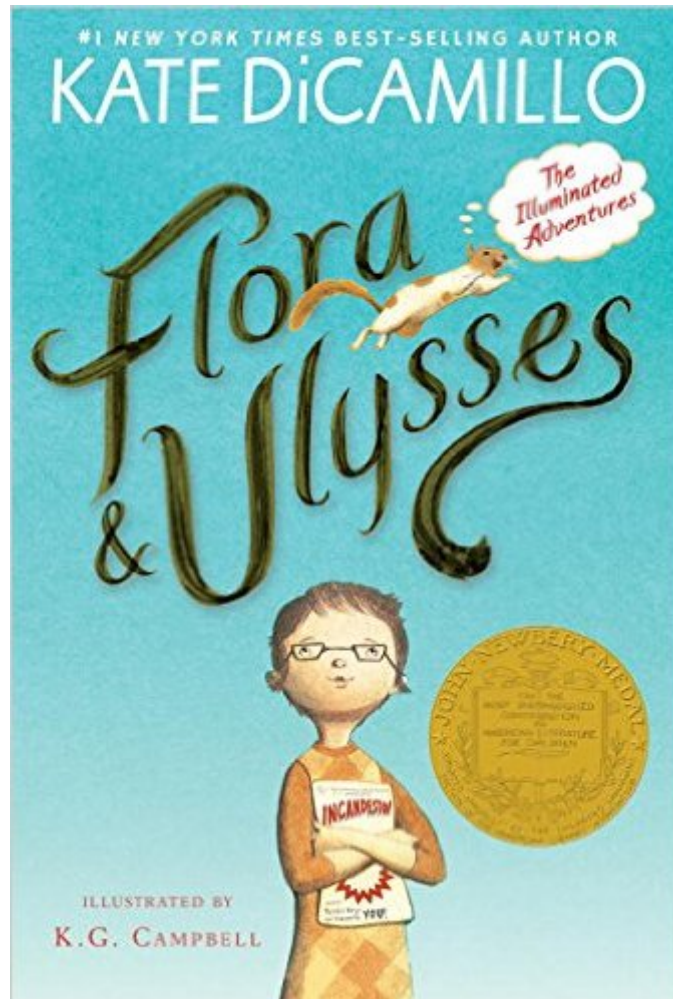


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# Flora & Ulysses: The Illuminated Adventures



## Synopsis

Now available in a digest paperback edition! The beloved 2014 Newbery Medal winner by former National Ambassador for Young People's Literature Kate DiCamillo. Holy unanticipated occurrences! From #1 New York Times best-selling author Kate DiCamillo comes a laugh-out-loud story filled with eccentric, endearing characters — a novel interspersed with comic-style graphic sequences and full-page illustrations, all rendered in black and white by K. G. Campbell.

## Book Information

Paperback: 231 pages

Publisher: Candlewick; Reprint edition (September 13, 2016)

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Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.7 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars — See all reviews (566 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,218 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #1 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Marriage & Divorce #3 in Books > Children's Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Superheroes #82 in Books > Children's Books > Action & Adventure

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Oh how I love this book. My 9-year-old son got to it before me, and how he loves this book. We've read excerpts aloud to my 15-year-old daughter who has never lost her appreciation for children's books (She must get it from me), and she loves what she's heard, and is going to read it next, now that I'm finished it. You can read the description yourself, but the characters speak to what was lovely about the book: FLORA -- A precocious (and self-proclaimed cynical) 10-year-old girl. ULYSSES -- A squirrel who got sucked up by a vacuum cleaner, the survival of which event gave him powers like flying and the ability to understand and communicate. TOOTIE TICKHAM -- The neighbor, probably nosy but definitely supportive of Flora. WILLIAM SPIVEY -- not William, not Billy -- Tootie's 11-year-old nephew who unexpectedly turns up in her (and thus Flora's) life. He is suffering from temporary blindness caused by trauma. MARY ANN -- A beautiful shepherdess keeping guard over the entry way (she's a lamp) There are other people who support or confound

