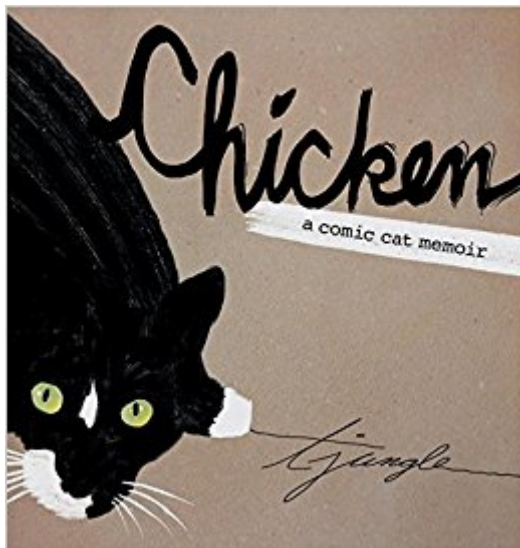


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# Chicken: A Comic Cat Memoir



## Synopsis

A great read for kids and cats of all ages :-) Chicken is a soulful expression of the love between cat and person as it collides with the powerful tide of family, friends, loss, and the invisible forces that connect us. Double Gold Winner in the 2016 Global E-book Awards for Best Children's Nonfiction and Best Pet Nonfiction! For anyone who has ever loved a cat, Chicken's true story is a graphic novel that touches the heart. From funny to emotional, sweet to silly, thoughtful to mystical, this true cat memoir captures it all in 72 full-color, smile-making illustrations with bonus fun facts about cats and their habits. "A beautiful, tenderly told story that's appropriate for both children and adults. If you pay attention to all the little doodles, background decoration and the notes scattered throughout the illustrations, there's a second story brewing just for adults. Look carefully, there are little gems buried in the details of the illustrations!" • The Hungry Monster

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 34 customer reviews

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Age Range: 5 - 12 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 6

## Customer Reviews

Author, artist, and educator, Terese Jungle received her M.F.A. in Visual Communications from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She taught graphic design for 10 years; has shown artwork in a range of mediums; and presently sells her art prints online and in boutique and museum gift shops. She wrote and illustrated "Chicken: A Comic Cat Memoir" over a period of years-after teaching classes, on breaks between sessions, in late nights and early mornings, on art retreats,

and sometimes in her sleep. She found a home in the engaging but challenging process of combining autobiographical storytelling, comics, collage, graphic design, photography, and typography with new media (the book was created on an iPad). "Chicken" is her first book, though in 2014, she and her daughter collaborated on "The Frizzball from Outer Space" booklet and pillow critter which can be found in Pittsburgh shops and online at [tjungle.com](http://tjungle.com), along with her digital art prints, typography-based silkscreen prints, and other visual merchandise, including prints of illustrations from "Chicken." Despite her nomadic past, she remains (for now) in Pittsburgh, with her artist daughter and the next cat who found them.

i love this book, i'm waiting for the hard cover to arrive and couldn't wait and had to download the kindle version. stood in my kitchen reading every hilarious word with a big smile on my face. this book warms my heart. love the illustrations and collage, and the whimsical view into the life of TJungle with her sidekick Chicken through various moves across the country ...and it's not just a book about a most excellent cat, this story also weaves in all the interesting places that TJungle lived as well as all her amazing family and inspiring friends and a real touchstone of a creative life lived with a true friend ! long live Chicken the Cat !

i really liked this book. It is about a cat named chicken. She is really tricky and was adopted by a girl who really likes cats. the illustrations are super good. Its a true story and chicken is a very interesting cat. The author is really creative!!!! Lucy Martin age 9

Chicken is a terrific, engaging book that is heartwarming, funny, whimsical and a little sad. The simple, soulful love story of cat meets human is beautified and enriched by the amazing illustrations that capture the story perfectly on Chicken's travels as part of this small, loving family. For adults, children, pet lovers or even just lovers, this book is a perfect gift and wonderful bedtime story for all ages!

