

## **The Runt Farm Series: Reviews**

### **Book 1: *Under New Management* & Book 2: *Beatrice and Blossom***

"My daughter and I loved reading these together. Funny and fun, and totally charming. We had so much fun we may have even missed the fact that we learned a thing or two."

-- **Maddy and Lewis Buzbee, author of *Steinbeck's Ghost***

"The **Runt Farm** books are filled with hope and humor, showing children a family of characters who don't "match" but who take each other into their hearts and make a fine life together. The stories are a good counterbalance to the idea that there are only limited templates dictating who we can love and take care of."

--**Ann Medlock, Founder, The Giraffe Heroes Project**

"**Runt Farm** is a charming, imaginative tale about a renegade kitten (and fledgling duckling) who inherit a deserted farm and proceed to invent a wacky lifestyle that incorporates two wandering super-intelligent mice named Cletus and Tooth from NAARF (the Nightshade Association Animal Research Facility). Fortunately, Kitten does not eat or hunt live mice, so the operation continues on a canned goods supply shoestring-style. It is amusing to read about the educational efforts of the mice to build the vocabularies of Kitten and Peep, and the random species sampler encounters its share of challenges both from predatory neighbors (weasel), and NAARF Gestapo types. "Under New Management" is the first book in a "Runt Farm " series and it promises many rollicking pages of adventure to come. Whimsical black and white illustrations enhance the text, designed to appeal to a juvenile audience ages 6-10.

In the second **Runt Farm** book of the series, ***Beatrice and Blossom***, new members are recruited for the Runt Farm pack, now including Kitten, Peep, two inventor mice named Cletus and Tooth, and Beatrice, a bunny, and Blossom, a soggy squirrel. A kind of raggle-taggle gypsy band dynamic develops, and each member of the troop contributes their own special assets or talents and a remarkable story ensues. The antics of the eccentric characters are hilarious and spontaneous. A very cozy group dynamic is further explored in this second book of the Runt Farm series. Playing marbles and teaching baby frogs to share lily pads was never so unpredictable and so much fun!"

--**Midwest Book Review**

"What wonderful books! I love so many things about your **Runt Farm** series. The characters are so well delineated, Cletus with his ever-inventive nature, Tooth with her healing grandmotherly qualities, Beatrice and Blossom learning the lessons of life. The stories clearly come from the heart; I was smiling the whole way through as I read them. The illustrations are perfect for the story--fun and light. They help move the story along. And I love the dragonfly who sets the stage and summarizes at the same time. I can't wait to get my copies of these books!"

--**Yvonne Palka, author and illustrator of *Dragon Fire, Ocean Mist***

“The **Runt Farm** Series is engaging, with very human animal characters and clever integration of vocabulary building. Children will enjoy the stories and parents will discover many teachable moments as they read.”

--Gretchen Russell, teacher & librarian

“Inspiring, fun, and absolutely charming. My two 8 year old kiddos are already creating a live stage version of **Runt Farm**. They definitely have their favorite characters, and we now have a squirrel named Blossom living in our backyard.

Oh, and let’s not forget how much we love the illustrations, the children constantly practice drawing the characters. Thank you for so much fun.”

--The Mendonca Family

“The first two **Runt Farm** books, **Under New Management** and **Beatrice and Blossom**, are appealing books, just the right size and length for the 6-10 age group. They are also age-appropriate in topic, excellent for the young ones who read beyond grade/age level. The glossary is a nice touch.

As a librarian, I see these fitting well with the "easy fiction" books -- a nice transition from controlled vocabulary readers to fiction chapter books. They offer a good starting place for parents and others reading aloud to children who are looking for something short and not as daunting as the longer books.

The colorful **Runt Farm** book covers pull you right in. Mark Evan Walker does a fantastic job with the black and white line drawings as well -- fanciful and just slightly cartoonish. Full page illustrations will be pored over by appreciative readers: Kitten and The Peep on their perilous water journey; the evil weasel; the recurrent dragonfly. Lots of action, with charmingly depicted characters fully engaged in their adventures.

Both books have gentle lessons--oh, the fire and The Peep depicted with a cigar!

I adored **Under New Management** and liked **Beatrice and Blossom**, too. The diversity of the Runt Farmers will be appreciated by all kinds of families, adding yet another wonderful element to the series. Everyone can find a place inside this delicious group. I look forward to their meetup with the wicked NAARFers! Danger always adds appeal (as does the fire in Book 1).”

--Toni Myers, retired librarian

“I deem **Runt Farm** five-star reading material!”

--Dr. Bernice Isham, retired music educator

“What delightful stories! And the pictures are unbelievable! I can imagine how they would stimulate a child's imagination on seeing them - they did mine.

What was so amazing was that I read each one in about an hour, and realized that probably half of that time was enjoying the pictures.”

--Anne Melle, librarian and treasurer, PFLAG – Seattle

“I just read Books 1 and 2 of the *Runt Farm* series by Amanda Lorenzo. Now I am in love with Kitten and The Peep, Cletus and Tooth, Beatrice and Blossom! Although these books were written and illustrated for short people, the ones who are fully tall will enjoy them as much.

Having been a runt myself, I feel that these books hold important messages for good growing up, but never in a heavy-handed way. The messages slip right into the fun adventures, and the illustrations by Mark Evan Walker are charming and so alive!

Ms. Lorenzo has crafted stories that fly by, making my heart melt and often bringing a smile to my soul. The Runt Farm books are must-reads for anyone who is, or ever was, a child.”

--Fax Sinclair, photographer

“I didn't know it until yesterday, when I was privileged to read the author's proofs of *Runt Farm: Under New Management*, and *Runt Farm: Beatrice and Blossom*, that I NEEDED to own a pink, long-sleeved tee shirt with the illustration of Beatrice looking into a cracked mirror with her skirt draped gracefully up and over her fuzzy tail. You can tell by the look on her reflected face that she is happy and content about her fluffed up, dressed up self. I like that.

The Runt Farm book series is completely engaging for young readers . . . and for their grandmothers. Not only Beatrice and Blossom but also the other adorable characters (like The Peep, who has issues) have exciting adventures, narrow escapes and comforting warm blankies bestowed upon them, not to mention poultices.

There are some BIG words in the Runt Farm books . . . some real and some delightfully tossed together by the author, Amanda Lorenzo. Did you know there is such a word as rejeamenta? My spell checker surely doesn't. The glossary in the back of each book explains and teaches the pronunciation of all the important big words and is a sweet little lesson in itself (I've always been a big fan of glossaries).

When the delightful narrative mingles close up and comfy with the incredible illustrations magic happens. I, the granny, am flung back to my childhood. And the children? They are safe, inspired, and enchanted on Runt Farm.”

--Kay Mickel, writer, granny and fearsome cancer fighter

“The **Runt Farm** books are delightful! The characters have vibrant personalities and their interactions ring true. I felt a real sense of satisfaction seeing the Runt Farmers find their way to harmony and collaboration. The illustrations are alive with subtlety, drawing you in. Readers of any age will love hanging out on **Runt Farm**.”

--Jack Elias, CHT, author of *Finding True Magic: Transpersonal Hypnotherapy/NLP*

“I inhaled *Runt Farm* and loved the story. The art work is delightful and the glossary - very educational!”

--Dr. Gloria Hutchins, retired special education professor

“I love the books, they're fantastic. If I had children I would, without a doubt, read these books to them. Personally I hope there are lots more to follow.”

--Robert Holiman, a Fan of *Runt Farm* on Facebook