

**CYRM Resource Book
Middle School/
Junior High Nominees
(Grades 6-8)
2008-2009**

Hattie Big Sky

by Kirby Larson

Delacorte Press, 2006

Heat

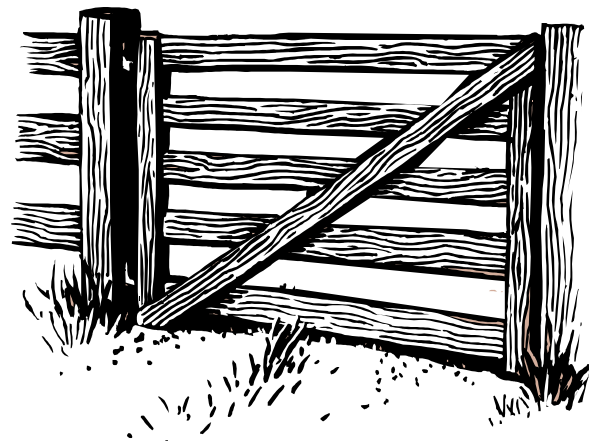
by Mike Lupica

Philomel Books, Penguin, 2006

Rules

by Cynthia Lord

Scholastic Press, 2006



California Young Reader Medal
Middle School/Junior High
Ballot
2008-2009

_____ *Hattie Big Sky*

_____ *Heat*

_____ *Rules*

California Young Reader Medal
Middle School/Junior High
Ballot
2008-2009

_____ *Hattie Big Sky*

_____ *Heat*

_____ *Rules*



California Young Reader Medal
Middle School/Junior High
Ballot
2008-2009

_____ *Hattie Big Sky*

_____ *Heat*

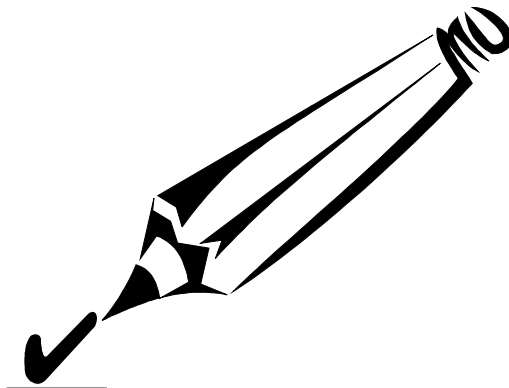
_____ *Rules*

California Young Reader Medal
Middle School/Junior High
Ballot
2008-2009

_____ *Hattie Big Sky*

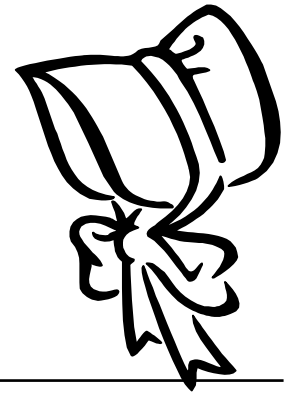
_____ *Heat*

_____ *Rules*



Hattie Big Sky

by Kirby Larson



Synopsis

Readers meet Hattie Brooks when she is sixteen years old and an orphan living in Arlington, Iowa. She has been shuffled between families from one distant relative to another. When she receives word that she has inherited a homesteading claim from her Uncle Chester, Hattie makes the journey west to Montana. She attempts to improve the claim despite the hardships of wartime between 1917 and 1919, and the efforts of a nearby rancher to take over her land. Hattie's first year is consumed by her need to survive the harsh conditions and also do the fence-mending, planting, and harvesting required to maintain her claim. Hattie faces frost, drought and blizzards. She makes friends with her neighbors, the Muellers, but this is during World War I, and many people do not trust those of German descent.



Hooks

- Imagine you were a 16-year-old orphan who had been shuffled from one unwelcoming relative to another. Suddenly you learn you have inherited a homestead in the wilderness of Montana. What would you do?
- Can you imagine the courage it would take to travel across the states to a place you have never seen to live in the middle of nowhere... but the land will belong to you? What fears would you have about this journey?
- Life in Montana can be harsh, even with today's modern conveniences. Hattie will have to live alone in a claim shack and learn to survive. What do you think the greatest challenges would be?
- What would it take for you to give up on owning your own land?

Meet the Author—Kirby Larson



Kirby Larson began her writing career penning chapter books while seated at her kitchen table, setting aside her work to serve up her family's meals. As she says, "I wrote and wrote and wrote -- really bad books! People don't realize that learning to write is like learning any new skill. Without practice, you're nowhere."

