

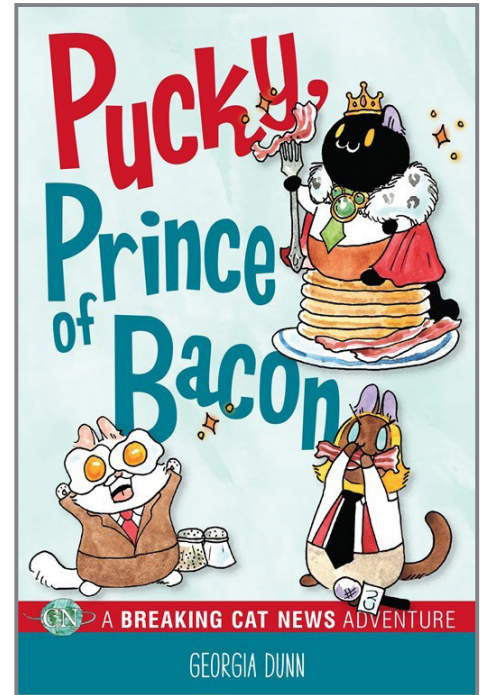
Pucky, Prince of Bacon: A Breaking Cat News Adventure

AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR
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SCIS: 5429768

ISBN: 9781524871284

RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower to Mid Primary



SYNOPSIS

Who has eaten the last of the ham? What are the moustaches doing on the lawn? And what IS going on with the vacuum cleaner?

Lupin, Pucky and Elvis, the delightfully strange cats from Breaking Cat News are back in their fifth comic. Reporting on all the strange happenings around the house and more, this bite sized comic is a playful, entertaining introduction to the ways we use language, and the, often hilarious, interpretations of 'facts'.

ABOUT THE CREATOR

In addition to being a syndicated cartoonist, Georgia Dunn is also a children's and fantasy/sci-fi illustrator. She sells her watercolour and ink illustrations on Etsy and to educational magazines and independent publications.

THEMES

- News/journalism
- Language
- Daily life
- Routine
- Pets
- Humour
- Family

STUDY NOTES

- Despite its zany characters, *Pucky, Prince of Bacon*, is about observing the things that happen in day-to-day life. From cleaning the house to setting New Year's resolutions (and failing to meet them!), readers will see how peculiar human life might look to animals. Despite its light-hearted subject matter, *Pucky, Prince of Bacon*, is a text that can be used to explore reportage and even history, as we start to think about what our lives might look like from the outside. Discussion topics might include:
 - Who decides what is newsworthy and why
 - How the same event can seem different depending on who's telling the story
 - What our daily routines might look like to someone else.

- The creator, Georgia Dunn, combines the language of serious reportage with the oddball observations of cats to surprise and delight readers. This makes *Pucky, Prince of Bacon*, ideal for starting conversations with readers about the different ways that we use language and why. Brainstorm a list of why we tell stories (eg. to make people laugh, to inform, to entertain).
- How does language shift depending on the type of story we're telling? Ask readers to think about the words they would use to tell a story to their best friends. Now how would they tell the story to their mum? The principal? What would change?
- Underline the words and phrases in the book that are specific to reporting.
- The cats from Cat News Network finds things that humans do every day (like vacuuming or eating ham) very newsworthy! Imagine what a day in your life would look like from a cat's perspective. Choose one of the cats from the Cat News Network and write a story where they report on something you did this morning.
- Georgia Dunn's illustrations draw on the familiar comic strip—a form which is itself a familiar element of the newspaper. A lot of the humour in the illustrations comes from the close-up expressions of the cats, which give the reader visual cues to suggest the way they're responding to the various events they report on. In addition to this, consider the way that text works with the images with the following questions:
- Is it a contradiction or supporting the action?
- How does the illustrator use images that contradict our expectations of the text to make us laugh? What is your response?
- How does the writer show different types of text using the colour and layout of each frame?
- Some of the scenes in the book (for example, when the cats are making a big mess!) might look pretty different from someone else's perspective. Choose one of these scenes, and rewrite it as if you were The Man or The Woman.
- Find a short newspaper article that you think is funny or interesting, and draw your own short comic inspired by it.
- What is the news? Talk about what kinds of stories make the news in class. What kind of language do reporters use when they're reporting, and how is this different to the kind of language fiction writers use when they're telling a story?
 - In groups, write a news article about something that's happening in your school right now. What headline would you give it to make people want to read it?
- In groups, work together to act out and film a scene from *Pucky*. Which scene will you choose? Why did you choose that scene? Choose people to perform the following roles:
 - costume designer
 - set designer
 - director
 - director of photography
 - script writer
 - actors.

Film your scene and share it with the rest of your class.

COMPREHENSION

- What are the names of the three cats in the book? How would you describe each of their personalities?
- What are some of the daily activities that the cats report on?
- What New Year's resolutions do the cats and people make? Have you ever made a resolution? Did you manage to keep it?
- How do the cats feel about the vacuum cleaner? How do you know?
- What is the difference between a fact and opinion? When Elvis explains the benefit of whiskers, is this fact or opinion? What about when he calls himself 'naturally handsome'?
- Find three items in the book that the cats use as toys, but the humans think are rubbish.
- Is looking after the cats easier or harder for the humans than looking after their baby? Why? How are the cats similar to the baby, and how are they different?

- How do the cats feel about Easter?
- What sections is the news broken up into? Make a list and find an example in the book for each section (eg. sports—when Lupin and Elvis have a wrestling match).
- What does Tommy call caterpillars?
- Would the events in the book be newsworthy (or as funny) if a person was reporting on them?