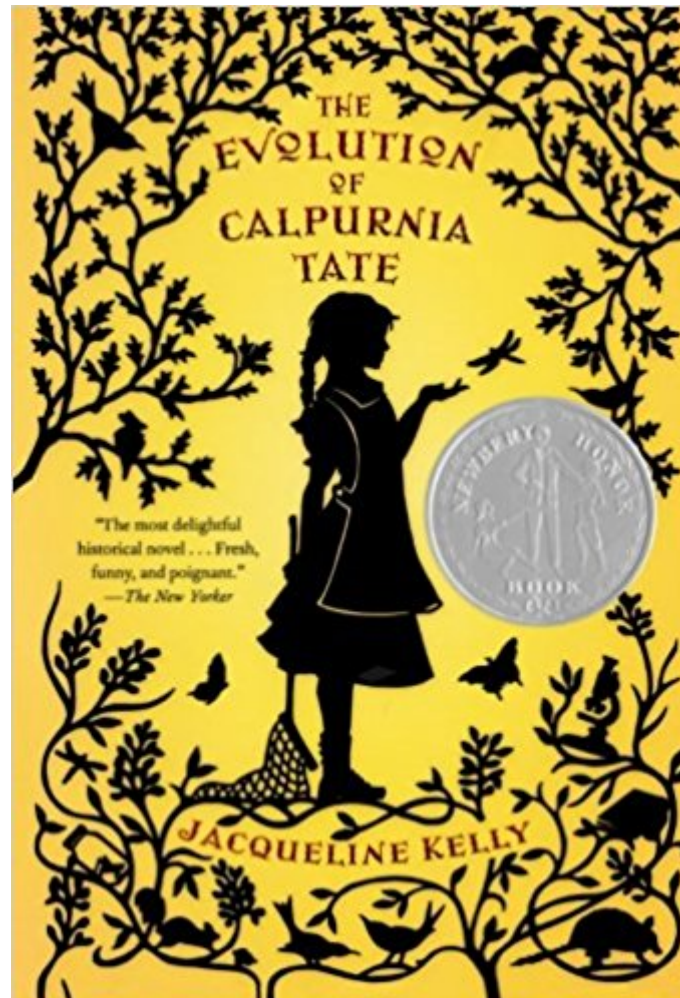




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# The Evolution Of Calpurnia Tate



## Synopsis

Calpurnia Virginia Tate is eleven years old in 1899 when she wonders why the yellow grasshoppers in her Texas backyard are so much bigger than the green ones. With a little help from her notoriously cantankerous grandfather, an avid naturalist, she figures out that the green grasshoppers are easier to see against the yellow grass, so they are eaten before they can get any larger. As Callie explores the natural world around her, she develops a close relationship with her grandfather, navigates the dangers of living with six brothers, and comes up against just what it means to be a girl at the turn of the century. Debut author Jacqueline Kelly deftly brings Callie and her family to life, capturing a year of growing up with unique sensitivity and a wry wit. *The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate* is a 2010 Newbery Honor Book and the winner of the 2010 Bank Street - Josette Frank Award. This title has Common Core connections.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 830L (What's this?)

Series: Calpurnia Tate (Book 1)

Paperback: 368 pages

Publisher: Square Fish; Reprint edition (January 4, 2011)

Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 1 x 7.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 268 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #14,209 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #17 in [Books > Children's Books](#) > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > 1800s #41 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Multigenerational](#) #102 in [Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > Science Studies > Nature](#)

Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Grade 5 *—* A charming and inventive story of a child struggling to find her identity at the turn of the 20th century. As the only girl in an uppercrust Texas family of seven children, Calpurnia, 11, is expected to enter young womanhood with all its trappings of tight

corsets, cookery, and handiwork. Unlike other girls her age, Callie is most content when observing and collecting scientific specimens with her grandfather. Bemoaning her lack of formal knowledge, he surreptitiously gives her a copy of *The Origin of Species* and Callie begins her exploration of the scientific method and evolution, eventually happening upon the possible discovery of a new plant species. Callie's mother, believing that a diet of Darwin, Dickens, and her grandfather's influence will make Callie dissatisfied with life, sets her on a path of cooking lessons, handiwork improvement, and an eventual debut into society. Callie's confusion and despair over her changing life will resonate with girls who feel different or are outsiders in their own society. Callie is a charming, inquisitive protagonist; a joyous, bright, and thoughtful creation. The conclusion encompasses bewilderment, excitement, and humor as the dawn of a new century approaches. Several scenes, including a younger brother's despair over his turkeys intended for the Thanksgiving table and Callie's heartache over receiving *The Science of Housewifery* as a Christmas gift, mix gentle humor and pathos to great effect. The book ends with uncertainty over Callie's future, but there's no uncertainty over the achievement of Kelly's debut novel.

