

REVIEWS/TRADE TITLES WRITTEN BY ROBIN CRUISE

Bartleby Speaks • Illustrated by Kevin Hawkes
Farrar, Straus and Giroux

“Through a blend of text and clever, energetic illustrations that goes beyond the words, Cruise and Hawkes let readers know that there’s more than one way to communicate.”
—*Booklist*

“Hawkes’s energetic illustrations will elicit smiles, especially at the notable resemblance between Bartleby’s ears and his grandfather’s. The characters’ expressive eyes, including the dog’s, add to the humor. Youngsters will wait with great anticipation for the hilarious conclusion and ask for repeated readings.”—*School Library Journal* (starred review)

“The whole family will enjoy this one and it’s a great story for bedtime.”
—*The News & Observer*

“Hawkes accompanies Cruise’s gently pointed text with characteristically comic line-and-color cartoons, varying vignettes with full- and double-page spreads that focus readers’ attention exactly where it needs to be, modulating noise and silence through artful pacing.”—*Kirkus Reviews*

“Hawkes’s (*The Road to Oz*) clear, sunny watercolors lift the story to pleasing heights.”—*Publishers Weekly*

“Riotous illustrations.”—*The Horn Book*

Little Mamá Forgets • Illustrated by Stacey Dressen-McQueen
Farrar, Straus and Giroux

“Swirls of movement and color are the happy backdrop for a story that might have been sad. . . . The story is bittersweet, but Lucy’s ability to look on the bright side, and the obvious love that she and Little Mamá share, wrap the events in affection and warmth. Dressen-McQueen’s artwork is outstanding. . . . The colors are south-of-the-border bright, adding to the inspirational feeling. Children won’t forget this.”—*Booklist* (starred review)

“The topic of Little Mamá’s forgetfulness is dealt with in a realistic, but child-focused manner. . . . Dressen-McQueen’s Mexican folk-style illustrations . . . capture the feel and texture of Hispanic culture but never overwhelm the story or the characters. The universal themes of love and family dominate this tender, heartfelt story.”
—*School Library Journal*

“Brilliant illustrations accentuate Little Mamá’s zest for living, while celebrating Mexican-American family life. . . . Extols the importance of memory and intergenerational relationships. Warm and wise.”—*Kirkus Reviews*

“Celebrates a family life sustained by happy memories and good times.”
—*Publishers Weekly*

Only You • Illustrated by Caldecott Honor winner Margaret Chodos-Irvine
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

“A warm celebration of parental love. The sparse, rhyming text is evocative and affirming, and appropriate for toddlers or even babies: ‘I love/your knees,/your toes,/your feet./I love your skin—/so soft,/so sweet.’ . . . The art complements the text beautifully. . . . *Only You* will make calming bedtime reading, and the words may end up memorized and recited aloud to soothe a cranky child. A stellar effort.”—*School Library Journal*

There’s no shortage of lyrical books that recount the way parents feel about their children. This one has the advantage of illustrations by Chodos-Irvine. In simple, rhyming text, the narrator (in some pictures, a mom; in others, a dad) notes everything lovable about the child: a nose, a kiss, a small hand to hold. . . . At times, the pictures are rendered in pure, saturated colors; at other times, the design work takes center stage—a soft snowflake design on pajamas or delicate tracings on leaves or bushes. Although this may mean more to the adult reading than to the child listening, both will feel the closeness the book engenders.”—*Booklist*

Fiona’s Private Pages
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

“Like Judy Blume, [Cruise] tackles serious issues but provides many opportunities for laughter. . . . Readers will love this book.”—*School Library Journal*

“A delightful, funny, sometimes poignant, on-target read. It’s no wonder that Fiona’s friends like her. So will kids.”—*Kirkus Reviews*

“The writing style is energetic and highly believable, with a voice that sounds just like a bright, reasonably sensitive sixth-grade girl: “Besides, *we* didn’t have an agreement—Mom had agreed with herself about *my* business.” This sequel stands on its own, but libraries that missed the first book may want to add it because Fiona is so entertaining as she sorts through the confusing situations of life.”—*Booklist*

The Top-Secret Journal of Fiona Claire Jardin
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

“Robin Cruise lets us peek inside the journal of Fiona Claire Jardin, an exceptional girl who is hilariously honest about her likes and dislikes, her friends, her teachers, and the ups and downs of having divorced parents. . . . Delightful and wise beyond her years,

Fiona will knock your socks off and remind you that good families, the kind you can trust and love, come in all shapes and sizes.”—Amazon.com

“Lively, funny, and poignant. . . . Will provide hope to any child in the same situation.
—*Booklist*

“The book will evoke laughter and tears as it helps readers work through the pain of divorce.”—*L.A. Parent*

“The therapeutic value of journal writing is highly touted these days and now libraries can add Fiona Claire Jardin’s diary to the list. Fiona’s parents are divorced, and she is forced to write down her thoughts and feelings several times a week as part of a deal with her therapist and her mother. As the year passes, readers see the 10-year-old change and grow through her entries. . . . Fiona is a likable character, and the journal is true to her point of view.”—*School Library Journal*

“Through the journal entries of a 10-year-old, Cruise explores the healing power of writing and expression. Fiona Claire Jardin shares her anger and sorrow, which she is unable to express off the page, in her chronicle of the year after her parents’ divorce. The entries are short, light, and breezy, while the book becomes a tool that will encourage readers to write in journals of their own . . . Some good characters emerge, notably Fiona’s therapist, John Robert, and her energetic teacher, Jasmine Dupré.”
—*Kirkus Reviews*