

Townsend, Michael. *Monkey & Elephant's Worst Fight Ever*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011. Print.

Best friends Monkey and Elephant live on a tiny island with many other animal inhabitants. One night, Monkey decides to bring Elephant a surprise gift—a tray of delicious cupcakes. Much to his dismay, Monkey spies what he believes to be a costume party going on at Elephant's house – to which he was not invited! Feeling very sad, Monkey runs away, all the while reminiscing about the good times he and Elephant have had, which leaves him feeling confused about why Elephant would leave him out of the party plans. Sad, however, quickly turns to mad and the desire to get even, and Monkey freezes Elephant's toys into blocks of ice. Elephant is shocked by his best friend's actions. Why, they collected pet rocks and watched pro wrestling together! In turn, he too gets mad and retaliates.

The back-and-forth havoc escalates until the islanders decide that enough is enough and plan an intervention for the former best friends. While Monkey and Elephant are sleeping, they are set adrift in a small boat and are ordered not to return to the island until they have hugged and made up. The two friends bicker, but eventually the truth comes out— Elephant's party was actually going to be a surprise wrestling match for Monkey. An embarrassed Monkey admits he should have asked about the party, and both friends apologize for their rude behaviour. Upon their return, the islanders rejoice, and everyone enjoys the wrestling match.

Michael Townsend is a gifted illustrator, visual artist, comic book enthusiast, and author of the *Kit Feeny* series of graphic novels for young children. Fans of graphic novels will enjoy the comic book feel to this book, though children younger than the publisher-recommended age range of 5-8 may find the storyline distracting. Somewhat questionable, however, are the friends' over-the-top antics, which lead to violence, including the breaking of windows. However, the "don't jump to conclusions" plotline will inspire bedtime conversations, and the contemporary and colourful drawings are funny and engaging.

Recommended with reservations: 2 out of 4 stars

Reviewer: Debbie Feisst