer my best friend.

“I’ll take her!” I say quickly.

“We have a special offer this week only,” the saleslady says. “You can get another canned best friend for free”.

“I only need one,” I reply. “I prefer playing only two together at a time.”

“But you don’t need to open both cans at once,” the saleslady says. “You can just take another friend with you in case some day you would rather do something else than play with dolls.”

“I don’t need to. I never get tired of playing with dolls,” I say.

The saleslady puts the can into a shopping bag and hands it to me.

“We have a 10-day return policy,” the saleslady says.

“If the can is returned unopened, you can get your money back. The instructions are in the back of the can. Be sure to read them carefully”.

“I will,” I reply.



As soon as I get home, I sit down on the floor and read the instructions. They are written in big, capital letters, so I am able to read them on my own.

1. REMOVE LID.
2. ADD ONE CUP OF WATER.
3. PUT THE LID BACK ON AND SHAKE CAN FOR TWO MINUTES.
4. LET THE BEST FRIEND REST FOR FIVE MINUTES.
5. REMOVE LID AND WAIT UNTIL YOUR BEST FRIEND HAS EXPANDED TO A GOOD SIZE.
6. YOUR BEST FRIEND IS NOW READY TO PLAY!

WARNING

IF YOU PUSH THE RED BUTTON ON HER NECK, YOUR BEST FRIEND WILL SHRINK AND BECOME TINY AGAIN.



“Oh! I will have to be careful not to touch the red button,” I say to myself out loud. I add the water, shake the can and let it rest.

Then I carefully open the lid ... the lid squeaks and a sweet popcorn-like smell fills the room.

WHOOSH!

Out pops a freckled, sweet-looking girl. She is teeny-tiny. Then she slowly starts growing and growing ...

Until she is as big as I am.

"Hi, my name is Lisa," she says and smiles at me. "But everyone calls me Dolly-Lisa because I love playing with dolls."

"My name is Helen," I say. "Do you want to play dolls with me?"

"Love to," Dolly-Lisa replies, "I *never* get tired of playing with dolls."

"Me neither," I say and smile. "Anja, who used to be my best friend, always wants to play football, or Kick-the-Can. That is so boring."

"Oh I know!" Dolly-Lisa says.



Dolly-Lisa and I play with dolls all day long. They each get a pillow house. Trade clothes. Fix hairdos. Go to work. Talk on their cell phones. Drink coffee and eat cookies.

When it starts getting dark outside, the dolls throw a party. The dolls put on their party dresses that flutter when they dance.

Dolly-Lisa gets to sleep on a mattress on the floor in my room. We pile all the dolls and stuffed animals onto our beds and then stay up late talking and laughing. Just as Anja and I used to do together ...

Just before falling asleep, I think about all the fun Dolly-Lisa and I will have playing together tomorrow.



I am woken up by Dolly-Lisa standing at the side of my bed and shining a flashlight in my eyes. Outside my window it is dark and quiet ... Is it the middle of the night?

"Time to wake up," Dolly-Lisa says. "Our dolls are going to the zoo," she says and points at the row of stuffed animals she has lined up across the floor.

"I want to sleep some more," I say with a yawn.

"But then I won't have anyone to play with me," Dolly-Lisa says. "I only need two hours of sleep to get recharged."

"OK," I reply, getting up and putting on my robe and slippers.

We have been playing for several hours when I hear laughter and shouting from the playground outside. It is Saturday and no one has to go to school. I wonder if Anja is outside playing?

"Now we are going to play that the dolls go grocery shopping." Dolly-Lisa says.

"Wouldn't we rather go outside to the playground?" I suggest.

"I can't play outdoors," Dolly-Lisa says. "I'll get broken."

"Oh ... I didn't know that," I say disappointed.

"Well, you should have read the small print on the back of the can," Dolly-Lisa says.

"I can't read the small letters yet, only the capital letters," I say.

"You wouldn't want me to get broken," Dolly-Lisa says looking at me crossly.

"No, of course not," I reply.

"Good, it's settled then. I decide that the dolls go grocery shopping," Dolly-Lisa says.