



Bink & Gollie

Kate DiCamillo , Alison McGhee , Tony Fucile (Illustrator)

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Winner of the 2011 Theodor Seuss Geisel Award!

In a brilliant collaboration, best-selling authors Kate DiCamillo and Alison McGhee, along with acclaimed illustrator Tony Fucile, introduce an outrageously funny pair of friends.

Meet Bink and Gollie, two precocious little girls — one tiny, one tall, and both utterly irrepressible. Setting out from their super-deluxe tree house and powered by plenty of peanut butter (for Bink) and pancakes (for Gollie), they share three comical adventures involving painfully bright socks, an impromptu trek to the Andes, and a most unlikely marvelous companion. No matter where their roller skates take them, at the end of the day they will always be the very best of friends. Full of quick-witted repartee, this brainchild of Newbery Medalist Kate DiCamillo and award-winning author Alison McGhee is a hilarious ode to exuberance and camaraderie, imagination and adventure, brought to life through the delightfully kinetic images of Tony Fucile.

Bink & Gollie Details

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Author : Kate DiCamillo , Alison McGhee , Tony Fucile (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Bink & Gollie for online ebook

babyhippoface says

Oh please, oh please, *oh please* let this be the first in a series. A long series. I am in love with Bink and Gollie. (And I'll just admit right off the bat that as much as I would love to be Bink, I am entirely Gollie. And my husband is *so* Bink in boy form.)

There is so much to love about this new book. A fun friendship between two polar-opposite-type girls. Clever dialogue. Brilliant Tony Fucile illustrations. (He is officially on my list of possible illustrators for the children's book I will never write.)

And speaking of Fucile's brilliance.... Open the book. Turn to page 3. How can you not love that image of Bink sitting criss-cross applesauce, eating peanut butter straight from the jar? (Okay, this is the singular occurrence in the book where I am, in fact, Bink. Yay!) Now look at Bink on page 9. Genius. Ditto pages 13, 14, 24, 57, and 69. Holy cow, 69.

This DiCamillo/McGhee/Fucile Trio is **gold**. Whenever Book 2 is coming out (and *pleaseplease* say it is), it's not soon enough.

Update: HURRAY FOR BINK & GOLLIE WINNING THE 2011 GEISEL!

L13 Tracy Beling says

I absolutely fell in love with Bink and Gollie. It may have something to do with the fact that they remind me of my two oldest daughters.

Bink and Gollie are two friends that appear to have nothing in common, yet somehow, they have a wonderful friendship. In this book, there are three short stories about the two friends, and how they get along even though they're so different. They complement each other perfectly and find a way to meet halfway most of the time.

The illustrations are wonderful. They are simple, yet show so much emotion on the faces of the characters through excellent details. Although there is not very much text on each page, there are some difficult vocabulary words (baffled, implore). However, the illustrations provide excellent support for the reader and provide more information that the text does not include. This would present an excellent opportunity for a lesson on using context clues to determine meaning of unknown words. This would also be an excellent book to use with a unit on friendship.

I would use this book with readers that are transitioning to chapter books in 2-3 grades.

It is a Theodor Seuss Geisel Award winner.

Betsy says

I eye *Bink and Gollie* across the room with a slow reptilian stare. I yell at it, “I refuse to be charmed by you!” I throw a shoe. *Bink and Gollie*, to its credit, does not allow itself to be sucked into my childish behavior. I edge a little closer. I cry, “I know your pictures are amazing and your writing manages to be loquacious without being precious but I am not fooled!” I throw my other shoe, which unfortunately means that I am now out of shoes. *Bink and Gollie* is now looking at me with a mixture of amusement and pity. I fall to my knees and crawl forward. When I’m close enough I whisper, “I lied. You’re amazing. You’re everything a person would want in a children’s book. You’re the best thing I’ve ever seen.” I succumb. *Bink and Gollie* strokes my hair as I cry uncontrollably, but it knows I am telling the truth. It really is the best thing ever. And what’s more, it’s a book like nothing else you’ve ever seen. Nothing. Ever. Seen. Trust me on this one. I see a lot of books.