Her young adult novel, *Hattie Big Sky*, was inspired by her great-grandmother, Hattie Inez Brooks Wright, who homesteaded by herself in eastern Montana as a young woman.

A frequent speaker, Kirby has presented at more than 200 schools, workshops, and seminars. Additionally, she teaches for the Whidbey Island Writers Association MFA program. Kirby enjoys sharing how she developed a passion for research—which she fondly calls "detective work." At the same time, she teaches valuable skills for writing and storytelling. Kirby has always had a passion for books—her best friends growing up. In fact, her teachers often complained that she spent too much time reading and not enough time on homework. But Kirby never imagined becoming a writer. When she's not reading, writing, or teaching, Kirby enjoys gardening, bird watching, traveling, or drinking lattes with friends. Kirby lives in Kenmore, Washington with her husband, where she has lived her whole life (except for one year as a baby in Alaska), growing up in a family with four noisy children and two warm and easy going parents. She states that she was an ordinary kid who never broke any bones or world records but did flunk Boys' PE when she was in 8th grade. When she was a senior in high school, she got into an argument with this guy in the library. Four years later, they got married, and now have two grown children.

Kirby has received the 2007 Newberry Honor Book Award, and the School Library Journal Best Book of the Year.

For more information, see Kirby's website:

<http://kirbylarson.com>

Contemporary Authors, Volume 161, or Something About the Author, Volume 96.

Connections for *Hattie Big Sky*

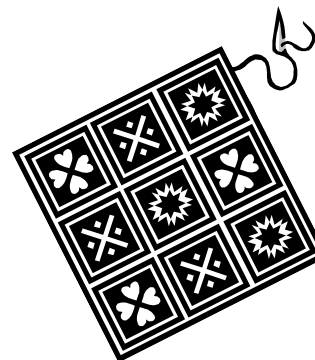


- Brink, Carol Ryrie. *Caddie Woodlawn*. Illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1973.
- Conrad, Pam. *Prairie Songs*. Harper & Row, 1985.
- Couloumbis, Audrey. *The Misadventures of Maude March, or, Trouble Rides a Fast Horse*. Random House Children's Books, 2007, 2005.
- Cushman, Karen. *The Ballad of Lucy Whipple*. Clarion Books, 1996.
- Cushman, Karen. *Rodzina*. Clarion Books, 2003.
- Ernst, Kathleen. *Hearts of Stone*, Dutton Children's Books, 2006.
- Field, Rachel. *Calico Bush* ; with the original wood engravings by Allen Lewis. Macmillan, 1987, 1966.
- Giff, Patricia Reilly. *Pictures of Hollis Woods*. Wendy Lamb Books, 2002.
- Gray, Dianne E. *Holding up the Earth*. Houghton Mifflin, 2000.
- Gregory, Kristiana. *Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie : The Oregon Trail Diary of Hattie Campbell*. Scholastic, 1997
- Hahn, Mary Downing. *The Gentleman Outlaw and Me*. Clarion Books, 2007.
- Holm, Jennifer L. *Boston Jane Series* including: *Boston Jane: An Adventure*, *Boston Jane : Wilderness Days* & *Boston Jane : The Claim*. Harper Trophy, 2002, 2001.
- Holt, Kimberly Willis. *My Louisiana Sky*. Holt, 1998.
- Lasky, Kathryn. *A Time for Courage : The Suffragette Diary of Kathleen Bowen*. Scholastic, 2003, 2001.
- Paterson, Katherine. *The Same Stuff as Stars*. Clarion Books, 2002.
- Sonneborn, Liz. *Women of the American West*. Franklin Watts, 2005.
- Steele, Christy. *Pioneer Life in the American West*. World Almanac Library, 2005.
- Stewart, Elinore. *The Letters of Elinore Pruitt Stewart, Woman Homesteader*. Benchmark Books. Marshall Cavendish, 2004.
- Taylor, Theodore. *Walking Up a Rainbow*. Avon, 1996.
- Tunis, Edwin. *Frontier Living*. Lyons Press, 2000.
- Van Leeuwen, Jean. *Cabin on Trouble Creek*. Dial Books for Young Readers, 2004.

