

**Lyla Lyte**  
and the  
Li'berry Fruit

**Other books by  
I'deyah Ricketts**

***Lyla Lyte and the Loot Tree***

***Where Are the Animals?***  
(Children's Picture Book)

For more information about the author,  
visit [ideyahricketts.com](http://ideyahricketts.com).

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## Lost for Words

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“**I** can’t come up with the right words,” Lyla Lyte mumbled as she sat at her desk staring at a blank white sheet of paper. “What is wrong with my brain?”

It was Thursday morning and everyone in Room 201 had finished their writing assignment with ease—everyone except nine-year-old Lyla. She sat there wanting her essay describing her hometown of Screenfield, Illinois, to come alive.

Tightly gripping her No. 2 pencil, Lyla wrote and then erased everything, trying hard to come up with colorful and spicy words, but her brain didn’t respond. It was like she had a Do Not Use sign posted on her forehead.

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“Here you go,” whispered Lyla’s best friend, Samantha Huggins, who had been watching Lyla fidget with her pencil like crazy. Samantha placed her completed essay on Lyla’s desk. “Just copy mine.”

Lyla and Samantha had been best friends since kindergarten. Looking out for one another was just one of the many qualities that made them like two peas in a pod. They were the same height, both taller than the other girls in fourth grade at Crinkle Academy, and they had the same round faces with cute baby bear noses. Their skin tone differed, with Lyla being a tad bit lighter. Both girls’ hair was jet black, but Lyla’s was much

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shorter than Samantha's. That day Lyla wore two orange scrunchies that hugged her puffs, while Samantha wore one white scrunchie wrapped around her long ponytail.

"No ... thank you," Lyla whispered politely, handing the essay back to Samantha. Then Lyla looked at the clock, and it seemed as though the second hand started moving rapidly. The time to complete her assignment was almost over.

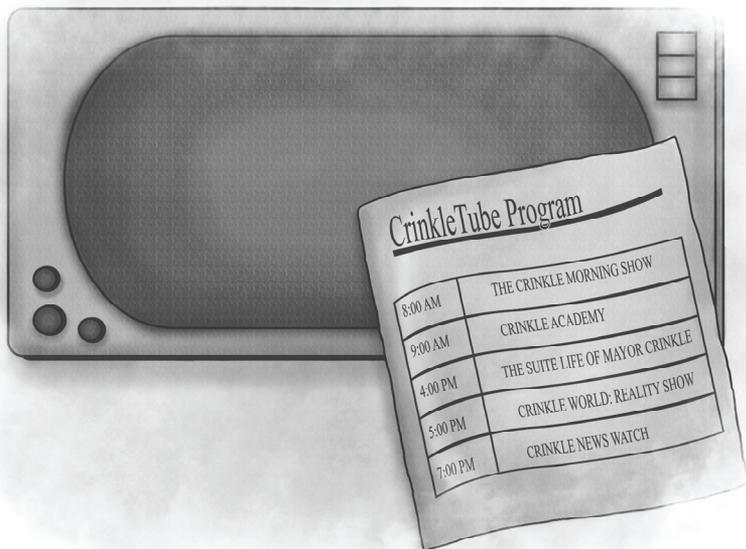
She was determined to use her imagination but didn't know how, so she sat there struggling to come up with the right words. No matter how hard she tried, the words on the page were either too simple or simply boring! Lyla wasn't the only child in Screenfield who suffered from a lack of imagination. There were NO books in the town, and all of the children grew up without reading a single one.

They didn't even know that books existed, so they couldn't pretend to be superheroes, princes and princesses, football players, fairies, or cowboys and cowgirls, because they simply didn't know how. This made life boring for them.

## Lyla Lyte and the Li'berry Fruit

The only outlet for the children in Screenfield was watching tubevision, and there were at least four of them for every person living in town. An outsider would assume that Screenfield's children were having a ball because they got to watch tubevision from sunup to sundown, but that was not the case.

Charles Crinkle, the mayor of Screenfield, only allowed ONE channel to be broadcasted on the tubevisions. That channel was called CrinkleTube,



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named after him, of course. Any Screenfield citizen wanting a program of their own on CrinkleTube had to apply for a permit, which Mayor Crinkle always denied.

Watching CrinkleTube was like being tortured. The mayor served as the network's only host, guest, actor, and news reporter. CrinkleTube's program schedule was exactly the same every single day, week, month, and year.

Mayor Crinkle worked and lived in City Hall, a huge building the size of a mansion that sat on top of Knob Hill, west of downtown Screenfield. This is where he placed the huge antenna he built that sent the signal to everyone's tubevision.

"Please pass your papers to the front, everyone," instructed Ms. Verdak. She was the Classroom Tube Assistant (CTA) for Room 201, one of the many assistants assigned to help the Tube Teacher. Not surprisingly, Mayor Crinkle was Crinkle Academy's only Tube Teacher. He was also the principal. Instead of books, children learned from a forty-inch tubevision, which sat in front of all the classes.