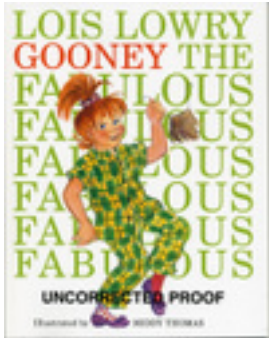


## Gooney Bird Greene

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Several years ago I wrote the book called GOONEY BIRD GREENE, in which an unusual (precocious, self-confident, sometimes outrageous) second-grader arrives in a new school and changes the tempo and tenor of the entire classroom.

Kids loved it because they could see themselves and their classmates in it; teachers loved it because it contained, as part of the plot, some teaching tools..specifically, how to create stories.

The book was set in October because Gooney Bird had arrived, (as I often did when I was kid) in a new school a month after school had begun. When it was clear how popular she had become, it occurred to me that I could take her through an entire second grade year, month by month. So I set the second one (GOONEY BIRD AND THE ROOM MOTHER) in November.

But the question arose: how to deal with the "teaching" side of it, which teachers had enjoyed. The requests I got were for more of the same...that is, more story-telling by the main character. But I began remembering "If You Give a Mouse a Cookie," which my own grandchildren had loved. There were many sequels to that book, and though small children didn't notice...it was all the same book, disguised each time by the use of a different character.

And I didn't want to re-write Gooney Bird month after month. I thought kids..and certainly, teachers..would tire of it. So I created a different set of teaching circumstances for the second book (the children are learning how to use a dictionary).

And then, after an intervening book (GOSSAMER) I did a third Gooney Bird. The photo I've attached here is of the "uncorrected proof," as it is called, for the book that will be released in the spring. Now it is December and Mrs. Pidgeon's second grade class is planning a holiday celebration. Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa...whatever. The school dog - Bruno, a Saint Bernard who belongs to the custodian - is wearing antlers; and Mr. Leroy, the principal, has a necktie with different holiday symbols: candy canes, pine trees, etc...each day.

Mrs. Pidgeon has been reading Aesop's fables to the kids. (Ah! Stories with morals! Now there's an idea!)

Her second graders, led by Gooney Bird Greene, decide to create their own fables, thereby also creating the title of the book: GOONEY THE FABULOUS.

As in each previous book, the children each have a distinct personality and set of circumstances. Malcolm's home life is disrupted by baby triplets. Felicia Ann has lost her two front teeth and can't speak without a lisp. And Nicholas...well, the only one who can solve Nicholas's mysterious problem is Gooney Bird herself.

Coming in April!

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