

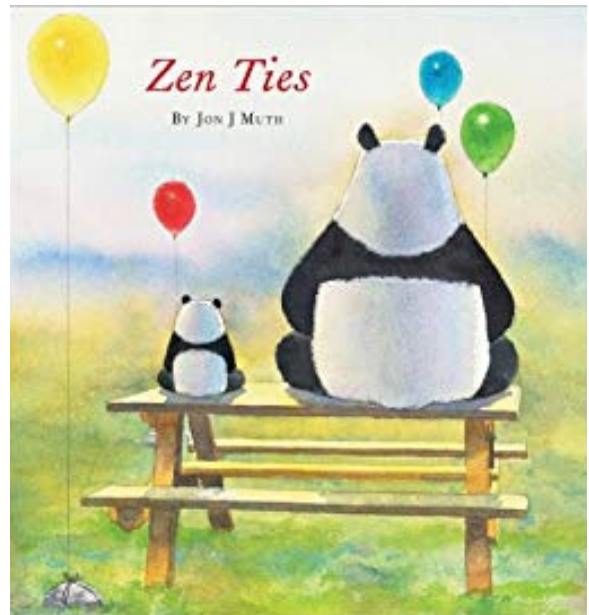


# ZEN TIES

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When the children meet Stillwater the panda bear and his nephew Koo, they don't know that they are about to go on an adventure where they would learn about being good neighbors, make new friends, and find out that even people we think we know can surprise us with kindness and empathy.

## Questions:



1. How would you feel if you saw a giant panda bear at the train station? Would you be shocked? Surprised? Excited? Scared?
2. How do you feel when you're waiting for a family member from far away to come visit? How do you think Stillwater feels?
3. How does Stillwater show Koo how excited he is to have him visit? What gift does he give him?
4. How does Koo show the children that he cares and wants to be friends?
5. Do you ever get nervous about things at school? What makes you so anxious?
6. Why don't the children want to help Ms. Whitaker? Should you help people who are having a hard time even if they aren't always nice to you?
7. Why do the children help even though Ms. Whitaker isn't very nice to them?
8. Even though Ms. Whitaker can't see very well, Karl and Koo still make pictures for her. Later on, she looks at them. How do you think she feels about the pictures?
9. Why does Ms. Whitaker help Michael study for the spelling bee? She spent her whole morning helping him- why?
10. How does Michael feel after the spelling bee? Have you ever felt so excited about something that happened at school?
11. Ms. Whitaker used to yell at the children for being in her yard. Why does Ms. Whitaker want the children to play in her yard now? How do you think Ms. Whitaker felt making tea with Addy? How do you think Addy felt?
12. Why didn't Koo want to go home? How can Stillwater and the children make him feel better about leaving?

**ACTIVITY:** Koo, Stillwater's nephew, speaks only in haiku. Have students write haikus about feelings!