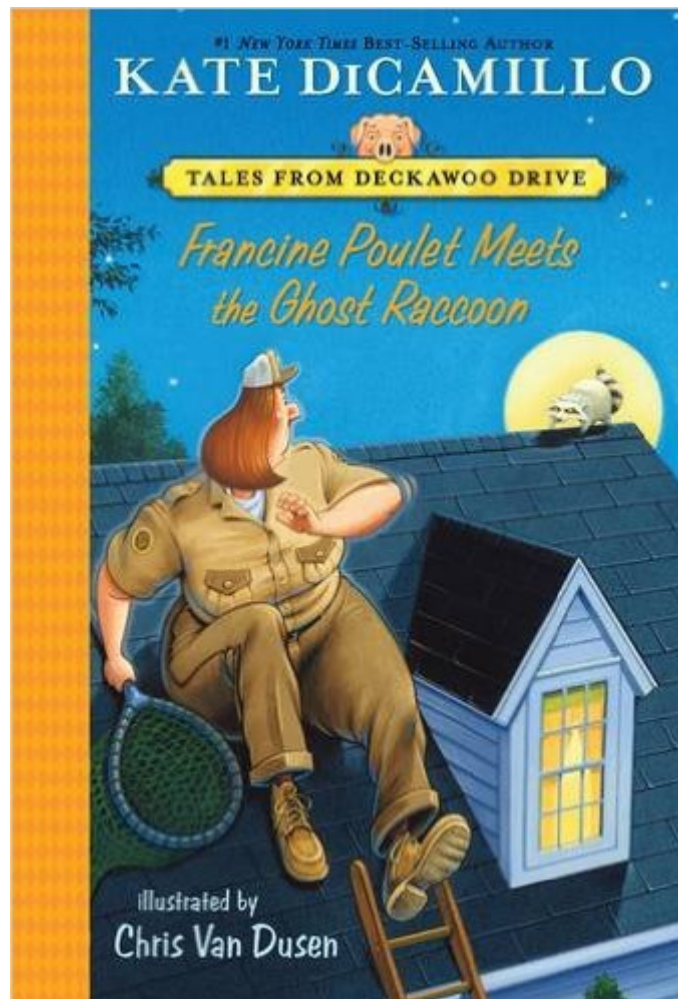


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Francine Poulet Meets The Ghost Raccoon: Tales From Deckawoo Drive, Volume Two



Synopsis

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.

Book Information

Series: Tales from Deckawoo Drive (Book 2)

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Age Range: 6 - 9 years

Grade Level: 1 - 4

Customer Reviews

I want to give this book more stars. I truly do. We are HUGE fans of Kate DiCamillo. We have literally every book she has written on our shelves, which is why I didn't hesitate to pre-order this one on . However, I was immediately disappointed to see a character prominently smoking a cigar on one of the pages. The smoking/smoke is described in the text as well. There doesn't need to be

a reference to tobacco use in a children's book; from a child's point of view, the reference was completely superfluous to this story. I find its inclusion by my favorite children's author totally irresponsible and disappointing. The story itself, like the Leroy Ninker spin-off, is a higher reading level (at least 1-2 levels) than *Mercy Watson*. It is incredibly moving at times (I shed a few tears reading a passage), but in a dark, heavy way that I needed to explain to/discuss with my grandchildren. It is less organized, with lots of unrelated scenes including familiar characters. While Kate DiCamillo has never been one to shelter our children from all of life's realities, it is considerably less light-hearted than *Leroy Ninker*. While Francine's discouraged soul-searching goes on too long for a children's book, the message of determination/perseverance is appreciated at the end. There are books my grandchildren pick up regularly. This one isn't one they (or I, sadly) have asked to read again. Gr1-3.

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 affects 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 funny 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 funny 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 and debilitating depression, (I'm not kidding), 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.)

My 8 year old son found this book engaging but was disappointed that all the illustrations were black and white. So was I!! The other Deckawoo Drive books have beautiful, colorful illustrations. I can't imagine why the publisher chose to leave these black and white.

Lots of figurative language. My 7 years old had to really learn and guess what it meant. Good for learning vocabulary and meanings of some figurative language. Might be a little hard for some kids to remember specific details due to a language.

Kate DiCamillo does it again with another hilarious book filled with quirky characters and zany situations. She's such a clever writer! My 10 year-old son had a blast reading this book out loud together.

The book is adorable, but the copy I purchased for my school library has 2 chapter 7's! By the time we realized this, it was too late to return it! You might want to check your copy when you buy this book!

Summary: Francine Poulet is a third-generation animal control officer, and not afraid of anything. Until one night when she's called in to catch a ghostly raccoon on a roof, and gets the first fright of her life. After falling off the roof and recovering from her hospital visit, Francine decides she's not cut out to be an animal control officer after all, and gets a job at a bait and tackle shop. Fortunately, a young boy named Frank comes into the store one day, and encourages Francine to try again with the raccoon, which has now taken up residence on a roof on Deckawoo Drive. Francine musters her wits, climbs up the house, and overcomes her fear to stare down the

raccoon and eventually snare it in her animal control net. She is back, and better than ever. Grades 1-3. Pros: Fans of Kate DiCamillo's Mercy Watson series will recognize several characters in this new Deckawoo Drive series (this book is the second installment). The crazy situations, goofy characters, and slapstick illustrations combine to make this lots of fun for beginning chapter book readers. Cons: Some of the sophisticated vocabulary and humor may be a bit over the average eight-year-old's head.

This is a great book. Every bit as good as her other books. It's funny, not patronizing, and Francine is an interesting character. No raccoon is going to get the best of Francine! Son and I loved it.

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