



Now What?

Brenda Faatz

Peter Trimarco, Illustrator

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Now What? is a charming picture book whose creative, quirky heroines make the best of a dreary day.

In Brenda Faatz's picture book *Now What?*, an ordinary day morphs into an opportunity for play, creativity, and mindfulness.

"Imagination is what allows your mind to discover," and for Lizzy, a drizzly day has forced her to face her imminent boredom without friends or sunny weather. She starts with an ill-fated indoor sport, then music, then a trip to the wet outside, asking the eternal question of young children unfettered by schedules, "Now what?" When a new neighbor arrives next door, the question suddenly has an endless array of new answers—and Lizzy delights in discovering the answers with Luna.

Humming prose, powered by rhymes and clear meters, helps the story to proceed with a spring. Instances of onomatopoeia, as with bingity-boingity-bouncity acts, combine with invented words to great entertaining effect. And the illustrations feature bright colors and expressive faces, complementing the chaos of the day; they render the characters in a cartoon manner, setting them atop lush watercolor backdrops.

Two friendships dominate the book: one between Lizzy and her dog, and the other between Lizzy and her new neighbor, Luna. Lizzy and her dog have an entertaining relationship that's expressed most through illustrations, which show Lizzy's dog reacting to her decisions. Sometimes the dog grimaces; sometimes, it throws itself wholly into her latest idea. Lizzy and Luna have a different friendship: they have the potential to bring out the best in each other, and they help each other to live in the moment, as opposed to forever asking "Now what?" Each girl brings something different to the partnership, too: Lizzy loves sneakers and exploration, and Luna, who moved from an island, has maracas and gourd instruments.

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CAMILLE-YVETTE WELSCH (October 11, 2021)

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