



Francine Poulet Meets the Ghost Raccoon: Tales from Deckawoo Drive, Volume Two

Kate DiCamillo , Chris Van Dusen (Illustrations)

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Deckawoo Drive's intrepid animal control officer meets her match—or does she? A funny, heartfelt, and fast-paced romp from Kate DiCamillo.

Francine Poulet is the greatest animal control officer in Gizzford County. She hails from a long line of animal control officers. She's battled snakes, outwitted squirrels, and stared down a bear. "The genuine article," Francine's dad always called her. She is never scared – until, that is, she's faced with a screaming raccoon that may or may not be a ghost. Maybe Francine isn't cut out to be an animal control officer after all! But the raccoon is still on the loose, and the folks on Deckawoo Drive need Francine back. Can she face her fears, round up the raccoon, and return to the ranks of animal control? Join a cast of familiar characters – Frank, Stella, Mrs. Watson, and Mercy the porcine wonder – for some riotous raccoon wrangling on Deckawoo Drive.

Francine Poulet Meets the Ghost Raccoon: Tales from Deckawoo Drive, Volume Two Details

Date : Published August 2nd 2016 by Candlewick Press (first published August 25th 2015)

ISBN : 9780763690885

Author : Kate DiCamillo , Chris Van Dusen (Illustrations)

Format : Paperback 112 pages

Genre : Childrens, Chapter Books, Humor, Animals, Fiction

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From Reader Review Francine Poulet Meets the Ghost Raccoon: Tales from Deckawoo Drive, Volume Two for online ebook

Becky B says

Francine Poulet is the premier Animal Control Officer in the land. She isn't afraid of anything. That is until she meets a raccoon who screams her name while charging her on a steep roof. The experience shakes Francine to the core and causes her to question her calling. But with the help of one little boy, she finds the courage to face her defeat and fear head on.

I know, I'm reading this one out of order, but that didn't affect the story much at all. Love the way Van Dusen's illustrations superbly complement DiCamillo's impeccable story writing. And even though this series is aimed at the lower grades, the author isn't afraid to expand their vocabulary with some nice big words. The story theme addresses an issue that many can relate to, how to respond to unanticipated defeat, but does so in a way that is humorous and probably not too close to home for anyone.

Notes on content: No language issues. No sexual content. One fall from a roof that results in some broken bones (but injuries aren't shown in illustrations).

Alex (not a dude) Baugh says

This second story from Deckawoo Drive (Leroy Ninker Saddles Up was the first), young readers meet Francine Poulet, the fearless and fearsome animal control officer. Following in her father and grandmother's footsteps, Francine is a first class animal control officer, in fact, she's won 47 animal control trophies, more than anyone else.

Since nothing scars Francine, when she receives an hysterical call from Mrs. Bissinger that there was a most unusual raccoon living on her roof and tormenting her by screaming her name all night long, she is immediately on the job. Undaunted and unafraid, Francine arrives at Mrs. Bissinger totally confident she will be able to capture the raccoon. That is, until it begins to scream her name, too. Suddenly, for the first time ever, Francine is afraid, so afraid she falls off the roof and lands in the hospital with several broken bones and a very broken spirit.

When Francine recovers, she quits her job as animal control officer and takes a job as a cashier at Clyde's Bait, Feed, Tackle, and Animal Necessities store. One day, two children, Frank and Stella, come in looking for some sweets. Frank immediately recognizes Francine from a newspaper story about her and knows all about her exploits as an animal control officer and her fall from animal control grace and Mrs. Bissinger's roof. But why quit? Frank explains to her that the raccoon is a screamer, and suddenly Francine remembers her father talking about a screaming raccoon.

The raccoon had gotten the best of Francine, an otherwise outstanding animal control officer. Maybe, Frank suggests, she is still a great one. Could that be true, Francine thinks, could she possibly go back and get that screaming raccoon, despite everything that happened.

What do you think she will do?