Writing Prompts / Discussion Questions for *Hattie Big Sky*



- After Kirby Larson heard a story about her great grandmother homesteading in Eastern Montana, she spent three years researching and writing this story. Write down any facts you recall from stories you have heard about any of your family members.
- Hattie’s Uncle Chester died before he could finish the requirements to own his homestead outright, and he wills his claim to Hattie. Research the Homestead Act of 1862. What were the requirements to hold the homestead claim?
- Hattie is grateful for the smallest things, including an old pair of work boots given to her by Uncle Holt. How do these boots symbolize the steps Hattie is about to take?
- The Mueller family befriends Hattie and becomes her lifeline for survival in many ways. What homesteading skills do the Muellers teach Hattie? Be specific.
- To help combat loneliness, Hattie holds conversations with God. Her self-imposed rule is that each conversation must start on a thankful note, and “sometimes that kept discussion from really getting started.” Why is that?
- Hattie is romantically pursued by the handsome and rich Traft Martin. Why does she resist him?
- Traft Martin’s Defense League requires that Karl Mueller and other German born immigrants register as a ‘resident alien.’ Is this patriotism or scapegoating? What other events in history reflect similar situations?
- How do letters to Charlie and her “Honyocker’s Homily” newspaper column sent back to Uncle Holt hint as to what the future holds for Hattie?
- How do you feel about the ending of *Hattie Big Sky*? Discuss the balance of a satisfying ending with realism.



Heat

by Mike Lupica



Synopsis

When Michael Arroyo is on the baseball diamond, everything feels right. He's a terrific pitcher who dreams of leading his South Bronx All-Stars to the Little League World Series in Williamsport, PA. It's a dream he shared with his father, one they brought with them as they fled Cuba and wound up living in the shadow of Yankee Stadium. Michael's ultimate dream is to play in the major leagues like his hero, El Grande, Yankee star and fellow Cuban refugee. Tragically, Papi died of a heart attack a few months back, leaving Michael and his older brother, Carlos, to struggle along on their own. Afraid of being separated, they hide the news of their father's death from everyone but a kindly neighbor, Mrs. Cora, and Michael's best friend, Manny Cabrera. When a bitter rival spreads rumors that Michael is older than he appears, the league demands that he be benched until he can produce a birth certificate.



Hooks

- If you were living with only your brother and father and your father suddenly died, what problems might the two of you face as you continue to live without a parent? What would happen if you fear you will be separated decide to hide the death of your father?
- In the above situation, what would you do if you needed help? Who would you trust? How would you decide?
- Consider your favorite sport; you are the star of the entire league! However, another coach wants to get you out of the league so his team can win. What strategies could he use to get rid of you?

Meet the Author— Mike Lupica



Mike Lupica lives in New Canaan, Connecticut with his wife, Taylor, where Lupica is what he describes as a “serial Little League coach,” a youth basketball coach, and a soccer coach for his four children, three sons and a daughter.

He is one of the best-known and widely read sports columnists in the United States. Lupica began his newspaper career with the New York Post in 1975, at the age of 23, covering the New York Knicks. In 1977, he became the youngest columnist ever at a New York paper with the Daily News, where he currently writes four syndicated columns a week. His work has also appeared in Sport Magazine, World Tennis, Tennis, Golf Digest, Playboy, Sports Illustrated and Parade. Lupica is also a regular on ESPN's Sunday morning show, "The Sports Reporters."

For more information, see Contemporary Authors, New Revision Series, Volume 97, or <http://www.teenreads.com/authors/au-lupica-mike.asp>



Connections for *Heat*



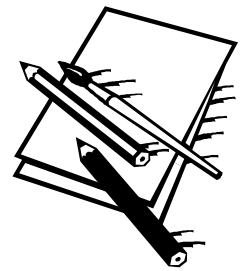
- Auch, Mary Jane. *One-handed Catch*. Holt, 2006.
- Corbett, Sue. *Free Baseball*. Dutton Children's Books, 2006.
- Curtis, Christopher Paul. *The Watsons go to Birmingham--1963 : a novel*. Delacorte Press, 1995.
- Green, Michelle Y. *A Strong Right Arm : the Story of Mamie "Peanut" Johnson*. Puffin, 2004, 2002.
- Gutman, Dan. *Baseball Card Adventure Series*. 8 titles in the series. HarperCollins
- Hobbs, Will. *Crossing the Wire*. HarperCollins, 2006.
- Hopkins, Lee Bennett. *Extra innings : Baseball Poems*. Illustrated by Scott Medlock. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1993.
- Jennings, Patrick. *Out Standing in My Field*. Scholastic Press, 2005.
- Johnson, Scott. *Safe at Second*. Puffin, 2001, 1999.
- Jordan, Rosa. *The Goatnappers*. Peachtree, 2007.
- Lynch, Chris. *Gold Dust*. Harper Trophy, 2002, 2000.
- Naylor, Phyllis, Reynolds. *The Fear Place*. Aladdin Paperbacks, 1996.
- Patneau, David. *Haunting at Home Plate*. Albert Whitman, 2000.
- Ritter, John H. *The Boy Who Saved Baseball*. Philomel Books, 2003
- Ritter, John H. *Over the Wall*. Puffin Books, 2002, 2000.
- Robinson, Sharon. *Jackie's Nine : Jackie Robinson's Values to Live by : Courage, Determination, Teamwork, Persistence, Integrity, Persistence, Commitment, Excellence*. Scholastic, 2002, 2001.
- Salisbury, Graham. *Under the Blood-red Sun*. Dell Yearling, 2001, 1994.
- Shearer, Alex. *Sea Legs*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2005.
- Smith, Roland. *Cryptid Hunters*. Hyperion Books For Children, 2005.
- Stewart, Mark and Mike Kennedy. *Long ball : The Legend and Lore of the Home Run*. Millbrook Press, 2006.
- Uhlberg Myron. *Dad, Jackie and Me*. Illustrated by Colin Bootman. Peachtree Publishers, 2005.
- Woodson, Jacqueline. *Miracle's Boys*. G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2000.

