

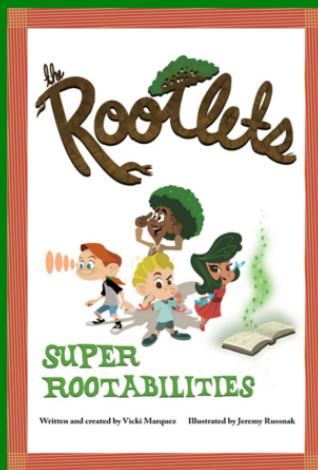


THE CHILDREN'S BOOK REVIEW  
*Growing Readers™*

## The Rootlets: Super Rootabilities, An Interview with Vicki Marquez

author interview with  
**Vicki Marquez**

The Rootlets: Super Rootabilities



"...made the  
"eat your vegetables"  
conversation  
much more  
fun and exciting."

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The Children's Book Review: **The Rootlets: Super Rootabilities** is the first book in your healthy eating series for kids. Before we talk about the book, can you tell us about your background as a certified health coach, wellness expert, and plant-based chef? And when did you decide to add author to this list?

**Vicki Marquez:** As a health coach, I work side-by-side with my clients—supporting and helping them to make small, healthy, sustainable, lifestyle choices. Adding plant-based chef to my list of credentials gave me an extra layer of wellness education that allowed me to roll up my sleeves, sharpen my knives, and bring a variety of healthy cooking techniques to my coaching practice. It's my mission, passion, and dream to help my clients see healthy living as something that's attainable, exciting, and also very delicious. If I can inspire one person to make better choices that will improve and enrich their life, then I'm doing my part...and there's no better feeling than that. Launching The Rootlets brand and authoring *The Rootlets: Super Rootabilities*, the first book of the series, is really just an extension of that passion and that dream. I wanted to create something that played a part in preventing and reducing childhood obesity and that helped kids embrace and love fruits and vegetables. I also wanted to give parents an entertaining resource that helped them establish a strong and healthy foundation for their kids and that made the "eat your vegetables" conversation much more fun and exciting.

**The Rootlets are a fun bunch. What was your inspiration for these superhero characters?**

**Vicki Marquez:** The driving force behind the Rootlets was—and is—my desire to help improve the health of our future generations by inspiring kids to want to eat more vegetables. But another big source of inspiration came from my grandma, the real life Yammy Grammy. Growing up she would introduce me to foods by singing songs about them, or she'd teach me math by turning an equation into some silly game. She always made learning fun, and that got my attention. I wanted to use that same approach to introduce kids to the superpowers of vegetables and other plant-based foods. I believe that by making healthy foods fun and switching the language from “you've got to eat this because its good for you” to “look at these cool veggie superheroes...let's eat our superpowers!” it becomes a playful and engaging dialogue that kids want to be a part of...and that makes a huge difference on how they receive the message.



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**How much fun did you have coming up with their names? Did they come easily to you?**

**Vicki Marquez:** Creating new characters, names and places is probably the most fun thing for me. I absolutely love getting into “fantasy-mode” and dreaming up everything that the Rootlets’ world has to offer. My main characters, and their names, popped into my mind pretty quickly and within about five minutes I knew that I had something really special to share.

**You have managed to intertwine a little mystery, humor and lessons in healthy living into one short story. It can be hard to tell a good story in so few words. How long did it take you to get this story just the way you wanted?**

**Vicki Marquez:** This story also happened pretty quickly. Last September I was given an opportunity to present this book to my peers in the health coaching community – but to do so, I needed to have the book completed by late October. That meant I had to write the story, go through a few rounds of edits, and have each page illustrated and laid out within about a month’s time. There were a lot of long late nights working with my team to meet that deadline...but we kept going, did our best and got it done. It was a challenge for sure, but it showed us what we're capable of and it makes the additional time we have for book number two that much sweeter!

