

Novel Resource 2

Kirby Larson, *Hattie Big Sky*, 2006, Delacorte Press, a division of Random House

About the Author

Kirby Larson says that she writes because it makes her happy; it makes her crazy; it is a compulsion. She says writing is a part of who she is. She tried to quit once...that lasted about six months. She feels it is an honor to write for preteens and teens. Books were her salvation. The characters she always ends up caring the most about is kids.

Kirby presents frequently at schools for teachers and students. She teaching writing for a program in Washington. She lives in Kenmore, Washington with her husband, Neil. Learn more about Kirby Larson at www.kirbylarson.com.



Kirby Larson has a remarkable connection to this book as it based on the events of her step-great-grandmother's life. Her maternal grandmother told her of the real Hattie's life in Montana and planted the seed for her to write this book.

Other books written by Kirby Larson include, *The Magic Kerchief*, *Second-Grade Pig Pals*, and *Cody and Quinn, Sitting In A Tree*.

Awards granted to *Hattie, Big Sky*:

2006 Newbery Honor Book

2006 Montana Award

School Library starred review

Booklist starred review

School Library Journal Best Book of the Year

Book Links Lasting Connections of 2006 title

Barnes and Noble Teen Discover Title

Borders Original Voice

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2006 Cybils nomination

2007-2008 Dorothy Canfield Fisher Award Nomination

Annotation

Hattie Inez Brooks is a sixteen year old girl who has never felt she had a home. While living with her aunt and uncle in Iowa, she receives a letter that states she has inherited her uncle's homestead in Montana. Hattie moves to Iowa to face challenges she has never encountered.

Hattie, Big Sky is an example of historical fiction, realistic fiction, and adventure.

The book is written in first person.

I think the theme of this book is hope, love, and self-discovery. I would not have got that from the title. I think the "big sky" is the hope and love that Hattie discovers in herself.

The conflict in this book is between Hattie and proving herself through "proving" her homestead. Although Hattie does not keep her homestead, she discovers what she is capable of doing.

Characters

Hattie Inez Brooks-a sixteen year old girl

Uncle Holt-Hattie's latest guardian and "sounding board". Uncle Holt is a man who doesn't openly show his emotion, however we do find out how he feels about Hattie.

Aunt Ivy- Uncle Holt's wife; she sees Hattie as a burden and Hattie doesn't like living with her however, many of Aunt Ivy's "life lessons" drive Hattie's decisions.

The Mueller family-Perilee, Karl, Charlie, Mattie, and Fern. This is the family that "saves" Hattie. She becomes part of their family.

Other town members-All the town members play a role in shaping Hattie and what she becomes.

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The setting of this book is Montana in the 1900's during World War I.

Reading and Interest Level

Reading level-4.4; Interest level 6-8

Book Talk

Hattie Inez Brooks, or Hattie Here and There, as Hattie thinks about herself, has never felt like she had a home. While living in Iowa with her aunt and uncle, she receives news that she has inherited land in Montana. Hattie moves to Montana and begins the greatest journey of her life. In Montana, Hattie finds family, love, and what she is capable of. Read *Hattie, Big Sky* and find out what it is like to be a farmer during a blizzard and through scorching heat.

Pre Reading Questions

What would it feel like to not have a home where you feel welcome?

What do you think it takes to run a farm?

Can you think of times people have not been welcome in the United States?

During Reading

In the first chapter, Hattie gets the opportunity to have her own home and she decides to go. What does this tell you about Hattie?

After the wolf snacks on Violet, Hattie goes to the Mueller's for help. When she gets there, she finds out Karl has to register as a resident alien. What is Hattie's reaction and how does that compare to Perilee's reaction? (p. 57)

Charlie's letter to Hattie start out positive and upbeat. As the story progresses, his letters become somber and sad. What might be contributing to Charlie's change of attitude?

After reading

Were you surprised to find out that discrimination existed during World War I towards people who were German?

Because of 9/11 and the war in Iraq, do you see any similarities between how the German's were treated and Middle Eastern people may be treated?

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Hattie doesn't prove her claim. Rooster Jim tells her "things have a way of working themselves out". Do you think things will work out for Hattie?

Write an epilogue on things working or not working out for Hattie.

Vocabulary

Proving- a place where something is developed or tried out.

In the story, proving means to show that a person can develop their land by successfully farming and fencing the land and building some type of home. (p.38)

Honyocker-there was no definition for this word. In context it is a derogatory word for a person who is homesteading. It is like a squatter or hayseed.(p.16)

Liberty Bonds-a special bond that was issued during World War I. Liberty Bonds were bought by Americans to support the war. After the war, the bond could be redeemed for the price plus interest. (p.127)

Indiana Standards

Language Arts: 6.1.2, 1.4; 6.2.6; 6.3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.8, 3.9

7.1.1, 1.3; 7.2.7; 7.3.2, 3.3 3.5, 3.8, 3.9; 8.1.1, 1.3; 8.2.9; 8.3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.7, 3.9

Anticipation Statements – Hattie Big Sky

Put an X in front of the statements you agree with.

