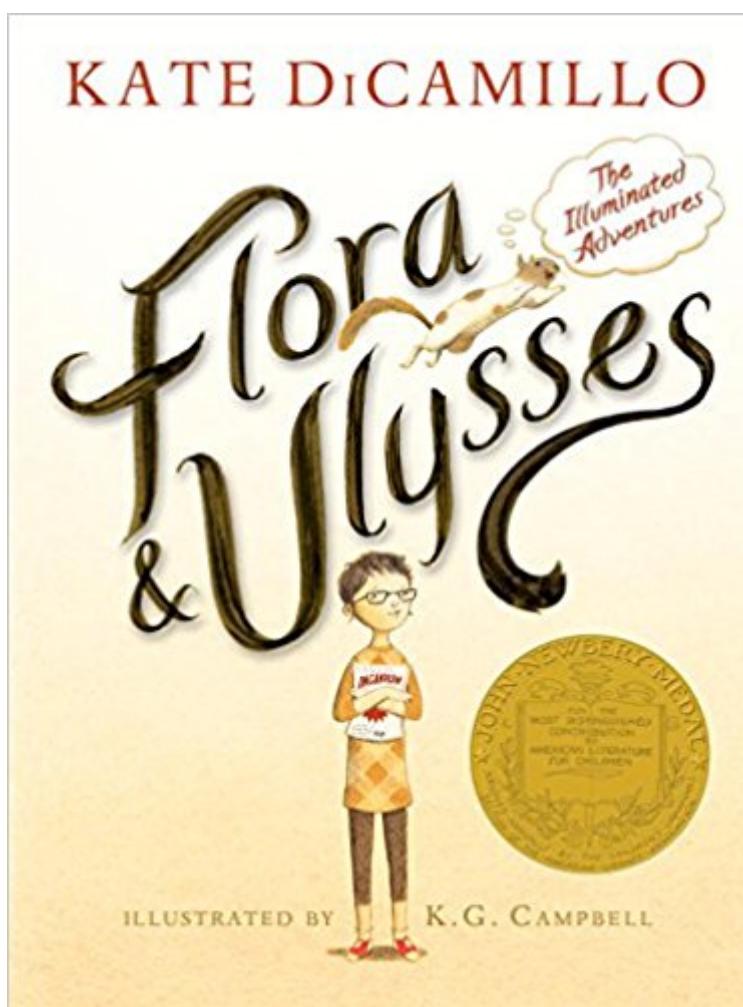


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# Flora And Ulysses: The Illuminated Adventures



## **Synopsis**

Winner of the 2014 Newbery Medal Holy unanticipated occurrences! A cynic meets an unlikely superhero in a genre-breaking new novel by master storyteller Kate DiCamillo. It begins, as the best superhero stories do, with a tragic accident that has unexpected consequences. The squirrel never saw the vacuum cleaner coming, but self-described cynic Flora Belle Buckman, who has read every issue of the comic book *Terrible Things Can Happen to You!*, is just the right person to step in and save him. What neither can predict is that Ulysses (the squirrel) has been born anew, with powers of strength, flight, and misspelled poetry — and that Flora will be changed too, as she discovers the possibility of hope and the promise of a capacious heart. From #1 New York Times best-selling author Kate DiCamillo comes a laugh-out-loud story filled with eccentric, endearing characters and featuring an exciting new format — a novel interspersed with comic-style graphic sequences and full-page illustrations, all rendered in black-and-white by up-and-coming artist K. G. Campbell.

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 520L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 240 pages

Publisher: Candlewick Press (September 24, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 076366040X

ISBN-13: 978-0763660406

Product Dimensions: 6.2 x 0.8 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 580 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #40,533 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #20 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Marriage & Divorce #70 in Books > Children's Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Superheroes #1263 in Books > Children's Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy & Magic

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## **Customer Reviews**

Gr 4-6â "Flora, obsessed with superhero comics, immediately recognizes and gives her wholehearted support to a squirrel that, after a near-fatal brush with a vacuum cleaner, develops the ability to fly and type poetry. The 10-year-old hides her new friend from the certain disapproval of

her self-absorbed, romance-writer mother, but it is on the woman's typewriter that Ulysses pours out his creations. Like DiCamillo's *The Magician's Elephant* (Candlewick, 2009), this touching piece of magical realism unfolds with increasing urgency over a mere few days and brings its somewhat caricatured, old-fashioned characters together into what becomes a supportive community for all. Campbell's rounded and gentle soft-penciled illustrations, at times in the form of panel art furthering the action, wonderfully match and add to the sweetness of this oddball story. Rife with marvelously rich vocabulary reminiscent of the early superhero era (e.g., "Holy unanticipated occurrences") and amusing glimpses at the world from the point of view of Ulysses the supersquirrel, this book will appeal to a broad audience of sophisticated readers. There are plenty of action sequences, but the novel primarily dwells in the realm of sensitive, hopeful, and quietly philosophical literature. "Rhona Campbell, Georgetown Day School, Washington, DC" (c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