Writing Prompts / Discussion Questions for *Heat*



- When Michael rescues Mrs. Cora's purse and 'clocks' the thief, Ramon, he is hailed as a hero. Mr. Lima of the Bronx Borough President's Office wants to set up a photo shoot ceremony to honor Michael. Why does Michael try to avoid such a moment in the spotlight? Why does Mr. Lima push for it?
- Carlos constantly warns Michael of the dangers of 'Official Persons.' Make a list of 'Official Persons' in your life. Which ones do you trust? Which ones do you distrust or fear?
- Michael is capable of throwing 'heat,' 80 mph fastballs. What kind of 'heat' is thrown at him, causing difficulty in his day-to-day life?
- The author refers to the Danny Altamonte Little League scandal of 2001. How does this affect Michael? Do you think that Justin and his coach-father use the issue of age to uphold the integrity of Little League? How does integrity in sports affect the dreams of young players like Michael?
- While attempting to obtain Yankee players' autographs, Carlos explains to Michael that some people only want autographs so they could sell them, that for some people, baseball is only a business. Why would this concept have to be explained to Michael?
- Michael's budding romance with Ellie Garcia is marred by her secret that she is the daughter of El Grande. Why would she keep this a secret? Are her reasons justified?
- Michael sings the song "El Gato Misifuz" to attract the attention of El Grande. Discuss how Michael, Ellie and El Grande are playing games of cat and mouse.
- Even though Carlos and Michael literally live in the shadow of Yankee Stadium, Michael sometimes feels that it seems just as far away as Williamsport, Pennsylvania. Why is that? Why are these two places so critical to Michael's dreams?
- Have you ever played in an organized sport with a less-than-perfect coach? What are advantages and disadvantages of having your father as your coach? What are some of the qualities of an ideal coach?

Rules by Cynthia Lord



Synopsis

It's the summer before seventh grade and Catherine is excited because a new girl, Kristi, is moving in next door. Maybe she will have someone to spend time with this summer while her best friend is on vacation. But Catherine worries that Kristi won't like her after she finds out about David, her younger brother. Her parents have placed 12-year-old Catherine in charge of her younger, autistic brother more often than she would like. While she loves him, she is also embarrassed by his behavior and feels neglected by their parents. Catherine longs for a normal existence. She's tired of having to be vigilant to prevent David's embarrassing outbursts and wants to be able to have easy friendships and slumber parties.

Perhaps, this summer is when David will learn the rules for acting 'normal' that Catherine has come up with. For instance, it is ok to hug Mom, but not the clerk at the video store.

At her brother's clinic, Catherine befriends a wheelchair-bound boy, Jason, who talks by pointing at word cards in a communication notebook.

Can life get any more complicated?

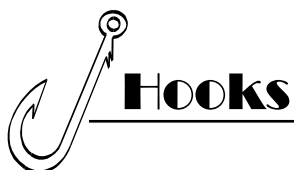
For more information on Autism, see: The Autism Society of America:
<http://www.autism-society.org>

Autism Resources: <http://www.autism-resources.com>

Cure Autism Now: <http://www.cureautismnow.org>

Sibling issues for parents:

http://www.parentlink.act.gov.au/parenting_guides/all_ages/disability_-_brothers_and_sisters



- Imagine your brother is 'different' and you have to help take care of him. How do you feel when people first meet him?
- Can you think of Rules in your home or classroom that you didn't need anyone to tell you? Try to name as many as you can think of (for example, when someone wears something that doesn't look good, you don't tell them).
- If you met someone who could not talk, how would you communicate with them? Would you even try?