—Jennifer Schultz, Fauquier County Public Library, Warrenton, VA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

**\*Starred Review\*** Growing up with six brothers in rural Texas in 1899, 12-year-old Callie realizes that her aversion to needlework and cooking disappoints her mother. Still, she prefers to spend her time exploring the river, observing animals, and keeping notes on what she sees. Callie's growing interest in nature creates a bond with her previously distant grandfather, an amateur naturalist of some distinction. After they discover an unknown species of vetch, he attempts to have it officially recognized. This process creates a dramatic focus for the novel, though really the main story here is Callie's gradual self-discovery as revealed in her vivid first-person narrative. By the end, she is equally aware of her growing desire to become a scientist and of societal expectations that make her dream seem nearly impossible. Interwoven with the scientific theme are threads of daily life in a large family—the bonds with siblings, the conversations overheard, the unspoken understandings and misunderstandings—all told with wry humor and a sharp eye for details that bring the characters and the setting to life. The eye-catching jacket art, which silhouettes Callie and images from nature against a yellow background, is true to the period and the story. Many readers will hope for a sequel to this engaging, satisfying first novel. Grades 4-7.

--Carolyn Phelan --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Assigned read for homeschool co-op and we truly enjoyed this one. Off to buy the second one at the request of my 11yo sons. I do recommend this set. While they could read it themselves if they wished- we chose to read this book together for bedtime and will do the same with the second book.

I read a chapter of this every night to my kiddo. It's excellently written. Every single chapter is funny! in a smart way -not the obvious, spoon-fed humor like in the Rick Riordan Magnus Chase books. It also gave me a chance to stop and explain words to her that she should know in expanding her vocabulary every once in a while. If you have a sensitive child like mine that can pick up on details, you will absolutely love this novel.

The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate is one of the best books I've ever read in my entire life. I recommend this book to everyone. Callie is so interesting, I love reading about her adventures with her many brothers, and her Grandfather. Callie wants to be a scientist like her Grandfather, her mother wants her to be a lady of society. Being the only daughter in a house full of boys, Callie mother can't focus her attention on any other girl and telling her about learning to cook, and being a perfect lady and housewife. Be sure to read the second book, The Curious World of Calpurnia Tate.

Absolutely THE BEST ! Love both of these books, The Evolution and the Curious World!! A MUST READ joyful encounter of turn of the century Texas life from the eyes of a young girl in a home filled with 6 brothers.

I'm 25 yrs old and a mother, and I still thoroughly enjoyed this book and plan to buy the sequel. I highly recommend it! A must read! I devoured it in 2 days. I think it would serve as great encouragement to young ladies to pursue their interests and dreams even if they don't fit into the mold of "traditional" roles. It also has discussion questions, an interview with the author, and a sneak peek at the sequel in the back.

My daughter writes this review: I love this book, Calpurnia and her family comes to life in this book. Calpurnia loves to do scientific observations in nature, and do experiments with her grandfather except in her time women were not expected to do that and they were expected to do embroidery, cook and stay at home. She did not want to do that. Whenever Calpurnia did what she wanted, her mother made her sit and knit socks for her brothers for Christmas. she was no good at it, she improved, but she did not like it. This was followed by a series of cooking lessons which she also

hated. This story took place in Texas. Interesting book. This ends with transition from 1800s to early 1900s. In this book, Calpurnia also receives a Christmas present - locket, a set of ribbons and book called The Science which Calpurnia is so happy, but when she rips the cover she found it is Science of Housewifery.

Engaging and exceptionally well written book that my 10 and 12 year old boys loved hearing me read out loud to them before bed. Characters in the book are extremely well developed and there are many laugh out loud moments. This turned out to be one of our favorite stories! Looking forward to reading more about Calpurnia soon!

My nine-year-old daughter enjoyed reading this with me and wants to read it again. I'm sure she'll read it again, on her own in another year or two.

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