The inspiring true story of two great friends, a baby hippo named Owen and a 130-yr-old giant tortoise named Mzee (Mm-ZAY). When Owen was stranded after the Dec 2004 tsunami, villagers in Kenya worked tirelessly to rescue him. Then, to everyone’s amazement, the orphan hippo and the elderly tortoise adopted each other. Now they are inseparable, swimming, eating, and playing together. Adorable photos e-mailed from friend to friend quickly made them worldwide celebrities. Here is a joyous reminder that in times of trouble, friendship is stronger than the differences that too often pull us apart.

My Personal Review:
The well-written book portrays a heart-warming story about friendship. Mzee’s love and guidance, along with Owen’s resilience, proves that science can’t always explain what brings species together. The book contains factual material, as partially told by the general manager of Haller Park, Dr. Paula Kahumbu. Photographer Peter Greste brings this story to life with his photos that capture all the main events leading to the remarkable friendship of Owen and Mzee. Further, they capture the amazing bond the two share. The pictures do a well job of telling the story. The vocabulary of the story is geared towards an average intermediate reading level, and can easily be modified to tend to a younger audiences level of understanding. Following the story are maps with facts about Kenya and Malindi, as well as facts on hippopotami and aldabra tortoises. The last section of the book also further discusses the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami. Lastly, this wonderful addition includes websites where teachers and parents can download discussion guides and take a virtual visit of Haller Park. This is a must for any parent and/or teacher to share with students of all ages.