___A sixteen year old girl can run a 320 acre farm alone.

___People from other countries who are citizens are loyal only to their home country.

___Americans should support a war we are involved in by buying war bonds to support the war.

___Friends are not important when you need support.

Read Aloud Passage

One selection I would read would be from Chapter 6, pages 64-73.

The next selection I would read is Chapter 17, 212-218.

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IF YOU LIKE....THEN YOU'LL LIKE
Module 6

IF YOU LIKED *HATTIE BIG SKY*
BY KIRBY LARSON... THEN YOU MIGHT
LIKE...

Ashes of Roses by Mary Jane Auch
Margaret Rose Nolan, a new immigrant from
Ireland, finds work in 1911 New York City. Tragedy
will strike the factory where she works.

- Students who enjoyed *Hattie Big Sky* may enjoy this book as well as it is also about a young person who encounters insurmountable odds.

Nightjohn by Gary Paulsen
Sarny, a 12 year old slave, risks punishment
when she is taught to read by a slave,
Nightjohn.

- Again, students who enjoy reading stories about young people who take risks in order to better themselves or their surroundings might enjoy this story as well.

Ties That Bind, Ties That Break by Lensey
Namioka

A young Chinese girl refuses to follow the ancient tradition of "foot binding". By refusing to follow this tradition, she has a high price to pay.

- This story might also appeal to young people who enjoyed "Hattie". A young adult who faces similar situations on breaking tradition might draw inspiration from this story.

Colibri by Ann Cameron

Colibri is kidnapped by her uncle at age 4. He hopes she will lead him to a treasure. Danger increases as her uncle becomes desperate and she plots her freedom.

- I think students who enjoyed Hattie relate to young adults who can appreciate struggle and adventure. This young girl has definite conflict.

Bucking the Sarge by Christopher Paul Curtis

Luther T. Farrell is trapped in Flint, MI with his mother, "a slum lord". He is about to bust out.

- Another young adult facing adverse living conditions might appeal to readers who liked "Hattie".

Penny from Heaven by Jennifer Holm, a young

Italian immigrant, faces prejudice during the 1950's. A Story about families in conflict and how the conflict is resolved.

- Students who read "Hattie" and were moved by the unfair treatment against Germans and anyone who spoke out against the war, might enjoy this story about another ethnic group who faces unwarranted prejudice.

Across the Curriculum Connections

Language Arts- Big Themes, Little Themes

- Review the concept of themes with students.
- Have students discuss and list themes they remember throughout the story. Have the students discuss the obvious ones of friendship, family, etc. Remind them that there are moral issues throughout the story as well.
- Tell students that stories can have one big theme and smaller ones throughout the story.

After listing themes, go through and see which ones seem to be central to the book. Then have the students go back and see how the smaller themes connect to the bigger theme.

To wrap-up the activity, ask the students if they like books with one big theme or a book with a big theme and smaller ones in the book and have them support their answer. Standard Language Arts-Literary Response and Analysis

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Research Alien Registration during World War I

What was alien registration?

Who was required to register?

What would happen to a person if they didn't register?

Was alien registration required during any other war?

Report your findings back in a paragraph.

Needed: computer, list of questions; Standard: Writing Process

Resources

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/frontierhouse>

Three families from present day homestead to Montana.

Legends of America website

www.legendsofamerica.com/AH-Homestead.html

This site explains homesteading in the United States.

Book Activities

Make a brochure advertising free land in Montana.

Moving west was a huge undertaking for a family. However, many people took advantage of the opportunity with free land as the reward.

The US government wanted people to move.

In your brochure include:

- Where land was available
- How much land is available
- How does a person claim the piece of land
- Make the land appealing; you want people to come;
- Use illustrations on your brochure.

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- What does a person need to do to keep the land

Use the internet/and or books to gather your information.
Locate posters and/or brochures the government used to
advertise the land west.

Standards Social Studies, 6.1.16; 8.1.30, 8.3.7

Lang. Arts 6.5.7; 7.5.4, 5.6; 8.5.5, 5.7

Prepare a 2-5 minute persuasive speech in support of purchasing
Liberty Bonds and War Savings Stamps

To prepare your speech, you will need to research Liberty Bonds
and War Savings Stamps. What was the purpose? How much or
how many were citizens expected to purchase? What will
purchasing bonds and/or stamps do for the war? Will the buyers
be able to get any of their money back. Focus on the patriotic
aspect of purchasing these items.

You will present your speech to the class. You will be graded on:

- Answering the questions
- Organization
- Were you persuasive (we will poll the class to see how many
would buy)
- Could we hear and understand what you were saying.

This could be the first time some of these students have given a
speech, so the teacher may need to model a speech.

Standards-6.5.5, 6.7.13; 7.5.4, 7.7.11; 8.5.6, 8.7.13

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Bibliography

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Indiana Department of Education Academic Resources

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