



# Vilonia Beebe Takes Charge

*Kristin L. Gray*

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## **Vilonia Beebe Takes Charge** Kristin L. Gray

Being responsible is NOT easy.

Fourth grader Vilonia hasn't lost her rain coat in the three weeks she's had it, and she's brushed her teeth every night and she's volunteered to be the Friday Library Helper. But all that hard work is worth it if it means she can get a dog. Besides, this dog isn't just because Vilonia has wanted one for pretty much ever. It's also to help Mama, who's been lost in one, big sadness fog for forty-three days—ever since Nana died. But Vilonia read that pets can help with sadness.

Now all she has to do is keep the library goldfish alive over spring break, stop bringing stray animals home, and help Mama not get fired from her job. And she's got to do all of it before the Catfish Festival. Easy as pie, right?

## **Vilonia Beebe Takes Charge Details**

Date : Published March 7th 2017 by Paula Wiseman Books

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Author : Kristin L. Gray

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## **From Reader Review Vilonia Beebe Takes Charge for online ebook**

### **Myrna says**

If you loved Ramona, you'll love Vilonia!

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### **Christina says**

That was just precious. So full of voice and spunk and I loved it so much. My 6yo laughed out loud, especially at any mention of chickens. Highly recommended!

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### **Darcy Miller says**

Just finished VILONIA BEEBE and wish I could crawl inside author Kristin Gray's head and live there! Vilonia is so real she practically jumps off the page - warm, funny, and, most of all, brave. You're going to love this one!!

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### **Alexandra Ott says**

This book is absolutely adorable! Vilonia Beebe completely stole my heart with her determination and spunk. Her voice is pitch-perfect, and all of the characters are so lovable and well-drawn. I read this in one sitting because I didn't want to put it down. An absolutely charming, heartwarming middle grade debut. Highly recommend!

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### **Michele Knott says**

Wonderful book for the early middle grade crowd!  
Young readers will love reading about Vilonia's adventures. They'll cheer for her and want to give her a hug!

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### **Corabel Shofner says**

With this first line “[t]he day I was born I was four times smaller than the trophy largemouth bass hanging in my daddy’s shop” Vilonia Beebe took charge of my heart and I would give it to her again.  
I have a soft spot for heartfelt humor and brave characters who lean into the problems of this world. Vilonia’s grandmother has recently died which sent Vilonia’s mother into a deep depression. Vilonia takes over her mother’s job, which is writing obituaries for the local paper. (I must admit I was already a huge fan

of obituary writers, in particular Bob Thomas who wrote the renowned obits for the NYT under the name McGee.) Vilonia also longs for a dog, which she is certain will heal her mother's broken heart. In order to prove that she is responsible enough to own a dog Vilonia charges around juggling a goldfish, chickens, fireworks and county fair.

No moment is wasted in this lively story. The neighbor hens are all named after first ladies — and I bet you didn't know that Harriet Lane acted as first lady for her uncle James Buchanan, who never married. Vilonia also organizes the most extravagant, entertaining, and disastrous pet funeral I've ever read. Let's just say it doesn't move her any closer to getting that runt puppy named Ray Charles.

Yet under all the humor is the grief of losing loved ones and helping each other to heal.

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### **Kristi says**

Vilonia's voice is perfect! She's funny, sweet and spunky. Her story is both heartbreaking and full of hope.

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### **Ms. Yingling says**

E ARC provided by Edelweiss Above the Treeline

Vilonia's grandmother died over a month ago, and she still misses her. Vilonia's mother is so depressed that she can barely get out of bed, and she is neglecting her job, which is to write obituaries for the local news paper. After reading that animals can help with depression, and realizing that the family chickens aren't quite as helpful as dogs, Vilonia offers to babysit her teacher's fish, and then is determined to get a puppy. There's a lot going on-- Miss Bettina, the newspaper editor, must be appeased, the chickens must be kept out of traffic, there's softball to be played, and a Catfish Festival to attend. Can Vilonia juggle everything and improve her mother's mood?

Strengths: This had its moments, and it was good to see Vilonia thinking about others and trying to improve things for her family despite her own sadness. The different pets were a nice touch, and the characters were well developed.

Weaknesses: Between the Mississippi setting and the irresponsible grief of the mother, this wasn't one I personally enjoyed.