Flora and Ulysses. The whole story is sort of Flora's quest or ultimate understanding of love and support. I chuckled out loud many times as I read, but I was also moved several times. Some of the chapters start off with a comic strip panel of Ulysses' adventures, and there are a few other of K.G. Campbell's drawings throughout, which gave the story extra charm. CONTENT NOTE: This may seem like a cute little book with some comics throughout, appropriate for your high-reading 2nd grader. He or she could read it I'm sure, and might like it, but I believe this is a book best enjoyed when that more sophisticated sense of humor and vocabulary kicks in. My 4th grade son reads on a middle school level and has always had that kind of sense of humor, so I think he got enough of it to love the book appropriately, but I'm quite sure he'd enjoy it even more in another year or so. As I read it, I was surprised at the words used: "euphemistically" (which was used in contrast with literally, so maybe he figured it out), "malfeasance" (a word Flora picked up from her comic book superheroes who fight evil), and the shorter but still unfamiliar to grade-schoolers "cynic" (which is sort of defined about midway through the book). My point is not to criticize the book, because I truly loved it, as did my son, but to suggest to parents (teachers, librarians, aunts, grandparents) that this book might frustrate a younger or less mature child, and as a positive, that this is a book that middle schoolers would love as well if you could convince them to read it. There is also an emotional depth that will be better appreciated by more mature kids.

And I don't mean the title as an insult or backhanded compliment. My daughter and I come to this from the younger audience DiCamillo books - most specifically the wonderful, screwball Mercy Watson books. My daughter is a second-grader for whom this is a tad advanced, mostly in the vocabulary, though I suspect most of the target audience and even a few adults, may have trouble here and there with this. As a result, we used this as a read-aloud, with the graphic chapters shared in a huddle. Our composite review is a big thumbs up. In Flora, DiCamillo has created a wonderful main character - an extremely intelligent and sensitive 10-year-old girl living in a world in which the adults around her don't seem to have much use for her, so she reasonably views their world with a jaundiced eye. She retreats into "cynicism" and comics until the world rather rudely and amusingly puts her into contact with a most amazing squirrel and some pretty screwball characters who will by turns exasperate, fascinate and enlighten her into some of the ways other people chose, or fall into, to cope with their sometimes hostile and uncaring worlds. Despite how angsty that last paragraph is, the book is for the most part a hoot - it is just a hoot with a point or two to make. My daughter and I both came to like Flora's dad, understand her mom, adore Ulysses, the superhero squirrel (and despite some of the other reviews you might read - he DOES indeed save a life here), and

appreciate William Spiver. Only complaint - and the reason for the docking of one star (though I wish I could dock only a half-star) - there are places here in which, much like the Mercy Watson books, DiCamillo pushes the quirkiness just a bit too far a bit too often. That said, there is a lot more here to like.

I never thought that one of the perks of being a grandmother would be the ability to read children's books, alone in my room, without anyone blinking an eye. I may not be in the target age range of 8-12, but I'm glad that I had a chance to read *Flora and Ulysses* because I thoroughly enjoyed it. I felt I could relate as an adult, when I read "Considering the human beings she was surrounded by, believing in a squirrel seemed like an increasingly reasonable plan of action." If only I had a squirrel in my life. I never imagined that a story about a squirrel could be so entertaining, especially since there are 68 chapters! They are short chapters, which makes it an easy read for kids of all ages. However, it also enticed me to read 'just one more' until the book was finished. I loved it! When my granddaughter was finally able to pry it from my hands, she fell just as deep into Flora's world and loved it as much as I did.

Flora is a 10 year old girl whose parents were divorced. Her mother is a romance novel author and only cares about her job and an Ugly little shepherdess lamp, Mary Ann. Flora calls herself Cynic, but we know she wants to be loved and cared by her mother. Then One day, the neighbor's vacuum cleaner sucked a squirrel and somehow the squirrel gained a superpower. Flora named the squirrel Ulysses and they became best friends. However, Flora's mother was determined to exterminate this rodent. Some parts of the story are told in comic novel style and they are cute. The supporting characters are all eccentric and that would appeal to young children. It's a fun book to read and the ending is heartwarming.

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