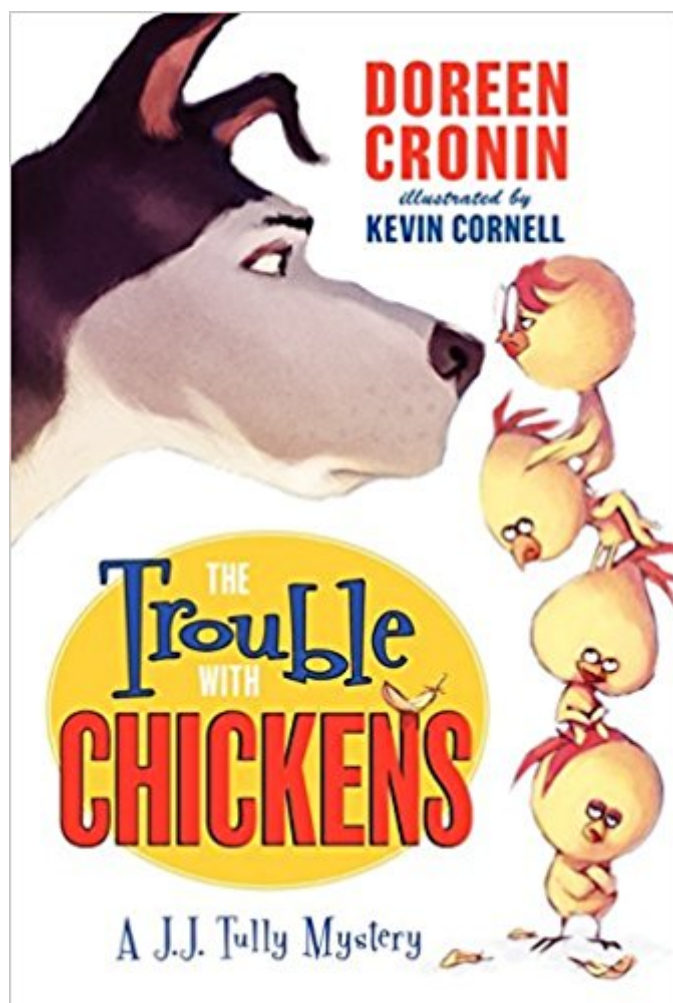


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The Trouble With Chickens: A J.J. Tully Mystery (J. J. Tully Mysteries)



Synopsis

From the bestselling, award-winning author-illustrator team of Doreen Cronin and Kevin Cornell comes the first book in a heavily illustrated, hilarious chapter book series about the adventures of a dog detective. Perfect for fans of Sara Pennypacker's Clementine series and Jarrett J. Krosoczka's Lunch Lady series. J.J. Tully is a former search-and-rescue dog who is trying to enjoy his retirement after years of performing daring missions saving lives. So he's not terribly impressed when two chicks named Dirt and Sugar (who look like popcorn on legs) and their chicken mom show up demanding his help to find their missing siblings. Driven by the promise of a cheeseburger, J.J. begins to track down clues. Is Vince the Funnel hiding something? Are there dark forces at work? Or is J.J. not smelling the evidence that's right in front of him?

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 570 (What's this?)

Series: J. J. Tully Mysteries

Paperback: 144 pages

Publisher: Balzer + Bray; Reprint edition (January 24, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0061215341

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Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.3 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 138 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #43,511 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #54 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Where We Live > Farm Life #117 in Books > Children's Books > Animals > Farm Animals #312 in Books > Children's Books > Animals > Dogs

Age Range: 6 - 10 years

Grade Level: 1 - 5

Customer Reviews

Gr 2-4-With its sharp wit and suspenseful mystery, Cronin's foray into the crowded chapter-book field is a crowd pleaser. Retired search-and-rescue dog J.J. Tully is enjoying the simple life on a farm when his world is turned upside down by an annoying hen, Moosh, and her two equally obnoxious chicks, Dirt and Sugar, who hound him to help locate Poppy and Sweetie. They fear that the missing chicks have been kidnapped and are being held hostage inside the house where

ferocious Vince the Funnel-an aptly named canine-lives. When Moosh appears with a note stating it "behooves" the chickens to "rendezvous" to get back her peeps, J.J. muses about the likelihood of birdbrains with sophisticated vocabulary, and he must sniff out the true offenders. Cronin's tongue-in-cheek humor spills forward as the detective story unfolds, while the whodunit will keep readers guessing until the ending. Cornell's black-and-white cartoon illustrations add to the hilarity with bespectacled Sugar, cone-headed Vince the Funnel, and J.J. Tully's mismatched floppy ears. Teachers will embrace the story as a great read-aloud, while reluctant and nonreluctant readers will savor this quick read of a mystery and eagerly await the next case for J.J. Tully to crack.-Michele Shaw, Quail Run Elementary School, San Ramon, CA (c) Copyright 2010. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