Kate DiCamillo really knows how to write great transitional books for young readers, first with her Mercy Watson series, and now with Tales from Deckawoo Drive. What is especially nice for these young readers is that they will recognize some characters from the first series in this second one, providing connection and continuity, a great support for developing readers at this age.

And this sense of continuity carries over to the illustrations by Chris Van Dusem, who has done the same type of spot black and white gouache illustrations throughout this book, just as he has for the Mercy Watson and Leroy Ninker books.

Some of the vocabulary will be a little sophisticated for some readers, but will hopefully encourage them to look up words they don't know. And some kids might be reluctant to read a book with an adult main character, but I think Francine is a humorous enough character that they will overlook that (just look at the cover), particularly if they see her in comparison to the other adult in the story, Mrs. Bissinger.

Like Leroy Ninker, this is a fun story that has a nice quiet message about not giving up even if you don't succeed the first time around. And they may enjoy learning that Francine's last name, Poulet, means chicken in French (lots of potential classroom discussion about that, I think). I also liked seeing the encouragement that Francine receives from Frank. Sometimes kids just see things more clearly than adults - in this case, Frank reminds Francine to just be herself and be proud of it - and it works.

I'm curious to read the next installment of Tales from Deckawoo Drive, and I hope young readers like this one so much that they will be as well.

A useful Teacher's Guide is available to download [HERE](#)

This book is recommended for readers age 6+

This book was sent to me by the publisher, Candlewick Press

The review was originally posted at Randomly Reading

Mary says

I got a kick out of this book and loved the illustrations. I tried the first in the Deckawoo series --Leroy Ninker Saddles Up, but didn't like it enough to continue beyond a dozen pages, which is rare for me. In any case, now that I get the idea of the humor and style of the series, I might try it again. Someday. But right now, because Francine is the only book I've put in my early chapter book category and I enjoyed it, I'm giving it 5 stars!

Tanja says

Kate DiCamillo is simply a master storyteller. No matter whether reading one of her novels or a beginning chapter book like this one, her words touch and warm the reader's heart. Her characters are always so well drawn and unique, yet so easy to relate to with all their strengths and weaknesses, with their joys and sorrows. I appreciate that Kate DiCamillo trusts her young readers with sophisticated vocabulary, awakening a curiosity for the beauty of language while telling an entertaining story. It is however the compassion and

empathy shown and felt by her characters in their big and small gestures, that make her stories so memorable. Each of her books is a very special gift, and so is Francine Poulet.

Sheri S. says

This book is definitely not up to the caliber of some of DiCamillo's other books (like *Because of Winn-Dixie* or *Tale of Despereaux*). It was slightly interesting and a bit amusing but I found it overall very mediocre. The story line was not super strong and the characters were alright. However, it does have an overall theme of perseverance which was good.

Adam says

Kate DiCamillo's words are the best words.

Luann says

Somehow I didn't hear about this series when it first came out. I'm so glad to have found out about it now! The first in the series, *Leroy Ninker Saddles Up*, left me with questions at the end, and I thought it was just okay. Luckily, that didn't happen with *Francine Poulet*! What a great story, with an important lesson to teach, and a screaming raccoon! I look forward to reading the next two in the series very soon.

Pop Bop says

To Whom Do I Give This Book?

This is the second book in DiCamillo's *Deckawoo Drive* series, which is itself a spin-off from the *Mercy Watson* series. Some familiar characters make appearances, but this book is perfectly fine as a stand alone.

SPOILER. Francine Poulet is the best Animal Control Officer in the county. But she has a panic attack while trying to capture a raccoon on a rooftop, suffers a nasty fall with serious injuries, loses all confidence in herself, and quits her job. She is coaxed back by a kind, patient, deadpan, young boy for one more try at the raccoon. Although frightened and nervous, she reaches down deep and remembers who she is.

Kate DiCamillo effects me the same way Polly Horvath does. Great characters, great pacing, some beautiful word craft, and an odd story that is too heavy for the antic setup, the funsy first chapters, and the audience.