**\*Starred Review\*** The story begins with a vacuum cleaner. And a squirrel. Or, to be more precise, a squirrel who gets sucked into a Ulysses Super Suction wielded by Flora's neighbor, Mrs. Tickham. The rather hairless squirrel that is spit out is not the same one that went in. That squirrel had only one thought: "I'm hungry." After Flora performs CPR, the rescued squirrel, newly named Ulysses, is still hungry, but now he has many thoughts in his head. Foremost is his consideration of Flora's suggestion that perhaps he is a superhero like The Amazing Incandesto, whose comic-book adventures Flora read with her father. (Drawing on comic-strip elements, Campbell's illustrations here work wonderfully well.) Since Flora's father and mother have split up, Flora has become a confirmed and defiant cynic. Yet it is hard to remain a cynic while one's heart is opening to a squirrel who can type ("Squirt! I am . . . born anew."), who can fly, and who adores Flora. Newbery winner DiCamillo is a master storyteller, and not just because she creates characters who dance off the pages and plots, whether epic or small, that never fail to engage and delight readers. Her biggest strength is exposing the truths that open and heal the human heart. She believes in possibilities and forgiveness and teaches her audience that the salt of life can be cut with the right measure of love. **HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY:** DiCamillo has a devoted following, plus this book has an extensive marketing campaign. That equals demand. Grades 3-6. --Ilene Cooper

Imaginative story about a girl, her squirrel, her divorced parents, William Shiver, and a couple of other endearing characters. The story subtly delves into Flora's feelings of self-doubt. She's not

sure if her mother really loves her. We also are introduced to William Shiver, who has his own issues of abandonment. I love how Flora fills a hole in William Shiver's heart with her kindness. If this book had been written when I was a youth, it would have ended with everyone getting back together; happily ever after and so on. This book doesn't wind everything up so neatly, but still it ends with promise. I can see why it won the Newberry award. I heard the author's acceptance speech and was so impressed with her. Excellent book--written for youth but with depth enough for all ages.

It all begins when Mrs. Tickman's husband buys her a Ulysses Super-Suction, Multi-Terrain 2000X vacuum cleaner and vacuums up a squirrel. Flora Bell, a young neighbor sees what happens. She rushes over and revives the squirrel. She takes him home and names him Ulysses. Soon Ulysses begins to develop extraordinary powers. He communicates with Flora by head nods and typing letters. Flora really needs a friend because her mother and father are divorced. Flora and her mother can't seem to get along. From this hilarious beginning evolves a story that will leave you laughing out loud as Flora and Ulysses get into one scrape after another. They make many friends who like them have unmet needs. The story becomes the adventure of how Flora and Ulysses interaction with people has a chain effect that will try the patience of some and bring great change and understanding to all the lives they touch.

Flora Belle Buckman, a self-proclaimed cynic at age ten, rescues a hapless squirrel that has been sucked into an ultra-powerful vacuum cleaner. Ulysses, named after the device that consumed him, returns from his near-death experience with super powers. He can fly, defeat a marauding cat, and type poetry. But not everyone is happy that Flora has taken a squirrel as a sidekick. Her mother, a romance writer, is the most unhappy of all. Among the cast of characters are Flora's dad, her neighbor and owner of the vacuum cleaner Mrs. Tickman, and Mrs. Tickman's great nephew William Spiver. Although Flora anticipates fighting crime with her new rodent friend, things don't work out the way she planned. This is a cute little book with imaginative illustrations. It would be fun to read aloud with the whole family.

Scarily powerful vacuum cleaners, deep-thinking flying squirrels, kids battle-scarred by their parents' breakups, and poetry on good old-fashioned clackety clack typewriters. I was entranced at the writing and captivating artwork from the start, but was still surprised that at the story's end, I teared up and applauded. Yes, literally clapped! Which may have been construed as odd because it was 2

in the morning. 1:30 is fine, but 2, that's just pushing it. Heartwarming without being saccharine, clever without being indulgent, cute without being cloying. This is the sort of book I would have loved as a kid and known even then I would still love it as an adult.(Note: this review is for the hardcover, page-turning edition of this book only. Much like graphic novels, I think the comic book-style artwork is better appreciated in material, non-swipy format.)

This was one of 5 chapter book read-alouds that I did with my third-grade class over the past school year and they ranked it their favorite. The colorful characters, BIG fun words, superb comic book style illustrations, and pure heart of this story cause it to stand out. Children of all ages and from many walks of life will relate to this book and the heart of Flora, along with her pet squirrel, Ulysses.

this is a very good read as are many of Kate's. I love that the characters are unusual (maybe a bit on the ASD spectrum even) and smart/thinkers.

I bought this for my nine year old daughter. She read most of it by herself, but she likes for me to read to her at bed time. This book is so good that I found myself reading longer past her regular bedtime than I probably should and being excited to see what happens next. I think this book is legitimate children's literature.

As a reading teacher, I have the opportunity to read a lot of children's literature. I did not enjoy this one by Ms. DiCamillo, but I am not a child either. The children I surveyed were half-and-half on it. Some thought it was "fun", others said dumb or boring, The vocabulary is challenging, so that would prevent some from understanding the story fully. It seemed to try to deal with the pain and isolation of divorce, but never really connected the reader to any of the characters. The illustrations did more for me than the text. Still, it is an award winner, so must be I missed something.

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