Put together two Minnesotans and one animator and what do you get? Bink and Gollie, of course. Bink is a diminutive pixie, all wild blond hair and a penchant for falling madly in love with things. Gollie, in contrast, is a staid and measured companion, unwilling to be pulled into Bink’s obsessions if she can possibly help it. The two are best friends and in this book we are treated to three of their adventures. In the first, Bink falls head over heels for a pair of brightly colored socks that irk Gollie to the extreme. A compromise must be reached. In the second tale Gollie is determined to scale the heights of the Andes Mountains in her living room but finds it difficult to do so when Bink keeps knocking on her front door. In the third, Bink becomes enamored of a goldfish. Gollie cannot see its appeal, but when a terrible accident occurs she’s the one who knows exactly what to do. If you seek marvelous companions, look no further than the tales you’ll find here.

The great pairings of children’s literature involve friends with differences. Danny and his dinosaur. Houndsley and Catina. Elephant and Piggie. George and Martha. But the greatest of all these and the standard bearers if you will, are undoubtedly Frog and Toad. There’s something about their particular combination of exasperation and affection that rings true. Until now, I’ve seen few very few characters that tap into that same feeling, and it is interesting to me that Bink & Gollie would be one of the most successful. On the surface, there are some distinct differences from Lobel’s classic work. While he never included a word more difficult to read than “button” in his books, DiCamillo and McGhee revel in delicious words like “bonanza”, “outrageous”, “implore”, “ventured”, and “marvelous”, but to name a few. That said, it’s all about tone. The back and forth between Bink and Gollie rings so true that you are given the immediate impression that not only are these two girls real people but that they have been friends for years and know one another well. You get that feeling from Frog and Toad too, you know. With a minimum of words, you’re convinced of their world from page one onward. No mean feat.

As for the girls themselves, I don’t think I’ve ever really seen characters like this before. Bink is short, blond, and sports a permanently pleated skirt. It takes noticing that skirt to realize that Bink is a girl at all, sometimes. She sports a Struwwelpeter-worthy head of hair that could easily be ascribed to either gender. Gollie, in contrast, appears to be older. She’s tall, thin, oft seen wearing knee-length pants with black tights underneath (explaining, in some ways, her visceral objection to Bink’s colorful footwear). If there is an age difference between them, Gollie is too good natured to let it get in the way of their friendship. True, she often tries to impose her opinions on Bink (your socks are too bright, your fish is not marvelous, etc.) but this usually meets with the brick wall of Bink’s obsessions. Bink loves Gollie, but is perfectly aware that Gollie’s opinion is not the be all and end all of creation itself.

Maybe what I love most about them is that these girls are allowed to do things that traditionally boys do in children’s literature. Gollie is inclined to pretend that she is explorer scaling the icy heights of the Andes

Mountains. Both love roller skating and ice skating for fun. They're active gals. And sure, they engage in traditional girly things like cooking and gardening, but I like that they're given options outside of the usual let's-play-princess mindset. If Bink wears shoes, she wears sneakers. There's something to be said for that.

The universe Bink and Gollie occupy could only exist in children's literature. Not since the days of Winnie-the-Pooh have characters lived in such individual and striking homes. Bink and Gollie partake of that childhood fantasy of a world without adults. At the foot of a large tree is Bink's home, all cozy and warm and tended. More cottage than house, really. On the top of the tree is Gollie's ultra-mod swinging pad, outfitted inside with sleek furniture and nonrepresentational art. And don't think to yourself that these tales take place while the grown-ups are away, either. You'll notice in the scene where Bink is digging carrots out of her garden that everything about her house is Bink-sized. Everything from the height of the windows to the size of the garbage can is made for Bink Bink Bink. You never really question this world either. Heck, I had to read the book four or five times before I even noticed it at all. Somehow, it makes perfect sense in context. An parent's presence would ruin the entire effect.