J. J. Tully, a former search-and-rescue dog, is supposed to be resting and relaxing after a noble career. But he is hardly settled into his new home before a mama chick named Mildred wants him to find two of her brood that have gone missing. Tully's willing to take on the case for a hamburger, but a ransom note soon complicates things, and a house dog, Vince the Funnel (for the contraption wrapped around his head), is out to make sure that he is not the canine going to the vet to get tubes in his ears. The plot is a bit convoluted, and when the narrator changes in the middle of the book, even experienced readers might be confused. But the noirlike detective Tully and the funny chickens running around, well, like chickens make appealing characters, especially as drawn by Cornell, who knows how to get TV cartoon style humor out of the action. Readers can expect to see more of Tully at work in future installments of this new series. Grades 3-5. --Ilene Cooper --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

We are completely in love with Doreen Cronin books! We started with The Chicken Squad... and it was our spark. Our upcoming 2nd grader finally fell in love with reading, thanks to these adorable and mischievous chickens! In LOVE - find him under the covers with a booklight giggling about chickens - in love. We're anxiously awaiting the next Chicken Squad book, and in the meantime have started on the prequel JJ Tully Mysteries. Absolutely adorable, and just as enjoyable for parents as for the kids. Our son is working his way through the 2nd Chicken Squad independently, and we supplement by reading the JJ Tully books to him, which are a just a bit more advanced (i.e. less pictures, slightly smaller text than Chicken Squad, but still lots of great illustrations, and nice manageable chapter sizes).

Children's noir might sound crazy but this book from Doreen Cronin and Kevin Cornell is a nifty little mystery great for reading out loud. To set the mood, I listened to Robert Mitchum's Philip Marlowe from *Farewell My Lovely* and adapted his gravelly delivery for the voice of J.J. Tully, the retired search and rescue dog. J.J. not only is the story's protagonist but also the laconic narrator through all but two of the 23 chapters. So, who narrates the other two chapters? Well, that would be Vince the Funnel, the villainous inside dog, described as "a cross between a dachshund and a lamp." For Vince, I initially considered a Peter Lorre impersonation but settled on Orson Welles' Harry Lime from *The Third Man*. With the narrative voices locked down, I added one more trick to keep my sons (ages 8 and 6) engaged in the story. We began each chapter with our own film noir soundtrack: da-dum-dum-ta-da-da-dum-dum with a cool finger snap for a beat with a single hi-hat. We read the book over three nights as the boys' bedtime reading. My sons focused mostly on Cornell's illustrations during the first night. My eldest son rolled his eyes as I led the film noir soundtrack into each new chapter. The noir style drew them in slowly. However, the night ended with a highlight, a silhouette of Vince the Funnel at the end of chapter eight. I had to hide the book for the second night, so my sons wouldn't read ahead before I got home from work. The eye rolling stopped. I had two enthusiastic finger snappers at the start of each chapter. They were critics, too. I mixed up a couple names only to be corrected by my six-year old, who flipped back to the book cover and named each chick. My boys woke up and searched the house for the book. They returned from school and searched again. By the time I returned home from work, they met me at the door. Fingers snapping, the third and last night was electric. The boys, sensing a double cross and a cliffhanger for J.J., pushed me through the last six chapters. I won't spoil the ending but, true to form, this whodunit ends with a (family-friendly) twist. Rating: Five stars. BTW: Parents looking for a noir treat of their own would enjoy *The Best American Noir of the Century*, a 39-story anthology I gave a five-star rating on in December 2010.

JJ Tully, a retired search-and-rescue dog, is called on by a mother chicken who wants him to find her missing chicks. He sets out to train her remaining chicks on search and rescue skills but he must become more involved than he wanted to find those chicks as well. I loved this story! JJ talks like a 1940's film noir gumshoe. The villain, Vincent the Funnel (is that not a great nickname?), talks like a 1930's gangster. The story is hilarious. Mama chicken and her chicks are precious. It's not just the chicks that learn. I look forward to more in this series.

Terrific sense of humor for your young ones. I have become a real fan of Doreen Cronin. If you don't know this author, give her a try.

I have seven-year-old twin girls who love Cronin's chicken series so we decided to give this one a shot too. We liked it but not as much as her more recent books.

Tully has written an amusing, clever book to read aloud to young children. My grandchildren, ages 4 and 5.5 are ready for "chapter books" which are so hard to find. At this age they still enjoy some pictures and this book has just the right amount. Many chapter books geared for this age are just bad and boring for a parent or grandparent to read. *The Trouble with Chickens* is entertaining for adults and for young children. It treats the young reader as a sophisticated knowledgeable young person. I read a chapter or 2 at night to the grandchildren and they cannot wait till the following night. I read the entire book first and was totally entertained. The book is about a retired Great Dane who worked as a rescue dog but now is relaxing out in the country. A chicken and her 2 chicks come for help and the story rollicks along. They all have very human voices and concerns which everyone, child, mom, dad, grandparents, can appreciate and enjoy. Wish there were more books like this out there. Hopefully JJ Tully will write more.

This is a very cute book. I didn't read it to my kids as they are a bit young yet, but I've bought it for kids who are older. A friend recommended it because she and her 7 year old loved it and it cracked them up.

[The following review is written by my 8 years old daughter.] I choose this rating because I really loved this book. I liked how it started out with J.J getting annoyed by "Moosh", but at the end he didn't dislike her as much. It was a nice happy ending. The part I disliked, was that the chapters were too short. If there were longer chapters, there wouldn't be as many chapters. I mostly would recommend this book to my teacher, since she really likes animals. She would think it would be a nice read aloud. This book was a hilarious laugh out loud book

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