At the outset DiCamillo builds a nice tone by repeating a few phrases over and over. The story is told almost like a poem with a recurring, repeating silly refrain. As the story unfolds we get to more edgy humor - the lady who calls Francine about the raccoon is dismissive and vinegary, Francine's boss is a windbag jerk, Francine is not all sweetness and light. That's fine. But once Francine fails at her task, well, the depth of her angst is way out of proportion given the rest of the story and is presented as a complete collapse of her entire sense of self-worth. Geez; what happened to the funsy ghost raccoon story? (By the way, the ghost angle is a

complete non-starter and I have no idea why it's even in the title.) We then follow Francine's further rather extended descent into self-loathing, before she is pulled together by a neurotic, humorless Yoda-like boy who urges her to try, try again.

The messages are all positive and the ending is happy enough. But the book by the end feels more like an intervention than a fun or even merely instructive, story. It's the same old problem - there are some terrific lines and some terrific descriptions and just marvelous use of words, (especially words more advanced than what you would normally find in books for this demo). Heck, a totally superfluous and loony but inspired scene in which a little girl kvetches because a bait shop doesn't sell sweets is worth the price of the book. But, it's all in service of a muddled, unconvincing and fundamentally awkward story that is quite likely to go mostly over a little reader's head.

The upshot is that I honestly admire this book as a crafted written work, but I have no idea to whom to give it. It's too old and angsty for the little readers, and too childish for the older readers. This is probably why Nietzsche didn't write children's books.

(Please note that I received a free advance copy of this book in exchange for a candid review. Apart from that I have no connection at all to either the author or the publisher of this book.)

Henry Martin says

Every time I read one of the Tales from Deckawoo Drive, I cannot help to smile. These books are not just funny, but also serious at the same time.

DiCamillo does a great job depicting the power of a child's wonder, and depicting how adult fears can change the course of one's life. Of course, the returning cast of characters is always appreciated, with the predictable personalities and outlooks.

Great illustrations, original story line, and pure joy to read aloud to a younger reader.

Laela says

Francine Poulet is a very self assured woman until she meets a raccoon that shakes her confidence.

Before we begin I must tell you I liked Leroy Ninker better. The vocabulary in this book is going to be challenging for most readers. There are more questions than answers in the plot.

However it has all the character qualities I want in a DiCamillo book. The illustrations make me want to turn the page so I can see what else is going to happen. I get to check in with some of my favorite characters who live on Deckawoo Drive. It is worth the read. I just wish the ghost element wasn't added in.

Peggy says

The moral of the story: Remember who you are and be brave.

Heather says

For some idiotic and irrational reason this book pissed me off. What happened to the raccoon? Why did it need to be captured in the first place? Did they take it to an animal rehab like Second Chances Wildlife? Or return it to the woods somewhere safe? Did they euthanize it? GOD, I've read too many kids books, I'M LOSING MY MIND. But really, I am way more concerned about this raccoon and it's whereabouts now. I'm terribly concerned about this raccoon and that wasn't even the point of the book...

Calista says

A great story about facing your fears. You get thrown off your horse, you have to get back up again, or you fall off a roof and you have to get back up again.

Francine is afraid of nothing until one day she learns what fear is. It stops her from doing her job and she walks away from what she loves. Luckily, there is Frank who pesters her into being the genuine article. She faces her fears and becomes better at her job.

This is so well told and has all the fun of the Mercy Watson series. Kate never disappoints.

BELIEVESINMIRACLES says

Kate DiCamillo is my favorite children/tween book storyteller of authors from the last 25 years along with Roald Dahl - Bev Cleary, Judy Blume and Frances Lattimore were my favorites as a kid in the 60s and early 70s.

She is so different from other writers in that she is far more of a story teller than just a writer of stories, which are two different things.

I first discovered her when I saw the film ' Because of Winn Dixie ' then read the book, she had me hooked and I have been a fan of hers ever since.

Elizabeth S says

I suppose these books may not be as engaging for readers not already familiar with the characters on Deckawoo Drive. Possibly. But this new series is so fun, cute, and full of charm, it is surely unlikely. I think anyone would enjoy these.