Like a whole host of new illustrators these days, we owe the existence of the illustrator, one Mr. Fucile, to his work on films as an animator. His first title for kids was the rather nice *Let's Do Nothing* which was a picture book about two boys attempting the impossible. It was a fine debut, but I little suspected the man capable of the visual splendor that is *Bink and Gollie*. Because, you see, while madams DiCamillo and McGhee give these girls their very particular, very distinctive voices, it is Mr. Fucile who makes you fall in love with them. Our very first view of Bink, aside from the cover and chapter page, is of her sitting in a chair cross-legged, cordless phone in one hand, spoonful of peanut butter in the other, jar nestled nicely between her sneaker-footed legs. Gollie, in contrast, is seen all akimbo legs, phone gripped in one hand, and a second holding a book, clawlike above her head. By the time you read the lines, "Greetings, Bink... I long for speed," it's done. You're charmed.

It is clear from here on in that you are nestled squarely in the palm of Mr. Fucile's hand. He knows when to make Bink just a nose above a desk, asking for information. Or how exactly to show Gollie spilling pancake batter all over her griddle. And the emotional beats resonate. When Bink accuses Gollie of being jealous of her fish, Fred, you see Gollie suddenly vulnerable. Her hands held before her, her eyes staring off into space. Her right eyebrow hints at the truth behind Bink's statement, and certainly the reader is left with little doubt. It's amazing. With just the tiniest strokes of his pen, Fucile turns a potentially tragic scene into a heroic one and then immediately into one of great poignancy. Fair play to the man.

Note too the use of color! Much of this book is left in black and white, but Fucile knows precisely when these layouts would best be served by a dash of hue here and there. Though the seasons change between each chapter, somehow you never feel that the colorless summer is the same as the colorless fall. It's all in the shading. Some folks I know have also mistaken this book for a graphic novel, and I think I know why this is. It's not because there are any speech balloons to be seen, but rather because Fucile is adept at breaking up his space. One moment you're looking at a two-page spread of a darkened theater watching a film and the next the action has been split into three long panels showing exactly how Bink trips and falls over a rock in the road. We're not used to our children's books working the layouts like this. Clearly Fucile's past experience with storyboards is coming in handy these days.

One is left wondering to what extent Mr. Fucile came up with the book's details and to what extent he created them out of his own brain. Was he told to give the Eccles' Empire of Enchantment that particular air of treasure hunting mixed with a tinge of despair? Was he told that Bink was a creature of peanut butter and to add that element in when appropriate while Gollie belonged squarely on the pancake side of things? Was he instructed that rather than cell phones, Bink and Gollie use white cordless landlines? Was he asked to

make Bink's scarf at the end of the book the second bright sock purchased at the *beginning* of the book? And on top of all that he includes little things you might not notice except on a fourth or fifth read. When Gollie decides to give Bink half her pancakes, notice that she gave Bink the much taller stack. And when a besotted Bink agrees to hang out with Gollie, she is holding her phone out so that Fred the fish can hear the news as well.

Now comes the difficult part for the children's librarian that reads this book. Mainly, where the heck do you put it in your children's room? It has three distinct chapters and comes in at 6 3/8" X 9 1/2". A picture book, it is not. However, as I mentioned before, it has outsized words in its sentences and comes in at a whopping 96 pages. Easy reader it is not. That said, there are very big pictures in this book, and hardly more than a couple sentences per page. So chapter book it is not. So where do you put it? My suggestion is that you create a *Bink and Gollie* section in your library. Clear a whole shelf off in your room and display your copies of this book proudly. And then, in the future, when there are many many more *Bink and Gollie* adventures to be added (as there had better be or you will hear me shrieking loudly in the streets outside of the Candlewick publishing offices) you can just buy enough copies to fill the shelf up. Slap your hands together, problem solved.

I keep very few of the books that I'm sent by publishers for review. In 2010 alone I think I've kept only the books signed to me alongside, *Meanwhile*, and *A Sick Day for Amos McGee*. I can now add *Bink and Gollie* to that list. I don't know where in the library you'd ever put it but put it in your library, both public and personal, you must. There's something about this book that utterly defies any and all expectations. You'd have to have a heart of stone not to be hypnotized by the sheer charm of these stories. All we can do now is own it, give it to all the small children we know, and clamor to the creators like little *Oliver Twist* parrots. Please m'ams and sirs . . . we'd like some more!

For ages 6-8.

Shira says

Adorable!

