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Best Friends Forever

Jennifer Weiner is a master of the modern-day fairy tale. In best-selling chick-lit romps like *In Her Shoes*, her heroines look just like us: self-deprecating, plagued by those few extra pounds—and ready for Prince Charming only once they've embraced their quirks. Weiner's latest effort, *Best Friends Forever*, is no exception, this time following a pair of friends—one fat, one thin—over two decades.

MC: Your stories often spotlight the ugly duckling who comes into her own. Why?

JW: Everybody feels like an ugly duckling in some way, and everyone wants the happy ending. My mom has a piece of art in her house

that says "If I only had a ____, I'd be happy." There's something satisfying about writing fiction that takes a heroine to a place where she doesn't have any more blanks to fill in.

MC: Why do your characters, particularly your new heroine Addie, focus so much on weight?

JW: I'm acknowledging the reality—weight is a big issue for women. As a larger woman myself, I want to talk about characters who aren't punch lines, who aren't pathetic—they aren't sitting on couches stuffing their faces with junk.

MC: They also have fun with clothes and shoes. Are you a fashionista?

JW: No! Last year, I bought this beautiful dress in a black-and-white print. It was \$800, but I said, "If I wear it 10 times, then it's only an \$80 dress." I wore it to readings all over the country—then people posted pictures of me on Facebook. At 10 different events, I'm wearing the same damn dress. People wrote in comments like, "Do you have other clothes?" And I'd been so proud. —Katie Charles