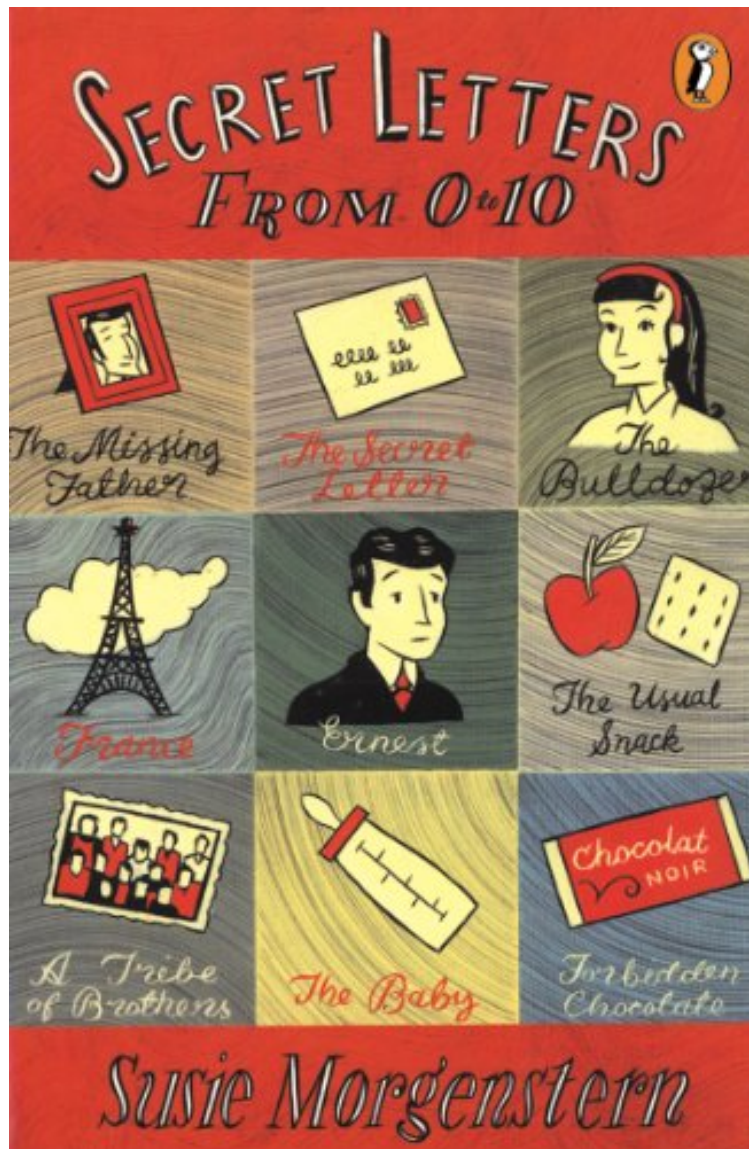


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## Secret Letters From 0 To 10 (Puffin Books)

Von Susie Morgenstern  
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Von Susie Morgenstern : Secret Letters From 0 To 10 (Puffin Books) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Secret Letters From 0 To 10 (Puffin Books):

Kurzbeschreibung Ten-year-old Ernest lives a flat, colorless life. Each day is the same: he comes home right after school, eats a healthy snack, and does his homework. Enter Victoria, the new girl in class. Victoria instantly falls in love with Ernest, and bulldozes her way into his life. Much to Ernest's surprise, he likes it. Bit by bit, color seeps into Ernest's humdrum existence--and he begins to realize that life can hold an endless variety of love, friendship, adventure, and change."Quirky characters, heightening suspense, and hilarious situations are deftly combined in this tender novel, which examines a few of the large and small ways people affect one another." --Booklist, starred review

From Publishers Weekly Terse prose and a lovable hero in the form of Ernest Morlisse, a deprived young man whose life turns topsy-turvy with a new neighbor's arrival, give this French novel universal appeal. There is no magic involved here, just the irrepressible spirit of Victoria de Montardent. This human "bulldozer" charges into his classroom and pulls 10-year-old Ernest into the colorful, modern world lying outside the door of his 80-year-old ("the kind of eighty that is really old") grandmother's house, a place where daily routines are as bland and predictable as the soup he has for dinner each night. Led by Victoria (and occasionally some of her 13 lively brothers), Ernest experiences a wide range of firsts: "I have tasted a delicious fondue, I have held an adorable baby in my arms, I have discovered the supermarket experience," he later reflects in a letter. He also learns the whereabouts of his long-lost father and is finally able to unveil the meaning of a puzzling missive written by his grandfather half a century ago. Not only will readers relish the serendipitous twists this novel has to offer, but their appreciation of ordinary pleasures (such as eating chocolate and scanning a book in the grocery store) may be heightened as they share Ernest's delight in discovering each new taste, texture, smell, sound and sight. Wrought with energy and wit, this chronicle of Ernest's metamorphosis from sheltered na?f into vibrant young man is not to be missed. Ages 9-12. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Booklist Gr. 4<sup>^</sup>-7. Poor, 10-year-old Ernest Morlisse: his mother died at his birth, his father deserted him one day later, and he is being brought up in a dreary, protected household by a grim, elderly grandmother, who rarely utters more than a few words and never smiles. Ernest's days are so structured they are completely devoid of joy and surprise, and the only mysteries life holds are the whereabouts of his father and the contents of a coded letter his grandfather sent just before he was killed in World War II. The arrival of Victoria de Montardent changes all that. Outgoing Victoria and her 13 vivacious brothers bulldoze Ernest into exploring life outside dull, familiar boundaries and help him experience the sensations and wonderment of love, loss, curiosity, pain, and joy. Morgenstern chronicles the awakening of Ernest's "sleepy old heart" through a wryly humorous narrative, presenting life's simple joys with such appreciation that events like going to the movies or answering the telephone seem as new to the reader as they do to a bemused Ernest. Quirky characters, heightening suspense, and hilarious situations are deftly combined in this tender novel, smoothly translated from the French, which examines a few of the large and small ways people affect one another. The richly rewarding happy ending will have kids begging for a sequel. Kathleen Squires