Michele says

Ah! I loved this book! It is cute, quirky, and fun. I have been putting off reading it to my library classes because it appeared too long for my 15-minute storytime. I was wrong. It took a *little* longer, but it was well worth it!

This is a deceptively simple tale about two friends which accurately captures the relationship between two girls. One of the best things about this book is that the relationship stands completely alone. The first time I read it, I thought the girls were sisters. At one point, Gollie acts more like a mother. Their ages are unclear, and irrelevant. Similarly, their homes are...fascinating and understated and unusual. One girl lives at the bottom of a tree, another in a modern abode on the branch of a tree. They sit on a bench on a branch to eat pancakes. The housing is both not important, and at the same time, extremely interesting.

The illustrations are absolutely wonderful and help to keep the emphasis squarely on the two girls. Much of

the drawing is in black and white, while the girls and their immediate task are in color. My first and second graders noticed this distinction right away. Why? they wanted to know? Why were only the girls in color? A wonderful discussion.

This book also nicely uses quite a lot of big words, and uses them in a way which helps explain these words to kids. There are three short stories within the book and the first one is all about *compromise*. The last one is about the meaning of *companion*. I really cannot express how much I enjoyed this book. I think it works best with an adult reading along to assist with the vocabulary.

Gina says

A cute little book I had to get for one of my college classes. The detail in the illustrations is the most enjoyable part, I think, but I have to praise it for getting across so much with so little text. Bink and Gollie's personalities are clear and distinct, and the strength of their friendship is obvious. Well done.

Calista says

This book lifted my spirits and helped me smile today. These two friends are very different with big vocabularies. They learn the art of compromise. I love how the pictures are as much a part of the story as the words and how they meld together to tell this special friendship. Also, it looks like such an amazing treehouse they have.

They deal with personal space and time, compromise of friends and goldfish and it all swirls into a wonderful whole. What we need now is a Bink & Gollie nation.

This book warmed my heart and brought bubbles of happiness. Maybe it would do the same for you and your kids. I think this is between children's books and middle grade. A kid learning to read could start with this gem. My niece loved this book and wanted to read it again tomorrow. You can count on Kate.

Luann says

I LOVED this! My one complaint would be that it is TOO short! Instead of three chapters about Bink and Gollie, I would love to read thirty chapters! While reading this, I made a list of things I love about this book:

- * I love BOTH Bink and Gollie.

- * LOVE Bink's hair!

- * LOVE their "compromise bonanza!" This is something all friends need to learn about.

- * LOVE the use of color AND gray-scale. Any important focal point is in color. Bink and Gollie are ALWAYS in color.

- * Gollie used Bink's sock as her flag for the top of the Andes!
 - * LOVE the fish chapter (of course!)
 - * LOVE Bink's choice of a goldfish! What a marvelous companion - and so cute!
 - * Was Bink using the sock from chapter one as a scarf while ice skating? Too fun! The sock makes an appearance in all three chapters.
-

Melki says

Cute story for kids that proves friends don't always have to agree on everything. One thing Bink and Gollie will never need to argue about is whether to have peanut butter sandwiches or pancakes:

Peanut Butter Pancakes

- serves 12

1 cup flour
2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup creamy peanut butter
2 tablespoons sugar
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 large egg
1 cup milk
2 tablespoons milk

- directions:

In large bowl mix together flour, baking powder and salt. Set aside.
In small bowl, whisk together peanut butter, sugar and oil until smooth. Beat in egg, then milk.
Pour the milk mixture into the flour mixture, stirring just until blended.
Lightly coat griddle or skillet with oil and heat it over medium-high heat.
Drop batter onto the griddle and cook until tiny bubbles appear on the surface of the pancake, then flip and cook a few minutes more.

Krista the Krazy Kataloguer says

I must say, these were three rather strange stories. The characters are very appealing, but I wasn't immediately sure if Bink was a boy or a girl. And do they both live alone? Not a sign of families anywhere. Very odd. Though this book was a 2011 Theodor Seuss Geisel Award honor book for beginning readers, I

found some of the vocabulary to be way too advanced for someone in first, second, or even third grade: outrageous, compromise, bonanza, marvelous, companion, unremarkable, extraordinary, accomplishment, interruptions. I do, however, like Gollie's treehouse. Wish I had one. Recommended with caution for beginning readers.

