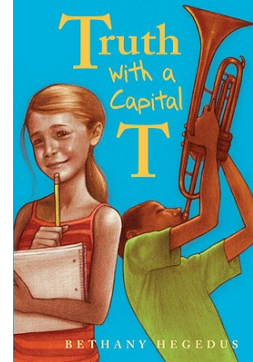


DEAR READER,

I'm thrilled you are reading my book [TRUTH WITH A CAPITAL T](#) and hope you find a good friend in Maebelle T. Earl and her cousin, Isaac. The summer between 5<sup>th</sup> grade and 6<sup>th</sup> grade is a big one. It was for me and it especially is for Maebelle. You see, right before *Truth with a Capital T* begins Maebelle takes a test to see if she will still be in the Gifted and Talented program when she moves to Middle School from Elementary School. The test is h-a-r-d, *hard* - so hard that Maebelle doesn't make the middle school G&T program!



Maebelle feels terrible. She has to work harder than anyone she knows. Her entire family is super smart and talented. Her parents write books and lead seminars and her grandparents, well they too are pretty famous. My grandma sold cosmetics at Walgreen's and I remember putting on the sample lipsticks she gave me when I was a girl. I loved those lipsticks almost as much as I loved my grandma. But Maebelle's grandmother and grandfather don't have ordinary jobs. They are Honky Tonk LEGENDS. And they drive around in an old Winnebago that plays their most famous hit: The Hoedown Showdown.

So, Maebelle is none too happy when her newly adopted cousin Isaac, a 4<sup>th</sup> grader from Chicago shows up in Tweedle, Georgia where she is staying for the summer. Isaac is talented—*way* talented. In fact, Gramps calls Isaac a trumpet playing prodigy!



Like Isaac, I played the trumpet when I was in Middle School and like Maebelle, I didn't have a musical bone in my body. I practiced my scales though and I played "Hot Cross Buns" with the best of them. I tried and tried and tried and practiced and practiced and practiced. I loved jazz music and was astonished at the abilities of musicians like Dizzy Gillespie. In fact, I made myself dizzy trying to puff out my cheeks and play like he did.

But, truly, Isaac and his trumpet playing is the least of Maebelle's worries. Maebelle and Isaac stay with Granny and Gramps in their newly inherited antebellum home. Isaac tells Maebelle, this means her family once owned slaves.

Maebelle is outraged and sets out to prove Isaac w-r-o-n-g, wrong. Only thing is, she has to break in to the locked wing and go against Gramps's wishes to do so. But Maebelle has a stubborn streak (I wonder where she gets that!) and won't give up until she uncovers each and every secret buried in the Earl family locked wing.

I loved spending time with Maebelle and Isaac. I loved writing about Georgia and Illinois, both places I lived when I was a kid. And I truly hope you enjoy [TRUTH WITH A CAPITAL T](#) and the mystery that is history!

Best,

[Bethany Hegedus](#)