What I really think: I can see this being very successful in elementary and some middle school libraries-- the cover is intriguing and colorful, and the story mostly upbeat.

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### **Wendy MacKnight says**

I was in love with Vilonia Beebe and her home from page one, so evocative and charming is Gray's writing. Vilonia's family is reeling since Nana's death: Mama's checked out, Daddy is struggling to keep up, older brother Leon can be so annoying. So Vilonia steps up to take care of everyone, sometimes to disastrous results. I'm not giving away many details here because this wonderful book deserves to have its petals unfold to the reader in it's charming voice. This book is a gift; it perfectly reflects how children navigate their changing world and try to make sense of it all. And the chickens. The chickens! This book is a delight!

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## **Karen Akins says**

I had the opportunity to read an early version of this, and OH MY GOODNESS. Vilonia is such a fun, adorable, spunky kid. This book is hilarious and heartwarming, and I can't wait for Vilonia Beebe to take the world by storm. :)

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## **Chelsea says**

Vilonia Beebe was a cute, quick read about a young girl who is trying to prove to her family that she is responsible enough to get a dog, while also trying to help make sure things don't fall apart for her family. It was definitely a lighter novel, but it did have some really sad moments throughout.

Overall, I really enjoyed the plot and getting to know Vilonia and her friend, AC, but there were a few issues I had with the book. The first being the fact that she takes over her mom's job. It was just too unbelievable, and I couldn't really wrap my mind around nine-year-old writing obituaries. The other thing that really bothered me was that fact that she was just riding around by herself wherever and whenever she wanted.

I would still recommend it because it was a cute novel, and the characters and plot were great. I look forward to reading more by Kristin L. Gray.

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## **K.L. Hallam says**

Fourth-grader, Vilonia, Vi for short, started out in the world four times smaller than the largemouth bass hanging in her daddy's shop. That was almost ten years ago.

Now that her mother has taken ill since Nana passed away, Vilonia must forge ahead. With a reputation for taking in destitute creatures, she spots a poster that might help her mother not feel depressed anymore.

"The most powerful antidepressant has 4 paws and a tail. 555-PETS."

And her favorite book, *Because of Winn-Dixie*, by Kate DiCamillo, is her inspiration to begin The Great Pet Campaign.

Meanwhile, Momma hasn't written a single obituary for the newspaper since Nana died. (Or Nana's) She'll be replaced if she doesn't write something soon, and why Vilonia steps in to help. No one would know it was Vilonia writing the county obits.

But there's no way her father will agree to a dog. Even with the pet fund, she's saved. Her mother is in no condition to handle any extra work. Vilonia would just have to prove how responsible she really was and she needed to find the right dog to convince her dad.

When her brother finds out her secret, he and her BFF, Ava Claire, work together to help Vilonia and wind up in a little trouble.

There's a lot of love in this story. Vilonia holds her family together while working to bring Ray Charles home. The premature shelter dog she fell in love with. She knows it will help her mother with her "Infinite Sadness". And it will help Vilonia. Once she proves how responsible she is.

An endearing story for any child, who has ever dreamt of bringing home a dog, and the adventures that prove what you're willing to endure for what you love. Vilonia is fearless in her pursuit.

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### **Shelley says**

I wish I could hang out with Vilonia Beebe in real life. She is endlessly hilarious as a narrator, and endlessly resolved as a person. Now I'm an endlessly adoring fan.

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### **Melissa says**

Being a fourth grader is never easy, but Vilonia Beebe, the plucky, softball-loving heroine of Kristin L. Gray's delightful middle-grade novel, *VILONIA BEEBE TAKES CHARGE*, has it harder than most. Her mama's been lost in a fog of sadness ever since Nana passed away forty-three days ago, and Vilonia would do anything to see her mama smile again—including undertaking a campaign to adopt a runt-of-the-litter dog (pets, Vilonia discovered, can help people overcome sadness). What follows is Vilonia's heroic efforts to prove how responsible she is, in order to help her mama learn to cast aside her sadness and embrace life again. A warm, heartfelt debut, brimming with empathy and Southern charm. Highly and enthusiastically recommended.

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### **Karina says**

I totally fell in love with Vilonia Beebe! What a charming MG story filled with runaway chickens, an adorable tiny pug dog, library fish, and a ten-year-old obituary writer. This is a sweet story filled with love and charm!

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