La Coccinelle says

I was searching my library's e-book selections for more books by Kate DiCamillo because I've found her to be a reliably good author when I want a children's book that's written well and isn't condescending. I'd never even heard of the *Bink & Gollie* books before, but the library had #1 and #3 (typical), so I picked up the first one to give it a try. As soon as I was done, I downloaded the third book as well.

This is a super-cute depiction of friendship. The pictures themselves are adorable (I love Gollie's house up in the tree and Bink's wild hair!), but combined with DiCamillo and McGhee's wonderful writing, I felt like I was watching an amazing animated film. I could almost hear Bink's cute little voice in my head (she has some of the best lines). DiCamillo never shies away from using big words, trusting that kids are smart enough to figure out what is meant through context. The result is a story that is enjoyable for a much wider age range than one might normally find in a children's book.

The stories are simple, but they all tie together by the end, and the girls' friendship is reinforced even more. I wish my library had all of the books in the series, because I'd love to read about more of Bink and Gollie's adventures.

Quotable moment:

"Hello, Gollie," said Bink. "Do I smell pancakes?"

"You do not," said Gollie.

"Will I smell pancakes?" said Bink.

"Perhaps a compromise is in order, Bink," said Gollie.

"What's a compromise?" said Bink.

"Use your gray matter, Bink," said Gollie. "You remove your outrageous socks, and I will make pancakes."

Kathryn says

I loved this book! It is completely charming and remarkable in how clearly it is able to convey both the joys and frustrations of close friendship. I was actually surprised how short/quick-to-read this book is since it looks like a longer picture book/early chapter book but it took me no more than ten minutes to get through.

The words are chosen sparingly and sublimely and it's brilliant how well they, coupled with the absolutely marvelous illustrations, convey the tone and characters' thoughts and expressions. I worried at first that some of the ambiguity would bother me (why, exactly, are Bink and Gollie friends since Gollie seems so much older? and does Gollie just hang out in an elaborate tree-house or is that her actual home?) but it just ended up adding to the sense of fun and atmosphere for me. The illustrations could almost tell the story by themselves but I just love the added nuances of character and the wittiness of the dialogue. I don't want to hype this book too much but I know it's already receiving major accolades from the professionals and I think they are deserved :-) It really warmed my heart.

Lisa Vegan says

Although this book is 81 pages long and has 3 “chapters” plus a short postscript, it is not a children’s novel as I was expecting, but an advanced picture book, at least in my opinion. It is quite advanced because the vocabulary/language used is sophisticated and definitely more advanced than in most picture books, though because the illustrations tell so much of the story, even the youngest children will understand it.

I love the story of this friendship between two very different girls. In every way, this is a lovingly created book.

Both the story and pictures are so charming and funny, and they really capture the complexity of friendship.

I love the way color and art style were used in the pictures.

My favorite part was the imagination shown by Gollie when she climbs the mountain, and the humor shown in the notes on the door. Gollie’s pancakes definitely made me hungry, and I read this very late at night/very early in the morning, not a time when I really wanted to eat. And, I like colorful socks. Everything with the fish was adorable too.

I’d like to read further Bink & Gollie books.

This would make a fitting gift to give to a friend (of any age), especially if the relationship is ever tumultuous or strained, or simply close.

The authors’/illustrator’s bio section on the inside back cover is cute too.

4-1/2 stars.

I enjoyed this book so much, I entered to win a copy at Goodreads' First Reads giveaway program, a giveaway ending on 12/20.

The Library Lady says

I know I'm supposed to be charmed by this as others have been. But I'm not.

Then again, I HATED The Tale of Despereaux: Being the Story of a Mouse, a Princess, Some Soup and a Spool of Thread. I am indifferent to The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane and I wouldn't care if

"Mercy Watson" was turned into bacon, sausage and porkchops. In fact, I might like her better.

How is it that an author that can write something as moving, as wonderful as damn good as Because of Winn-Dixie then decides she's done enough of that and suddenly turns out one saccharine, cloying book after another?

Bought it for the library and hope that the kids like it. But I don't.
