

Chirp

Written by Kate Messner

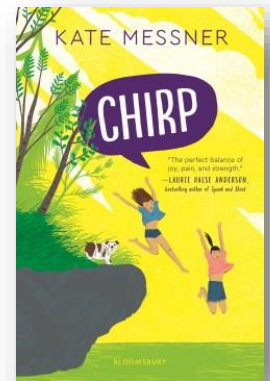
Bloomsbury Children's Books, February 4, 2020

9781547602810, Hardcover, \$16.99

Thirteen year-old Mia and her family, move from Boston to Vermont the summer after seventh grade, intending to help Mia's grandmother – an aging and zany cricket farm owner with the care of her business (she's a scientist who sells the crickets as food for their protein-potency). But someone is making attempts to destroy the farm and the business: unleashing seagulls and other pests on the land, futzing with temperature controls, and much more! Mia soon sets out with some new friends to figure out, whose been trying to sabotage her grandmother, promoting her grandma's work along the way. As her efforts to uncover the evil-doer and save her grandmother's farm become successful, a serious secret of her own slowly comes to light. A secret that destroyed her own confidence and self-worth back in Boston. Eventually, Mia finds the courage and strength to speak up, come to terms with her past trauma, and look forward to the future.

Without giving too much away, Mia's secret involves uncomfortable experiences she had at gymnastics the year earlier, making for an ideal first conversation-starter on topics of sexism, female agency, and even the #metoomovement. There are some heavy issues here handled with respect and accessibility for the older elementary school readership (playing detective is at the story's heart, and the non-frilly writing style, a little friendship drama, fun adult characters, and subtle analogies using crickets make the delivery of heavier topics accessible for younger tween readers). This is a wonderful, smart, and timely novel wrapped up in a sweet, mystery and friendship story involving science, summertime play, gymnastics, and, of course, crickets.

Picked by Bobbie Bensusan, CATS Eastern Regional Sales Manager



Fiction

Jack at Bat

Written by Mac Barnett and Illustrated by Greg Pizzoli

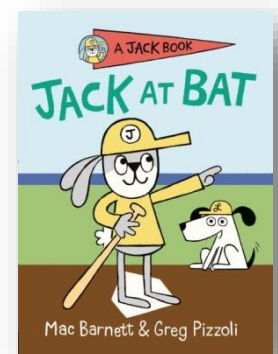
Viking Children's Books, February 4, 2020

9780593113820, Hardcover, \$9.99

Just in time for the start of Spring Training, Jack is at Bat! Well, not at first. Jack starts out our story as the Bat Boy for the Lady Town Ladies, but when destiny calls, he steps up to the plate! Follow along in this simple and easy going jaunt around the bases, learn about good sportsmanship, that Rex the Dog might not be the best choice for Left Field, baseball games are so long you can get in a good nap, and that the exciting stuff always happens in the 9th inning. (Especially when there are snacks!)

Great read along for new readers, and humor throughout to keep up the pace, even as the game drags on!

Picked by Alison Curtin, CATS Special Collections Project Manager



Fiction