Meet the Author—Cynthia Lord



Cynthia's life as a writer began at age four with a song collaboration with her sister. According to Cynthia, "I couldn't write, so she did the actual writing." The song was called "Ding Dong the Cherries Sing," and they forced anyone within a 12-mile radius to listen to them sing it, over and over and over.

Cynthia grew up in rural New Hampshire beside a lake, where she and her sister ice skated in the winter and spent most of the summers swimming and cannon-balling off the dock into the water. Her sister was her first friend, and one of their favorite things to do was to turn over their rowboat and find toads, whom they treated to surfboard rides and visits to the 'Toad Motel' they created using trowels and paper cups in their mother's loam pile.

After college, Cynthia got married and became a teacher. She has taught first-grade, sixth-grade, and even in a one-room schoolhouse.

As her children grew, she returned to writing fiction. Now she says that she gets up most mornings between 3:30 and 4:00 a.m., tiptoes through her dark kitchen, flicks on the coffee-maker, and sits down at her desk. This is her own time, the 'just-me' time to open her heart and spill it across white pages. Often, the sun comes up while she is writing, and her dog, Flurry, comes in and lies at her feet. "The sound of his breathing and my fingers hitting the keys are the only sounds in the room."

For more information, see her website:

www.cynthialord.com

or

http://www.debbimichikoflorence.com/author_interviews/2006/CynthiaLord.html



Connections for *Rules*



Choldenko, Gennifer. *Al Capone Does My Shirts*. Putnam's, 2004.

Clements, Andrew. *Things Not Seen*. Philomel Books, 2002.

Conly, Jane Leslie. *Crazy Lady!* HarperTrophy, 1995, 1993.

Kochka ; translated by Sarah Adams. *The Boy Who Ate Stars*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2006, 2004.

Konigsburg, E. L. *Silent to the Bone*. Aladdin Paperbacks, 2002, 2000.

Lennard-Brown, Sarah. *Autism*. Raintree, 2004.

Lowry, Lois. *The Silent Boy*. Dell Laurel-Leaf, 2005, 2003.

Martin, Ann M. *A Corner of the Universe*. Scholastic, 2004, 2002.

Mikaelsen, Ben. *Petey*. Hyperion Paperbacks for Children, 2000, 1998.

Ryan, Pam Muñoz. *Becoming Naomi Leon*. Scholastic, 2007, 2004.

Naidoo, Beverley. *The Other Side of Truth*. HarperCollins, 2001.

Nelson, Theresa. *Ruby Electric : A Novel*. Aladdin Paperbacks, 2004, 2003.

Paterson, Katherine. *The Same Stuff as Stars*. Harper Trophy, 2004, 2002.

Philbrick, Rodman. *Freak the Mighty*. Scholastic, 1993.

Porter, Pamela. *The Crazy Man*. Greenwood Books/House of Anansi Press, distributed in the USA by Publishers Group West, 2005.

Sonnenblick, Jordan. *Drums, Girls, & Dangerous Pie*. Scholastic Press, 2005.

Trueman, Terry. *Stuck in Neutral*. Harper Collins, 2000.

Writing Prompts / Discussion Questions for *Rules*



- Catherine is torn between love for her autistic brother, David, and her resentment of his special needs. How does having a special needs family member affect family relationships? Does Catherine get enough attention from her parents? Why or why not?
- Other than taking David to the video store, we do not see much interaction between David and his father. When Catherine attempts to arrange a father-daughter event, he rebuffs her in favor of paying attention to his tomato plants. Is Catherine's Dad fulfilling his fair share of family responsibilities? Why or why not?
- Why does Catherine seem almost desperate to have a best friend next door? What is she really craving?
- When Catherine first meets Kristi, she knows Kristi will be popular, that she radiates 'cool. How does this foreshadow the nature of their friendship?
- When Kristi has David dance in Catherine's room, is she making fun of David? Is it okay since David doesn't seem upset?
- Why does Jason's speech therapist always speak so loudly to him?
- Catherine draws the word cards "gross," "awesome," and "stinks a big one." What word cards would you draw to make Jason feel more like a 'normal' adolescent? How would you illustrate these words?
- Catherine's drawing gives her a special way of viewing people and objects around her. How does her first drawing of Jason alter how she views him? What does Kristi think of that drawing?
- Why does Jason get upset when Catherine draws him without his wheelchair?
- Choose three scenes from *Rules* which portray prejudice. Why do you think these scenes show prejudice?