At first glance, *Chicken: A Comic Cat Memoir* by Terese Jungle is, on the surface, a children's picture book about a woman and her cat. It's a memoir of the author's life as well as a beautiful memory of her cat, Chicken. But it's also a book adult readers will enjoy not only for the delightful art but also for the greater story of TJungle's life. I'm a reader who enjoys graphic novels, and the further I got into the story, the more I realized this was more than just a

children's book. The art, the words, and the doodle-like notes in the margins are where TJ celebrates her journey as an artist and a friend to many other creative people. TJ grew up allergic to cats, but over time, the allergy faded. Now an adult, she dreams of a tuxedo cat with bright green eyes and when she can't find the cat at the local shelter, her friend Mimi announces that the cat must be looking for her. Of course, the cat finds TJ and they are a perfect fit for each other. The cat, named Chicken, follows TJ on her journey through life, sometimes at her side and sometimes in the care of others. But, like all pets, Chicken's life comes to an end, and TJ and her daughter have to deal with it. It's a beautiful, tenderly told story that's appropriate for both children and adults. I can see why the author calls this, "A great book to read to cats (and kids)." The illustrations are delightful, even child-like. The book would be a good way to help young children talk about their feelings about the loss of a beloved pet. But if you pay attention to all the little doodles, background decoration and the notes scattered throughout the illustrations, there's a second story brewing that's just for adults. Look carefully, there are little gems buried in the details of the illustrations! TJ's story is woven into the pictures, including multiple moves, hinting at the unsettled lifestyle of an artist and student. There are also cat fights, both feline and human, with one side note, "They didn't stay friends for long" that will make any cat-lover snicker with recognition. The author also takes great care to include the people who were important to her life in the illustrations. At the end, there's a listing of notes (marked with asterisks in the story) that give a little more insight into the people, artwork, cat behavior and poetry that appear in the book. I recommend this for parents to read to their children, but be warned. If you are a "cat person" read it through the first time by yourself because (as they say on the internet) it will hit you right in the feels.

Check it: I despise almost all books and movies about children or animals (though I adore both in real life). Screw Charlotte the spider and Wilbur the pig! Begone, Black Stallion! And I certainly don't care for animals as central subjects of works of visual art any more than I look forward to seeing pet pics on Facebook. Luckily, I was turned on to Terese's lovely and worthy book, CHICKEN: A COMICS CAT MEMOIR, and I learned that a story about a cat can be much more than a story about a cat. Presented via clever and unmistakable Teresean illustrations that include handwritten text and word balloons, CHICKEN tracks the autobiographical plot of a girl named TJ who used to be "very, very allergic to cats,