**With so many good benefits that come from eating well, how did you get to the four superpowers that The Rootlets posses?**

**Vicki Marquez:** For the Rootlets’ superpowers, I considered two things. The first was what type of power would be important to each character and the second was what real health benefit was provided by the vegetable that made up that particular characters hair. For example, Brocc loves to learn and study, so I knew that super brain power would be something he'd appreciate and

take very seriously – additionally the vitamin K and potassium in broccoli is known to heal, protect, and strengthen the brain; while enhancing cognitive function. So when kids eat broccoli they'll be able to link it to the book and know that they're getting the real life benefit of super brain power as well.

**The snippets of humor are amusing. “Give Mr. Fungi time and he'll grow on you.” Comedic timing is a skill. Was it your goal to work in funny lines or did they just flow naturally from pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard)?**

**Vicki Marquez:** For me funny is always the goal—if kids are laughing and having a good time then you've got their attention. Plus I'm very much a big kid at heart...I love silly jokes, puns and play on words...laughter is really important to me, so infusing humor into each book is a big part of my story writing process. All that to say that it doesn't always flow naturally, sometimes it does, but other times you just have to wait for it.



Mr. Fungi Illustration copyright © 2014 THE ROOTLETS

**From the text size and layout to the illustrations, the book design has been nicely done. Can you tell us about the team behind the book that helped you bring your story from dream to reality?**

**Vicki Marquez:** Thank you and, yes, absolutely! For this book I had a very small, but very mighty, team of three amazingly talented people—and everyone played an integral role in making this book just right. My illustrator, Jeremy, worked with me to ensure we had a good balance of full-page images and spot illustrations to move the story along. My editor, Julie Knight, helped me whittle down the word count of my first draft from 3000 to under 2000 words. And my graphic designer, Taryn Dufault, was the mastermind who took each individual piece of text and imagery and tied them together into a perfectly formatted book.

**Can you tell us more about your collaboration with the illustrator, Jeremy Russnak?**

**Vicki Marquez:** Jeremy is AMAZING! And probably the only person in the world who can take the ideas and dreams from inside my head, pull them out, and make them so beautifully real. His talent is unparalleled and I'm honored to work with him. Jeremy and I are also cousins...so another fun part of our collaboration is pulling from our family history to add more meaning and depth to this project. For example, The Rootlets' Artichoke home has a look and feel that's very reminiscent to rooms that we grew up in when we were young. Jeremy captures the spirit of those memories in his artworkmaking each image, for me, that much more special.



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**Your wish for The Rootlets is that they help to break the stigma that healthy living is boring. Any word from your readers that suggests your wish is coming true?**

**Vicki Marquez:** Yes, the book reviews have been amazing and adorable little fans have written to me expressing their new love of broccoli or interest in kale. One little girl that I met at a recent school reading ran up to me and in her sweet little voice said “Miss Author! Ever since I read The Rootlets I started eating my vegetables. I never liked them before, but now I do! And I ate all of my green beans and peas and salad!” It was adorable! She was so excited and proud to tell me that she ate her veggies...and she liked them! So yes, the Rootlets have already made a difference and that’s most definitely my wish come true!

**What’s next for The Rootlets and when can fans expect to see the next story?**

**Vicki Marquez:** My team and I are currently putting the finishing touches on our website – which will launch this summer and will give our fans the opportunity to experience and explore the Rootlets’ town of VeggieVille in a unique and interactive way. We’ll also have a variety of games and learning activities that parents and teachers can download for free and share with their kids. Then the Rootlets’ adventures will continue later this year with book number two!

**Available Here:**



Read our **review of *The Rootlets: Super Rootabilities***

## About the Author



Vicki Marquez

In *The Rootlets: Super Rootabilities*, Vicki Marquez introduces readers to Brocc, Carrotina, Cornelius and Kaley – four fun-loving and adventurous kids with veggie hair and healthy habits.

As a certified health coach, wellness expert, plant-based chef and author, Vicki's dream is to break the stigma that healthy living is boring and to show both kids and adults that plants – especially veggies – are ridiculously cool!

Vicki lives in Chicago, with her husband, stepdaughter and two quinoa-loving Yorkies.

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