grew out of the allergy (or the allergy grew out of her), had recurring dreams of a green-eyed black-and-white tuxedo tabby and eventually adopted and adored just such a cat until her (the cat's) death many years later. One of the basic messages of the book is the grand miracle of fated intimacies. "[Those] destined to meet will do so, apparently by chance, at precisely the right time" goes a pertinent quote attributed to Emerson on the dedication page, though, for the life of me, I don't know from which work it came and I know my Emerson. Dovetailing this quote, TJ's friend Mimi gives her some sage advice about how to go about acquiring the right cat: "[Y]ou have to wait for your cat to find you." Sure enough, TJ discovers one of a few stray cats outside of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco and resolves to go from being a cured cat-activated sneezer to a full-blown cat owner. Eventually TJ names the cat Chicken. Yes: Chicken. Why? Because the cat makes a rare, if not unique, "bak" sound, which, thankfully, provides the central gimmick for the book's title. Terese seems to have an enviable effortlessness in her illustrating, but just when you think she produces clever images almost willy-nillyingly, with savant-like rapidity, something pops up that shows real careful design behind it all. In fact, I doubt that I could have managed to communicate so much, create such an effective mood and poignant autobiographical summary, so deftly. (I think Terese would kick ass telling a story on THE MOTH RADIO HOUR. I'd suck.) Though comparing artists' art to other artists can be quite tacky, I do so only out of respect and with full acknowledgement of the former's distinction. Terese's general work doesn't allow for easy comparisons, so the best I can do is evoke the pithiness of Raymond Pettibon, the deceptive simplicity and fluidity of James Thurber (whose cartoons echo Picasso's sketches), the weirdness of Edward Gorey and Audrey Niffenegger's THE THREE INCESTUOUS SISTERS, maybe even a little R. Crumb and Art Spiegelman. CHICKEN also features judicious incorporation of photographs: Grandma W's quilt, Grandma V, Chicken's kibble coincidentally arranged as a smiley face, a desert campsite, former apartments, her daughter Ana's drawings, a mouse killed by Chicken, and Chicken's shrine. Perhaps above all, Terese's humor earns the book high ratings: from Chicken's impossible use of human language to a psychedelic portrayal of a cat-nip high. When infant Ana grabs her tail, Chicken thinks or says "Mother? [H]elp. Me not toy," and when someone mistakes Chicken for a "bed

lump! offended Chicken says "f!ed  
lump! indeed! f!ed! Dust bunnies in a closet are really bunnies in a closet; the sound a spring makes is "sproing; f!ed!  
Chicken's first word of greeting before the adoption decision is f!ed! "y f!ed! fellow; f!ed! and the very comic frame is broken by sound effects twice: when girl-age TJ sneezes (f!ed! "ahchooo f!ed! and when the premonitory dream cat gets very close and lets out a f!ed! "meyow. f!ed! Even the vinyl albums strewn on the floor near a pregnant TJ are silly: Radiohead f!ed! "s KID ANA (instead of Kid A), Oleman Hawkins instead of Coleman Hawkins, Elle and Sebastian instead of Belle and Sebastian, and MAMA MILK instead of TIGERMILK, and Oddest Mouse instead of Modest Mouse. My favorite humorous bit is when Terese f!ed! "s habitual employment of asterisked footnotes is taken to an absurd level with the image of Chicken licking her own buttohole, which is almost identical to an asterisk. f!ed! "not an asterisk f!ed! appears between two brackets, and a text emoticon says, via a word balloon: f!ed! "OMC f!ed! (which, I assume, means f!ed! "Oh my cat! f!ed!). However, Terese f!ed! "s humor knows its place, and it doesn't ban life f!ed! "s inevitable shadows with too much brightness. By the time Ana has grown into a little girl, Chicken gets sick: kidney failure and a tumor after 17 years of health and vibrancy. As deftly as a scene in an episode of ALL IN THE FAMILY could go from zany to ultra-serious, Chicken takes a tragic turn, and I found myself reading through tears as Chicken is dying and TJ recalls the times when she could have been more vigilant and protective of her beloved pet. Finally there a heartbreaking goodbye scene: f!ed! "Please f!ed! f!ed! TJ sobs as Chicken thinks \*I f!ed! "m ready to go\*. Bravo to Terese for a masterful balance of Thalia and Melpomene, life f!ed! "s joys and sorrows. Of course, the book is full of inside jokes and anecdotes, and likenesses that are recognizable and dearest to Terese f!ed! "s intimates, but the incidentals don't gum up the book f!ed! "s accessibility at all. CHICKEN has abstract worth, vibrates with universals: the age-old love between pets and humans, the sickening fact of mortality and how it forces tearful goodbyes out of everybody sooner or later, the episodic and migratory rhythm of life. The book also celebrates the peculiar and miraculous medium of comics, its visceral power and its attractiveness to people of all ages. Copies of CHICKEN should be sold on both children and adult bookstore shelves. Are TJ and Ana found by another cat, one special enough to replace the great Chicken? Buy the book and find

out.

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